

John 4:26-42 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To understand the importance of intentionally cultivating the soil of the minds and hearts of the people God has put into our lives.

Icebreaker Suggestion: Have you ever participated in relief work after a devastation?

Transition: The rebuilding after a devastation is a long process. Dave talked about the Dust Bowl that occurred in the 1930's in the Great Plains when over one hundred million acres of land was ruined. Farmers had to be trained in order to understand the importance of cultivating the soil. Years of erosion, moving away from certain life giving truths, has left our culture and individual people in a spiritual dustbowl. In this state, people are further away from being able to understand and believe the gospel. Jesus here in John 4 provides a framework for cultivating the soil of people's hearts and minds.

Discussion

1. What are some signs of this cultural erosion that makes it easy for people to discount Christianity? What stereotypes of Christians do you see in the media?

Read [John 4:26-42](#).

2. Throughout this narrative, the disciples seem to miss what God is doing, and therefore fail to engage in this great work Jesus is doing. Dave described their focus in the situation as being on consuming culture and people (what does this woman or Samaritan have to offer me?, what food does Jesus have to eat?). This view keeps them from being a cultivator of culture. What does being a consumer of culture look like in our lives?
3. Jesus tells them the first thing they need to be a cultivator of culture is to open their eyes. They need to see that it's not chance that has put the people around them, but that God has placed them in our lives for a purpose. Why do you think God might have put you in the neighborhood you live in? Your workplace? Your family? Your kids' sports team or school? If we knew God had

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placed you there, what effect would that have on how you engage in those areas?

4. Cultivating is often a long process. "You can't just start planting in a dust bowl." "We shouldn't just spray a bunch of junk on plants trying to make them grow." Dave mentioned that the process to faith is made up of a series of "mini-decisions." If you were to take a secular atheist who was very antagonistic towards Christianity, what would be the kind of mini-decisions he would need to make in order to even consider Christianity plausible?
5. Cultivating soil is a long process, but it also requires us to be intentional in a slow, organic way. What are some ways for us to be intentional in a way that breaks stereotypes others have of Christians and makes them more curious about Jesus?

Summary Questions

6. "God's purpose and work for each of us as Christians is to constantly cultivate the soil of the minds and hearts of the people God puts in our lives." Consider an intentional step that you can take with one person this week.

Sharing and Prayer Time

Consider having a time to pray for the people whom God is calling you to take an intentional step with this week.