

10.23.16 Identity Discussion Questions

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Think about a time when some element of how you identify yourself changed, you moved away from home for the first time, got married, had a child, etc. What emotions did you experience?
2. Have you ever planned to go grocery shopping (or some other similar require outing) at a time when you hope to see as few people as possible and hopefully no one you know? What were you feeling?

Background

Following Jesus's discussion with Nicodemus about being born again he and the disciples headed out to the Judean countryside and baptized people who believed. John gives us some clues about the timing of the event by including that they were doing all this before John was put in prison. One of John the Baptist's followers got worked up because Jesus and the disciples were baptizing rather than sending people to them. John the Baptist sets him straight and once again testifies about Jesus and who he is and that he alone offers eternal life.

During their time in the countryside Jesus got word that the Pharisees had caught on and that people were starting to say he was gaining more followers than John the Baptist so he decided to head home to Galilee. The shortest route to get to Galilee from where he was took the traveler through Samaria, but nearly all Jews would have taken the longer route that allowed them to avoid going through Samaria. The Samaritans were considered a cult offshoot of Judaism and were despised by the Jews. The fact that Jesus went through Samaria says a lot about his willingness to push the culturally accepted norms. Another clue that Jesus was about saving all the lost is that he, an unmarried man, talked to an unmarried woman who was at the well at mid-day. The only reason to go to the well at mid-day would be to avoid all the other women. The temperatures at mid-day can be extreme during much of the year and the walk to the well from the city is not an easy one. The city is on top of a large hill and the well is at the bottom. Imagine walking down and back up Alabama hill to get water twice a day.

Read John 4

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What does Jesus tell the woman at the well he has to offer?
2. What is the woman's response to Jesus's request for some water?
3. What revelation causes the woman to leave her jar at the well and run back to town?
4. What is Jesus's response to the disciples when they urge him to eat?
5. How do the people of the town respond when the woman tells them of her encounter with Jesus?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. How do we take full advantage of the offer of living water that Jesus makes to us?
2. In what ways do we each find ourselves as confused as the woman at the well by an encounter with Jesus?
3. How do we recapture that moment when we first realized all Jesus was offering? What actions should that reality move us to take?
4. What is the equivalent in our modern world of the disciples walking back to the well after buying food in town and being utterly confused by what we see Jesus doing?
5. Have you ever been in a situation where you got to witness first hand large numbers of people choosing to follow Jesus? What was it like?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. If we have accepted Jesus's offer of living water for ourselves how do we take the next step and share it with others?
2. What is our role in helping those who have experienced Jesus and are confused find answers to their questions?
3. What impact do you think it will have on others when we live daily in the joy of knowing he knows everything about us and loves us still?
4. What practical steps can we take be sure we are looking for all the opportunities Jesus puts in our path to share his love with others?
5. What can we do to facilitate bringing the message of living water to people?

Closing

Spend some time praying together for wisdom to recognize when Jesus is putting others in your path. Also, pray for a renewal of the love and joy you felt when your relationship with Jesus was brand new.

Reminder: We did not come into this world by chance or happenstance and our true identity is defined and refined by Jesus. It is to him and him alone that we ultimately belong and he gives us our story and the lens through which to understand it.