



INSTRUMENTS IN THE REDEEMER'S HANDS

Lesson 7 – Know I: Getting to Know People; Discovering Where Change Is Needed

Review

1. Our hearts direct our lives, so God, in his redemptive love, is jealous for control of our hearts (lessons 1-3).
2. God calls us to be his ambassadors, representing his message, methods, and character to those around us (lesson 4).
3. Living as an ambassador means incarnating the Love of Christ, seeking to Know where change is needed, being faithful to Speak the truth in love, and assisting people to Do what God has called them to do (lessons 4-6).

Concepts and Objectives

- Concept: Wise people are not only people with the right answers, but people who ask the right questions. We cannot get to the right answers without asking the right questions.
- Personalized: I need to ask good questions and avoid making assumptions about people that keep me from doing so.
- Related to others: I will look for opportunities to ask questions that move me beyond casual relationships and provide insight as to where ministry is needed.

Lesson Content

Christ the Data Gatherer (Hebrews 4:14-16).

- We can come to Jesus with confidence (v. 16), because...
- He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses (v. 15), because...
- He has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin (v. 15).

The Problem of Assumptions

- Assuming that we know what we need to know and failing to ask appropriate questions almost always leads to misunderstandings that blunt and divert personal ministry.

- The principle is “Don’t assume; ask.”
- Three ways to guard against assumptions:
 - Ask people to define their terms.
 - Ask people to clarify what they mean with concrete examples.
 - Ask people to explain why they have responded the way they did in the examples they gave.

Asking Good Questions

Here are four principles for good questions:

1. Always ask open-ended questions – questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no.
2. Use a combination of survey and focused questions.
 - a. Survey questions scan the various areas of a person’s life.
 - b. Focused questions look intensively at one area of a person’s life.
3. Always remember that certain kinds of questions reveal certain kinds of information.
 - a. What questions reveal general information.
 - b. How questions reveal the way something was done.
 - c. Why questions uncover a person’s motivations, desires, and goals.
 - d. Where/How often questions reveal themes and patterns.
 - e. When questions uncover the order of events.
4. Ask a progressive line of questions, in which each question is based on information uncovered in previous questions. Ask yourself: “What do I not know about what I have just heard?”

The Big Question: As you minister to others, do you ask good, biblical questions or is your ministry weakened by assumptions?

Concepts

1. Insightful people are not the people with the right answers but the ones who ask the right questions. We cannot arrive at the right answers without the right questions.
2. Christ is our example of entering a person's world, understanding what is there, and thus being able to fully sympathize and understand.
3. Relationships that are trapped in the casual don't lend themselves to fruitful personal ministry.

Personalized

1. I need to be interested in the lives of the people around me if I want opportunities to serve as an instrument of change.
2. I need to be committed to move beyond the casual at home, at work, in my neighborhood, and in the body of Christ.
3. I need to ask where I have missed ministry opportunities that God has given me because I did not know the person well enough to understand and respond.

Related to Others

1. I need to be committed to asking good questions of people, not to satisfy my curiosity but to fulfill my call as one of Christ's ambassadors.
2. I need to ask what I do not know about people that keeps me from effective personal ministry.
3. I want to be a sympathetic and understanding instrument in God's hands, one to whom people can come with confidence.

Make It Real

1. List the places where you have been tempted to make assumptions instead of asking questions you needed to ask.

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2. Where do you have gaps in your information about this person/group and his/their world?
3. List some open-ended questions you could ask to get this information.
4. Pray for God's wisdom and discernment as you seek to understand this person or group.