

Sharing the God Story – Building connection with outsiders

Understanding 'Felt' needs

Session #4

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. John 4:35b NIV

Jesus refers to this ripe harvest after his interaction with a Samaritan woman at the well.

She responds to Jesus (with the rest of her Samaritan village) in stark contrast to self-righteous Jews who were rejecting him

The gospel accounts reveal the most responsive to Jesus were often **marginalized** like this Samaritan woman. A woman who knew she needed help as her life unraveled on a relationship level.



In the same way, we often find a 'ripe harvest' out on the margins of society where people are struggling, and the Lord will equip us to connect with certain sorts of people.

Practice #4 Understanding Felt Needs (spotting a soft heart)

Our 4th 'practice' is to let the Lord of the Harvest train us to read the harvest and to spot those who are ripening (and to know where he is placing us).

What is a 'felt' need?

If I encounter a homeless person and want to connect with them, it is important to respect their situation. I might know they 'need' Jesus, but their 'felt need' that day is for some money or for a kind word. Jesus responded to those who were sick and this opened their hearts to the Kingdom message.

It's hard to offer something to a person who doesn't need anything, so sometimes the Lord allows circumstances to humble us and even 'bring us to the end of ourselves'. Our awareness of need can set us on a pathway to find the ultimate source of help – a relationship with the Lord.

There are many situations in life that can bring this about. Things like: Social isolation, divorce, loss of job, illness, financial difficulty, bereavement, ageing, social rejection or migration.

People are all different so we can expect the Lord will assign to us a part of the larger harvest where we can be effective. We might describe this as our calling.

Some Examples

My wife and I have different 'callings' which reflect in how we respond to people.

After a life of nursing the Lord can use Beverley to connect with sick and dying people and she knows how to access the hearts of patients and their family members.

I'm not good with sickness but have done a long journey with migrants and refugees and I can see how people in transition (to a new country) respond to welcome and support. We are not limited to our specialty, but aware of the authority God gives when we journey in love with people.

We all find our place of effectiveness in the harvest as we walk with the Lord.

In session #4 we will unpack some of these areas and the harvest 'tools' that can open hearts.