

Week 6: Unlikely Guest

Have we saved a place at our table for the one who might consider themselves an unlikely guest? Have we made room for the one who might assume we don't have enough in common to share together in a personal space?

1. What is our motivation to invite someone into our home that we have little in common with?

Jesus surely caught people off guard with some of the ones He chose to spend time with. Most shocking to the religious leaders was the time Jesus spent with sinners.

We can understand some of their confusion. Even Paul writes what could be perceived as contradictory to Jesus' behavior.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Cor 15:33

These are verses we should consider out of wisdom. However, Jesus does not violate them eating with sinners, giving us confidence that we can do the same.

Jesus replies to the religious leaders' concern in Mark 2.

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark 2:15-17

It is our intent with the unbeliever that makes the difference. Jesus pursued people who were sick to be their physician.

If we choose to bind ourselves to unbelievers in the carrying out of our lives, we will find ourselves in conflict. Jesus offers Himself to sinners, but to be yoked to Him they must choose Him. We offer ourselves to unbelievers, but we acknowledge our intimacy is limited with one who continually rejects Jesus.

More concerning than the people we are around is the position we take with those people. The word "company" implies one in a crowd. If we join a crowd or group of unbelievers just to be one in the crowd, it can be dangerous. Jesus never ate with sinners or joined the crowd at a party just to be one of them! Jesus went to call the sinner; to meet them where they were, to know them, and to bid them to come to Him.

When we invite the lost to our table, we keep in front of us the goal. The lost need Jesus and we will meet them where they are, know them, and bid them to come and find Him.

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| 2. Have you had relationships with unbelievers and felt the limitations of your core differences? What were those limitations? | 3. Is there reason to pursue relationship with an unbeliever if you have no intent to ever share Jesus with them? |
| 4. How do you avoid just becoming one in the crowd when spending time with sinners? | 5. How do you know when to keep pursuing relationship with an unsaved person, or when to let it end? |

Practical Convo: What are conversation starters you could use with the people you have been praying for on your #pray4two cards to provide opportunity to share Jesus?