

FOR

I see people
as God sees
them



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the world

For *I see people as God sees them*

Our society is driven by a “me first and only” mentality. Companies and marketers promote “self” even when it seems they want to help you out. It ends with their bottom line NOT you! Even Christians and churches can come across as focused on getting attendance at their events or building their programs. Being “for” means we look for what is in the best interest of the other person. It is focused on what is good for them, not what we want. Being “for” someone requires us to see everyone through the lens of one who is loved by God and has value because they were created in God’s image. This means that we take an interest in them, build a relationship with them and act on what we see and know on their behalf. Obviously, the greatest thing we could wish “for” anyone is a relationship with Jesus. However, most people are not ready for a spiritual conversation. They need to know we care and are committed to them as people before they’ll be ready to hear the Gospel.

PRACTICES

CHEERLEADER: Be an encourager. Find specific things you can about the people around you that you can acknowledge and encourage. Write a note, share it publicly with them present. Be specific and then intentionally follow up. Go on social media and take the time to make positive and encouraging comments on others’ posts. Intentionally show the people in your life that you are their biggest “fan”.

AGENDA - YOU: This practice moves from words to actions. Choose a few people in your circle of influence and think about them. How can you make them the agenda? What are they working on right now? What are they hoping for? Are they involved in an activity or hobby that you can support? Find physical ways to show them you support who they are as people. Do something for them without an ulterior motive, just let them know you are “for” them as people

BOOK COVER: The saying goes, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Unfortunately, as a society we do exactly that! Picture the following groups of people in your head – homeless, addict, police officer, teacher, pastor. What did you see? How did you feel? If you truly see others as God sees them, you will need to add a lens to the preconceived pictures we all hold. How do you do that? Build relationships! Intentionally engage with people that are in a group that you have a preconceived idea about. Ask God to give you His heart as you interact with them. Consider that even people who annoy us are often struggling with internal pain that is coming out sideways. Pray for those people and ask God to help you see everyone as He sees them.

DIG IN

Read Jeremiah 29:1-7. The people of God were exiles, meaning they were taken from their home country and made to live somewhere else. Many of these folks would be tempted to see this as temporary and couldn’t wait to get out of that situation. Yet, God calls them here to “put down roots”, to become a part of the culture and be a force for good there. Why do you think God wanted them to bless the city, or area, where they were living?

Read Matthew 5:14-16. Do you notice any similarities here in Jesus command and God’s call to the Israelites in Jeremiah?

What kind of community should we be as a church that would allow us to be like a “city on a hill”?
What would make our neighbors say, “I’m really glad that church is here, and we would really miss out if they ever moved!”?

Read Galatians 6:6-10. What is the connection Paul makes between reaping and sowing and doing good to all?

How does doing “good to all” and “blessing our city” move God’s kingdom forward?

Does God bless cities and people even when they don’t deserve it? What are our excuses for not doing the same?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Cheerleader, Agenda - You, Book Cover) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally, try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God’s movement through the practice.

Since we live in a world that has been taught to be cynical and skeptical, how can we live in a way that people know that we are “for” them? How will they learn to trust our hearts and motives? It likely will require more relational time and less task completion. Spend time with someone outside of faith in this next month, work hard to discover who they are, not just how they represent themselves and find intentional ways to support them.

Review Jesus' interactions with people in the Gospels. Note how people believed Jesus was "for" them before He ever shared the good news with them. He led with love not His message. In fact, it was His love that gave Him the platform for His message and the receptivity of His listeners. Investigate Jesus' interactions through an extensive study, record your observations, and test what you discover with people around you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Jesus Outside the Lines: A Way Forward for Those Who are Tired of Taking Sides by Scott Sauls

Know What You're FOR: A Growth Strategy for Work, An Even Better Strategy for Life
by Jeff Henderson

Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot - And Cold - Climate Cultures
by Sarah A. Lanier

FOR KIDS

God Made Me Unique: Helping Children See Value in Every Person by Joni and Friends



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