

Parenting Tools:

Recognizing Our Mission Field



HOME
22.6

Parenting Tools: *Helping Your Family Recognize Their Mission Field*

Every person on the planet has four sets of relationships. We all have family members (biological relationships), neighbors (geographical relationships), workmates or classmates (vocational relationships), and friends (volitional relationships). Often, when we think of being “missionaries” or fulfilling the Great Commission, we think of serving those less fortunate in our community or traveling a long distance to show kindness to and share with others who may not have the same level of access to the Gospel as we do in our culture. Yet, recognizing my mission field is actually a much more simple (and intimate) process.

What does Jesus say about knowing my mission field?

In a way, Jesus teaches clearly His plan for recognizing our personal mission field by explaining the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told the disciples that the empowerment that comes through this Spirit would be given to them for a specific reason: to be his “witnesses “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This command to be “witnesses” was given not only to these select few, but also by all of His disciples by extension – including us.

By commanding us to be His witnesses “in Jerusalem,” He is telling us more than just where to go; He is telling us to whom we should go! The geographic idea is to be a witness to those living nearby, but the cultural idea behind His command is that we are to share with anyone we meet who may be “like us.” Someone who is “like us” usually means a person that is from the same part of the world as me, speaks the same language I speak, and has many of the same customs I have. This is where those four sets of relationships come

into play. Recognizing my mission field means first of all knowing and caring about the spiritual condition of many of my family members, neighbors, colleagues, and friends.

Is that all? Where else might I have a mission field?

Jesus also said to be His witnesses in Judea and Samaria. What did He mean by that? This refers to people who are living in areas further away from us, but with whom we have some degree of familiarity and connection. People that are in “my Judea” may live in the same city, state, or country as me, and even speak the same language I speak, but have customs and traditions that are very different from mine. An example may be people from different ethnic groups in my city and state. Our geography and language may be the same, but our values and worldviews are very different. What about Samaria? Those who are in “my Samaria” may share the same city, state, or country as me, but communicate in different languages and have an entirely different set of values, customs, and assumptions about the world. An example may be Native Americans residing on a protected reservation in my state or country, but whose language, worldview, customs, and culture are very different than mine.

The graph below shows the differences of this Acts 1:8 command.

Acts 1:8 Area	Our Geography	Our Language	Our Culture
Jerusalem	Same	Same	Same
Judea	Same	Same	Different
Samaria	Same	Different	Different
Ends of Earth	Different	Different	Different

Does that mean I do not need to be concerned with those living far away?

Jesus was very clear that people living in near and far-away countries, communicating in different languages, and possessing an

entirely different culture are also in my mission field. He even told the disciples to “make disciples of all nations” before He ascended back into heaven. In fact, 96% of the world’s population that does not know Jesus lives outside the borders of the United States. This is why He tells us to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth! His desire is that all people come to know Him as Lord and Savior, which includes everyone from Little Rock to Las Vegas; from Lima to Liberia; and from London to Lebanon. To truly have the heart of God, you must have more than just a heart for your neighbor, but also a heart for the nations.

So what does Jesus want me to do?

A man by the name of William Carey said, “to know the will of God, all you need is a Bible and a map.” Right now, as you are reading this devotion, 9 out of 10 people on the planet have no relationship with Jesus and have never experienced His forgiveness, grace, and love. He has placed your mission field all around you and has told you to be witnesses to all people and make disciples of all nations.

Start Now, Here is how...

The good news is this: you can get started right away!

1. Take a moment and write down the names of 10 of your closest family members, neighbors, workmates, classmates, and friends.
2. Put a small cross next to the names of those who already have a relationship with Jesus.
3. Draw a circle around the names of those who do not, as far as you know, have a relationship with Him.
4. Pray for each one by name and ask the Lord to give you the courage to bring these people one step closer to Him in the next few weeks. You can do so by showing genuine friendship and concern. The Lord will use you to make a difference in people’s lives if you will allow Him to do so – one smile, one hug, and one conversation at a time