



Gardening: Plant | April 18, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Whether it looks like it outside or not, spring is fast approaching. And as it warms up, we often start to think about planting and gardening. Turns out, there are so many parallels between gardening and our faith.

Key Verses

Mark 16:15-16 (NIV)

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Discussion

Many of us have aspirations to be a great gardener. It can be very satisfying to plant something and see it change before our eyes. To see a tiny seed grow into something beautiful. But as much as we may hope to be great at it, gardening is actually much harder than it looks. (Can I get an amen?) We spend so much time investing in our plants... watering them, trimming them, making sure they are healthy and thriving. But even after all that work, sometimes the plant only produces a few fruits.

1. Have you ever tried gardening? If so, explain your experience and why it interested you. Were you successful? Frustrated?
2. Why do you think so many of us long to be great gardeners? What is it about gardening that makes it an attractive hobby?

Often times, the plants we invest the most time in don't yield anything. It can be super frustrating and discouraging. Yet other times, the plants we barely touch produce way more than we were expecting or worked for. It's almost as if the garden laughs and says, "I can kind of do this better all on my own." Our faith is actually very similar to gardening. Not only personally, but also in the way our lives should impact the lives of others. God has created us to connect with and invest in the lives of other people.

3. Has this ever happened to you, in gardening or in another hobby? Explain why it feels frustrating and confusing.
4. What responsibility do you think you have as a Christ follower in the lives of other people? Have you lived this out? Why or why not?

In Mark 16:15-16, we read that God has commissioned us to go out and tell everyone we meet about Jesus, to teach them how to follow him. As Christians, we are all called to doing ministry with others, to cultivate relationships and introduce people to Jesus. As we live this out, there will be times we walk with people for a long time and devote lots of energy and attention to them, but see very little fruit. And then other times, we'll look around and wonder why we're surrounded by a sea of people asking to go deeper and wanting to know more, without any effort of our own.

5. Were you aware that doing ministry with others is part of our calling as Christians? How does this make you feel?
6. Do you have any experience doing ministry with others (whether you volunteer with a church/organization or are intentional in your own personal life)? What has your experience been and how have you seen the principle above played out?

What's Next?

As Christians, our lives should look different. The people who interact with and get to know us should be intrigued by the person of Jesus, and how having a relationship with him changes us.

This week, as you live out your faith, consider your calling: to invite other people into your life and faith journey, to introduce them to Jesus, and to encourage and inspire interest in getting to know him. Think about one step forward you can take to live into your calling in ministry and inspire others to do the same.