

1) Compassion is the prerequisite for ministry. (9:35-36)

1. Which of the three ministries of Jesus listed in v. 35 has made the biggest impact on your life? What needs in your own life do these three ministries address?
2. Does a lack of compassion keep you from the ministry of teaching, proclaiming, or meeting the physical needs of others? How is each of these ministries fueled by compassion? Are you really compassionate if you teach and proclaim but are unconcerned about the physical needs of people? Are you really compassionate if you meet physical need and neglect teaching and proclaiming? Which way does your compassion lean? How can you balance your compassions so that you are involved in all three?
3. Have you ever felt like a sheep without a shepherd (i.e. harassed and helpless)? Why do sheep need shepherds? Who is your shepherd? What role do they play in your life? Are you embracing your God-given responsibility to shepherd others? Who? What do you need to do to be a better shepherd?

2) Availability is the prerequisite for multiplication. (9:37-38)

4. Have you ever planted a crop or a garden? How do the following stages of farming parallel ministry to people?
 - a. Plowing – Break up the hard soil. Remove the obstacles.
 - b. Planting – Scatter the seed.
 - c. Cultivating – Patience, Protecting, Praying for rain.
 - d. Harvest – Collecting the fruit.
 - e. Multiplication – Don't eat all the seed.
5. The harvest is only plentiful when a Christians labors (plows) by sharing (planting) a truth from God's Word (seed) with someone in need (soil), praying (cultivating) that God's Spirit would produce life (harvest) and fruit (multiplication). According to that description of ministry, to what degree are you laboring toward the harvest?
6. The harvest is not dependent on my ability, experience, or persuasiveness. The only obstacle Jesus identifies is the availability of laborers. How does the truth that Jesus is the Lord of Harvest assure you? Have you made yourself available to the Lord of the Harvest?
7. Everyone is laboring for some kind of harvest (educational, financial, relational, etc.). List things that you are laboring for and the fields you are laboring in. Are you unavailable for the spiritual harvest Jesus is interested in because you are spending your time and energy laboring for less significant things? What adjustments do you need to make to be sent out into his harvest?

3) Empowerment is the prerequisite for misfits. (10:1-4)

8. Any person who feels unqualified should recall the unfinished misfits that Jesus assembled to labor beside him. What excuse have you used for being disqualified to labor alongside Jesus?
9. Do you have a desire to be a part of a team that is doing something bigger than yourself? What eternally significant things have you seen recently through your church? Do you feel like you play a significant role in the harvest God is producing? How does your involvement in the following “harvest labors” encourage you?
 - a. Praying
 - b. Giving
 - c. Sharing your faith with an unbeliever
 - d. Encouraging a fellow laborer
 - e. Sharing a scripture with someone
 - f. Inviting a friend to worship with you
 - g. Serving on a ministry team
 - h. Discipling another believer
 - i. Instructing and training your kids in Scripture

Additional Scripture

- Ezekiel 34
- John 4:35-38
- Galatians 6:7-9
- Matthew 13:3-8, 13-18
- 1Corinthians 3:9
- 1Timothy 5:17
- 1Thess. 5:12-13