

Tools – part 1

Compiled by Kirk Irwin

Scripture:

John 4: 27-38

Quote:

“I believe that people are essentially spiritual beings, and we are driven by spiritual needs...The problem is that our human experience is so distracting that the spiritual often has to be *injected* into life, just as a badly needed vaccine must be injected into the blood system. But injections can be painful; the trick is to inject the spiritual into daily life in a way that doesn't seem annoying, abrupt, or insensitive. That's the sower's challenge.”

Downs, page 127

Questions:

Have you experienced this with your friends? How have you “injected” spiritual matters into their lives? How has it worked?

Thought:

Downs suggests when interacting with people the sower keep in mind timing, or what he calls ‘moments of openness’. There are both predictable moments of openness and unpredictable moments. The predictable ones come usually around holidays, times of transition, family crises, or even national events like a bad economy or 9/11. The unpredictable moments of openness depend upon the individual and are harder to see. To quote Downs:

“To be able to recognize these open moments requires that you actually know something about your neighbor and that you actually have such times of interaction with him/her...But once the sower has decided on the proper timing, what does he use to plant?” Downs, page 128

Quote:

“There are three specialized tools that the sower can use to help him in this planting process: questions, agreements, and his own life”

Downs, page 128

Tool #1 – Questions

“Strangely, Christians have a difficult time learning this method. I suspect it's because we are, by nature, answer people. Knowing that truth is on our side, we see it as our job to give answers to an ignorant world. You've got questions? We've got answers. The problem is, when we seem to have all the answers, we appear to be arrogant and dogmatic, and our listeners become resistant.”

Downs, page 129

There are four things valuable in using questions:

1. Questions are non-threatening
2. Questions communicate humility
3. Questions allow listeners to discover truth for themselves
4. Questions demand questions in return