

## To Bless Many, Focus on a Few

As a leader, where should the majority of your focus be? Should you be focused on the crowd or on a smaller group of people?

As you read through the gospels, you find Jesus being incredibly intentional with His disciples and intensely focused on their development. **Jesus was focused on a few, for the blessing of the many.** Because His disciples were transformed and trained, the world was radically impacted. Robert Coleman wrote, "His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men, who the multitudes would follow... The disciples were to be His method of winning the world to God."

Luke 12 provides us a snapshot of **Jesus' intense focus on His disciples.** A massive crowd gathered around Jesus, so much so that people were trampling on one another. And Jesus "began to say to His disciples *first*" (Luke 12:1). Jesus' first concern was not the crowd, but His disciples.

Try to get a sense of the scene... Imagine showing up at a major Christian event to hear an incredible communicator, the one everyone longs to hear from. The stadium is sold-out. Christians are honking at one another in the massive parking lot and cutting in front of one another in line, vying for the best seats. You finally sit down with your Diet Coke and chicken sandwich, ready to hear from an incredible teacher. To your surprise, the teacher invites a small group on the stage and speaks to them while you are sitting in the crowd. You think, "Is this some type of illustration?" But the teacher continues. Finally someone asks a question. The famous speaker briefly answers but then turns back to the small group and continues addressing them directly. It could seem a bit odd, a bit dismissive of the crowd. This is how Luke 12 reads...

*Jesus was teaching His disciples in the midst of a huge crowd, a crowd who has been waiting for this moment. After someone asked questions about dividing an inheritance, Jesus answered him with a parable and then again spoke directly to His disciples about not worrying, trusting God, seeking Him first, and being prepared (Luke 12:13-40). As you read the narrative, you get the sense that perhaps Peter feels badly for the crowd. He even asks Jesus, "Lord are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?" In other words, "Jesus there are a whole bunch of people here. Watching and listening to you right now. Are you thinking this is for them too?" Jesus didn't answer Peter. He kept speaking to His disciples about faithfulness and suffering (Luke 12:41-53).*

One would expect the well-sought out Teacher to speak to the masses and allow the smaller group to overhear. But Jesus spoke to the disciples and allowed the crowd to overhear, not the

other way around. Jesus' focus was precisely opposite of what we might expect.

Why did Jesus focus so passionately on His disciples? He knew His time with them was short, and they were the focus of His urgency. In John 17, in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane for His disciples, Jesus prayed:

*I have revealed Your name to the men You gave Me from the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that all things You have given to Me are from You, because the words that You gave Me, I have given them. They have received them ... (John 17:6-8)*

Jesus left His role as disciple-maker knowing "the words that you gave me, I have given them." A time is approaching when you will vacate your role. Wise leaders envision their last day and work backwards. **To make the biggest impact, the few need your focus.** To bless many, focus on a few.

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