

Deeply Formed Life

Group Discussion Guide

Ch.9-10

Possible starting point: Go around the group and invite everyone to give 1minute opening observations on the assigned chapters. [*Note, this book isn't the Bible + Rich isn't Jesus – which means we it's not perfect. Feel free to voice disagreement, but do you best to put the emphasis on the parts that *help* you and the group.]

Ch.9 - Missional Presence in a Distracted + Disengaged World:

Rich begins with the story of a famous monk who once encountered a Hindu "holy" man, and their conversation about the limited impact of Christian missionaries in India. Reflecting on this, Merton observed, "*The Hindus are not looking for us to send them men who will build schools + hospitals... **They want to know if we have any saints to send them.***" (170) This chapter explores how missional living must flow from a deeply formed life.

1. Right from the start, Rich names the necessary tension of **being + doing**. One the one hand, "Deeply formed mission is fundamentally about becoming a particular person and offering that to the world" (171). While on the other hand, "Jesus doesn't wait for us to be perfect before inviting us into mission" (172). He calls and uses us as we are.
 - *How do you respond to this tension?*
 - *Where do you most often put the emphasis: doing or being?*
2. On p.177 Rich begins to explore how missional living flows from the Missional heart + life of God. In contrast, take a few minutes for someone to read Rich's story of his "first mission field" (p.179-180).
 - *What stands out for you in Rich's story?*

On p.181f, Rich explores two foundational convictions to understanding God's Missional Life. First, that God is **already + always** at work. And second, that God is primarily **for** the us, not against us.

3. Regarding the former (God WITH all), Rich claims that "We too often assume God's absence" (184). That there are certain people or places where God is likely, even certainly, **not** at work.
 - *Where do we sometimes assume God's absence?*
 - *What difference does it make to trust + anticipate God's sovereign work in the life of another?*
4. Regarding the latter (God FOR all), Rich names the sad reality that Christians so often are quick to voice what they/we are **against**. But Jesus was known for being **for** people – which drew people to him – of all stripes.
 - *Where have we had to learn this, or are being challenged in this?*

Ch.10 - Deeply Formed Practices of Missional Presence:

There likely isn't enough time to talk through everything in this chapter, so focus in on the practices and ideas that were most challenging and helpful for you.

1) Practicing Hospitality

We tend to view hospitality as "having someone over", but Jesus didn't own a home or even rent a room.

- How does this help us re-imagine the practice of hospitality in our daily lives?

2) Practicing Justice

With a view to encouraging us to "activate [our] justice gene", which of the following did you find most helpful:

1. Practicing justice doesn't have to be 'big'
2. Practicing justice means being near God and the Vulnerable
3. Practicing justice requires us to name our burdens
4. Practicing justice means raising our voices
5. Practicing justice requires community + collaboration
6. Practicing justice means taking up one's cross

3) Practicing the Holy Calling of our Work

Although it has been common in the church to view certain work as distinctly "holy" or requiring a "high calling", the Bible teaches that all work can be done to the glory of God (and therefore, holy).

- What idea in this practice most challenges or encourages you?

4) The Practice of Announcing the Gospel

Likely because "sharing the gospel" gets a lot of air-time in Christian circles, this was the shortest and least instructive practice in the chapter. Which is unfortunately because many Christians wrestle to know how best to "use their words" in announcing the gospel.

- What is one idea or practice that has helped you "announce the gospel" more fruitfully? (feel free to share things you've learned from sources other than this book)

Before You Close in Prayer:

- Go around the group and invite everyone to share **one take away** for them.
- Being that this is **the last study** in these series, take a few minutes to reflect back what you've most appreciated about the journey together.
- If anyone wants to offer a follow-up study for those who'd want and are able to continue on, now would be the time to name it and elicit interest.

PRAY: Take a few minutes to pray together once more - for one another and for our church in the light of what's been discussed and shared tonight. [If helpful, split off into groups for prayer.]