

Small Group Discussion Guide: Keeping the Main Thing, the Main Thing

Big Idea: Jesus shows us in John 2 that he is concerned about keeping the main thing, the main thing. This passage challenges us to consider not only our goals but the ways in which we pursue them.

Discussion Sections

1. Ends and Ways: Aligning Our Goals with God's Ways

Read John 2:13-17

- What stands out to you in this passage?
 - Why do you think Jesus was so disturbed by what was happening in the temple?
 - The issue wasn't that sacrifices and currency exchange were taking place, but where and how they were happening. What does this teach us about the importance of "means" and not just "ends" in our spiritual lives and church leadership?
 - Can you think of examples in the church today where the focus on the goal has led people to justify questionable ways of achieving it?
 - How can we align both our ends and our ways with the ways of Jesus?
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2. Life as an Outsider: The Experience of the Excluded

Read John 2:13-14

- Imagine you are a Gentile worshiper arriving at the temple, expecting a place of prayer but instead encountering a chaotic marketplace. How would you feel?
 - Have you ever experienced or witnessed a time when someone was excluded, ignored, or hurt by a religious institution? How did that impact your faith or the faith of others?
 - Jesus' actions in the temple reveal his deep care for those who were being pushed away. How does this encourage or challenge you?
 - What can we, as a small group and church, do to make sure we are places of welcome and healing for those who have been hurt?
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3. Life as an Insider: Standing for What is Right

Read John 2:18-22

- Imagine you are a Jewish worshiper witnessing Jesus' actions. How do you think different people in the crowd reacted?

- Some in the temple likely felt torn—recognizing the injustice but feeling powerless to change it. Have you ever felt that way about issues in the church?
 - How can we become “pockets of tov” (goodness) within the broader church, standing for justice and integrity even when it’s difficult?
 - In what ways can our group commit to embodying Jesus’ heart for righteousness and inclusion?
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Application & Prayer

- What is one key takeaway from today’s discussion that you want to apply in your own life?
- How can we as a group practically pursue justice, inclusion, and faithfulness in our community?
- Spend time praying for those who have experienced church hurt and for wisdom to lead and serve with integrity in Jesus’ way.