

## **Me52 Devotional**

Finding Common Ground – Relating to people whose worldview and values may be very different from your own

Bible References – (Isaiah 42:16, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

People love to talk about themselves. Even more so, people love, and feel the need, to be heard. Our worldview is defined and sustained through our conversations with others and the environment in which we live. America has regarded itself as embracing people's cultural differences. However, where there are differences, there are also misunderstandings, lack of acceptance, and strife. This affords us a tremendous opportunity to witness to those who believe differently.

In our day-to-day lives, there are many people whose paths we cross who have different worldviews. How do we relate to a person's culture and values when they are different from our own? It begins by creating an authentic, safe, and healthy environment wherever you go. Listen and hear. Do not respond right away. Instead, ask questions. Try to understand the "whys" of their beliefs and values. Why do they feel the way they do or believe in what they do? Are there facts which substantiate their worldview, or is it based on lived experience and feelings? Listen, hear their reality, and pray. If it feels "right," pray with them. Then, when appropriate (it could be in that conversation or at a later time/date), ask if you may share and be heard. Meanwhile walk as Jesus would. Pray continually for growth opportunities – yours and others. This lays a foundation for Kingdom advancement. Relationships will be born.

Isaiah 42:16 says, "And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them."

I think I am right when I say we've all been in a situation where we are with someone whose views and beliefs are different from our own. How do you react in those situations? Does your body respond physically - a quickening of the heart, flushing or tears, a stomach flip? Does your mind start thinking of your response - a way to prove you're right, your own experiences, judgment? Remember we are in a spiritual battle and must take every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). I often need to let the Holy Spirit quench my responses when I meet someone who does not agree with me! After all, like I said earlier, I think I'm right! Then I am reminded of what I have learned about God's Truth and now firmly believe: "God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We must stay grounded in scripture and, through prayer, seek His will in every situation. You may be the first taste of the Lord that someone experiences, and it is good. When we find ourselves with people from a different religious background, a poor or unsafe neighboring community, a family affected by incarceration, a foreign country, or in a political gathering, there is always an opportunity to find a common ground. LOVE. It takes time. It takes sacrifice. It takes perseverance. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit allows us to know how to proceed and His Word guides us.