

Week Three: *We Change the Script*
Matthew 15:21-26

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. As we prepare to dig deeper into what it means to change the script like Jesus did, read Matthew 15:21-28.
2. Verse 21 says, “Leaving that place, Jesus *withdrew*.” *Withdrew* seems to be an important word in that sentence. Do you think he was tired and not wanting to be bothered?
3. Assuming Jesus and His disciples were “laying low” and resting, how do you think the Canaanite woman knew where they were?
4. What did the Canaanite woman call Jesus? What label did she use? (verse 22)
5. Why do you think she called Jesus what she did?
6. How do *you* refer to Jesus? What do *you* call Him?
7. Does the name you use for Jesus indicate a *close* relationship with Him? Or is it more formal, stuffy, and distant?
8. As you finish your FIFTEEN, consider where you stand with God. As Christians, we never “fully arrive” or reach the end of our faith journey. No matter where you are in your journey, ask Him to draw you closer to Him than you currently are.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

9. Read Matthew 15:22 again. How do you think the Canaanite woman knew who Jesus was?
10. Being both a Canaanite and a woman in Jesus’ day would have been two negative labels. Did Jesus acknowledge her label and treat her accordingly? How did Jesus initially respond to the woman?
11. Why do you think Jesus ignored the Canaanite woman when she first spoke to Him?
12. Was Jesus being rude by ignoring the woman when her daughter was in desperate need of help?

13. Think of a time when you took a concern or request to God and it felt like He was ignoring you. How did that feel?
14. Looking back now, was He actually ignoring you? Or was He really working things out according to His better plan?
15. Do you wear or carry any labels? Do you treat others according to the label they carry? If so, how *should* you both view and treat them?
16. As you finish your FIFTEEN for today, think about how you treat others. Do you allow labels to affect how you treat people? Thank God that He sees you as you truly are and ask Him to allow you to see others in the same way.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

17. As we prepare to dig deeper into what it means to change the script like Jesus did and see *people* instead of labels, it would be a good idea to read Matthew 15:21-28 again.
18. What did Jesus' disciples tell Him about the woman in verse 23?
19. Who are "the lost sheep of Israel" that Jesus refers to in verse 24?
20. Are Jesus' words in verse 24 confusing to you? Why or why not?
21. Do His words make it sound like being a follower of Jesus requires exclusive access or membership? Why do you think He said what He did?
22. Can you think of a time when you were treated like an outsider or made to feel not welcome? How did it make you feel?
23. Imagine how easily Jesus could have made the Canaanite woman feel more unwelcome than she likely already did. But He didn't. Do *you* ever go out of your way to make sure others feel included? Or do you treat people according to the labels they've been given? Why?
24. Before finishing your FIFTEEN for today, thank God that all of us are welcome in His family and kingdom. Thank Him for never treating us according to our labels or pasts. Spend some time praying, as you feel led, concerning how you treat others and how you *should* treat others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

25. As we continue to dig deeper into what it means to change the script like Jesus did and see *people* instead of labels, read Matthew 15:21-28 again.

26. Put yourself in the Canaanite woman's shoes. After Jesus said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel," would you have given up?

27. Had the Canaanite woman not been as persistent as she was, do you think Jesus would have healed her daughter?

28. Read Luke 19:1-10. In these verses, Jesus meets Zacchaeus and goes to visit him in his home. How was Zacchaeus viewed? What was his label? (verse 7)

29. How did Jesus view Zacchaeus? What did He call him? (verse 9)

30. According to verse 10, who did Jesus say He came for?

31. As you finish your FIFTEEN, think about what divides you can cross to show love to those you normally avoid. Is there a certain person or group you've been deliberately avoiding? Pray that God would give you the strength and love to share His love with them.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

32. Before starting your final FIFTEEN of the week, read Matthew 15:21-28 again.

33. In Matthew 15:27, the Canaanite woman affirms what Jesus said and calls herself a dog. Had she gotten mad and walked away instead, what do you think would have happened?

34. In verse 28, Jesus is clearly impressed with the woman's faith. She was persistent and shameless in her faith. Are there times in your past when you couldn't swallow your pride and as a result limited what God could do?

35. Notice that each time the woman speaks to Jesus, she calls Him "Lord." Do you believe that was an indication of her faith or was she just referring to Him like His disciples did?

36. Read Luke 18:1-8, the parable of the persistent widow. Had the widow given up and stopped asking for the justice she desired, would she have received it?

37. In verses 6-7, Jesus says, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?" What do these verses mean to you?
38. If even a bad judge will give to those who ask, what do you think your loving Father God will do for you?
39. As you finish your FIFTEEN for the week, thank God for how much He loves you and for all He has done for you. Ask Him to give you the will, strength, and persistence to serve and follow Him day after day.