

2. Is there any way to avoid experiencing a "Nazareth" environment? If yes, what compromises will we need to make?

- **John 15:18-20** – "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."
- **Matthew 10:34-36** – "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."

3. What will a "Nazareth" environment look like for us in today's world?

- **Matthew 13:57** – "And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.'"
- **2 Timothy 3:12** – "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

4. How will unbelief, anger, rejection, and hostility manifest towards God's Work in our lives within our "Nazareth" environment?

- **Mark 6:3** – "Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.
- **John 15:20** – "Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

5. How does God's Word command us to respond to the challenges we face in our "Nazareth" environment?

- **Matthew 5:44** – "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."
- **Romans 12:12** – "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

6. What is God's Purpose for allowing the people within our "Nazareth" environment to challenge, resist, and reject His Work through our lives?

- **James 1:2-4** – "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

- **Romans 5:3-4** – "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

7. What are some of the positive aspects of our "Nazareth" environment, and why should we be thankful in it?

- **1 Peter 1:6-7** – "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."
- **Romans 8:28** – "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

8. What are the consequences of not following Jesus's examples in how He responded to the challenges in Nazareth?

- **Romans 12:21** - "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
- **Matthew 5:11-12** - "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven."

Key Points:

1. We are each individually responsible for our effectiveness in life and for God's Kingdom

- **Romans 14:12** - "So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."
- **Colossians 3:23** - "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

2. We are responsible for our personal growth and maturity in God's Word

- **1 Peter 2:2** - "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." (1 Peter 2:2)
- **2 Timothy 2:15** - "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

3. We must be willing to take initiative to seek Godly counsel, guidance, and resources to assist us in growing in our effectiveness for God's Kingdom

- **Proverbs 15:22** - "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."
- **Matthew 7:7** - "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

4. We must learn to set boundaries with those who seek to distract us from God's Kingdom Purposes

- **Luke 8:19-21** - "Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.' He replied, 'My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.'"

5. We should not allow other people's opinions (especially negative opinions) to hinder or determine our effectiveness for God's Kingdom

- **Galations 1:10** - "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."
- **Proverbs 29:25** - "The fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."

Closing Questions:

1. Why are people in our "Nazareth" environment unbelieving, angry, and resentful towards God's Work in our lives?

- **Mark 6:4** – "*Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.'*"
This highlights the challenge of being recognized for God's work by those who are overly familiar with us.
- **1 Samuel 18:8-9** – "*Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. 'They have credited David with tens of thousands,' he thought, 'but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?' And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.*"

2. How can we be a Godly influence to inspire positive and productive change within our "Nazareth" environment

- **Matthew 5:16** – *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

Living as an example of God's love and grace can inspire others to turn to Him.

- **Romans 12:21** – *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Responding to negativity with goodness and kindness helps us to influence others positively and productively.

3. Why is it important for us to guard our hearts and not participate in or entertain the contention and grumbling that manifests in our "Nazareth" environment when we begin to pursue God's Kingdom Purposes for our lives?

- **Proverbs 4:23** – *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* Our hearts shape our actions, so protecting them from negativity ensures that we remain focused on God's purposes.

- **Philippians 2:14** – *"Do everything without grumbling or arguing,"*

Avoiding contention allows us to maintain a pure heart and set a godly example for others, promoting peace instead of discord.