



## PART I Audience Identification Overview

**DEFINITION OF AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION** Audience identification is the process by which a Christian individual, group, church or ministry organization decides whom they believe God wants them to reach and serve for Jesus Christ. There are a number of terms that can be used to describe the people who become the focus of ministry. Two interchangeable terms we'll use are "target audience" and "ministry focus group."

**IMPORTANCE OF AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION** There are two primary reasons it is important to determine the target audience or ministry focus group: one, effectiveness; and two, strategic impact.

### **Effectiveness**

Effectiveness in ministry depends upon fit. The main components that comprise ministry include the content we seek to communicate (meaning), the way we formulate it (message), the forms we use to convey it (media), the situation in which we communicate it (milieu), and us, the people sharing it (messenger). The more we ensure that these components are harmonious with each other and appropriately address the felt and real needs of our ministry focus group, the more effective our ministry will be. Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in John 4 is a perfect example of this. Let's take a look at that incident.

At a village well during the hottest time of the day, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman with a personal history of sexual promiscuity. The other village women customarily journey to get their daily ration of water in early morning and late afternoon to avoid the scorching midday sun in this arid land. But for this woman, scornful eyes and jeering taunts are far worse than the blistering heat. That's why Jesus finds her alone that particular noon hour. It seems she shuns all human contact that makes her feel unwanted, dirty and worthless. Who wouldn't? However, the worst ridicule and rejection she suffers comes from voices inside herself—condemnation she cannot escape. Then she meets this apparently Jewish man named Jesus. He breaks through her walls of defense. He puts a stop to her downward spiral and turns her life upside down. All of a sudden she feels wanted, clean and helpful to others. How does Jesus bring about such a radical change in this woman's life through such a brief encounter? It has much to do with how Jesus relates and interacts with her. Customarily, Jews didn't talk to Samaritans, men didn't

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milieu - situation for  
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