



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

INVEST YOUR LIFE IN RELATIONSHIPS • Dave Sunde

Although he possessed an impressive pedigree that gave him entrance anywhere he might go in the Roman Empire, he was captured by a higher calling. He put it this way: “I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (I Corinthians 9:22). You may have guessed that I have been referring to Paul. Paul the Apostle. St. Paul. What a man! Author of thirteen or fourteen of the letters of the New Testament, businessman (tentmaker), professional (graduate work in theology of Judaism; achieved membership in The Pharisees).

Yet above and beyond all these achievements, was his commitment to his mission in life. He lived to build relationships with anyone and everyone, so that somewhere in knowing that person, he could communicate the Good News. Can you imagine someone saying, “And I do all things for the sake of the gospel. . .” (I Corinthians 9:23)? He did. As he tells us in the remaining verses of the chapter (I Corinthians 9:24-27), his whole life was disciplined around the objective of living out obedience and good faith to his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

The name of the game is people. If God is at work in your life, He is moving you towards people—not away from them. Living in isolation is the game the Enemy plays with us, moving us in that lonely, self-involved direction. The great apostle was so concerned with building relationships, that he went to great lengths. These may be noted in a study of I Corinthians 9:19-23. In order to build relationships, he personally identified with the mindsets and customs of:

- 1) The mainline religion of the day
- 2) The legalists of the day
- 3) The libertines of the day
- 4) The weak: those very unsure of what is pleasing to God (cf. Romans 14)

With all of them, he took on the role of a servant.

As a result of his life, literally whole cities and culture groups were won to meaningful faith in Jesus Christ! We are still talking about his exploits 21 centuries later. If we could meet St. Paul, we would be impressed not by his drive and energy, but by the interest he would take in us. He was a humble man. Truly great people always are. And if we could follow him around for a day or two, I think we would be impressed with his incredible love for people. We would think he knew everybody! But he didn't. He simply was clear on his objective.

“That I may by all means save some.” Convicting, isn't it? If we are to get started in a small way in the direction of the great apostle's model, we will have to break rank from the mindset of our culture. We will understand the self-centered, indulgent lifestyle for what it is, but not sit in criticism of it. After all, we are called to relate to those around us, despite their lifestyle, even as Paul did.

When God wanted to communicate His love and His plan for His highest creation, how did He do it? Write it in the sky? Thunder it from the heavens? Etch it on stone tablets? He did all those things. But His finest and fullest communication was in a Son. The Son of God came to our planet for the express purpose of relating God to man.



It's called the Incarnation. It is possible to have a personal relationship with Almighty God. It is possible to be forgiven of all alienation and sin by the Holy God. All this by means of a relationship: a personal relationship with the Son, Jesus Christ. Now we can see why St. Paul gave his life to the building of relationships. He was looking at the Model!

End 

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org