

YOUNG ADULT LESSON

By Paul Calcote

Associate Pastor to Young Adults, Champion Forest Baptist Church

OVERVIEW

The apostle Paul demonstrates a “whatever it takes” attitude to sharing the gospel, making disciples and winning people over to Christ. The message, of course, never changes, and we should never compromise, but what if we exercised more empathy in efforts of building bridges and earning the right to be heard by loving people? Paul encourages the reader to find common ground and build bridges for people to encounter Christ.

It is important that we’re careful we don’t allow trivial things to put wedges between us and the people to whom God calls us to minister. Paul admonishes us not to major on minor things but instead to give up our own rights and become all things to all people.

This passage both encourages and challenges us to be creative and innovative in our evangelistic efforts. The apostle Paul did so much ministry with his version of pen and paper and his two feet as he traveled spreading the Good News. In our day, we have more than just snail mail; we have the World Wide Web. What if we thought about other approaches to sharing the gospel and pointing people to Christ? Some nontraditional platforms that we could use include social media, podcasts and YouTube, just to name a few. One study reveals that on average people around the world spend 145 minutes online each day. Why not meet people with the gospel where they are? Let’s always invite people to church, but let’s go the extra mile and meet them for coffee or dinner and then look for ways to turn the conversation vertically and plant gospel seeds. Let’s take the church to them.

HOW TO BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

The first step is listening. What if we extend the courtesy of listening to others and seeing things from their point of view? Often listening can help guide the way you approach the conversation. Listening to people first often softens their hearts, making them more open to listen to what we have to say. Remember James 1:19—“My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.”

Secondly, love people, for that is the great commandment—loving God and loving people. We will not win people over being rude, arrogant or sarcastic. The Bible says to speak the truth in love. Love is the trademark of Christianity, and Jesus says that people will know that we are his by how we love others. Approach gospel conversations as an opportunity to love people and win them over to Christ, not to merely win an argument.

While we become all things to all people, we must exercise wisdom, guard our hearts and always keep in mind that we are in this world and not of it. But let’s get out of our comfort zones and do whatever it takes to win people to Christ with the gospel. Sharing the gospel is your single greatest contribution to a person’s life because it makes an eternal impact.

So, let's adopt a "whatever it takes" attitude as we win over people to Christ with the greatest news ever, for the gospel is too good and too transformational not to share it with others. One friendly reminder: As you evangelize, remember that our job isn't to save anyone but to introduce them to the Savior. True success boils down to obedience and faithfulness. The apostle Paul said it best in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Regardless of how the conversation turns out, keep planting those gospel seeds and trust God with the results.

Let's meet people where they are with the Good News, listen to them, love on them and thus become all things to all people in hopes of winning them over to Christ. Let's win the world for Jesus one conversation and one relationship at a time. Let's do whatever it takes.

QUESTIONS

- 1. How can we shake off our apathy and develop a passion to win the lost?**
- 2. Paul encourages us to "become all things to all people so that I might save some" and also warns us not to "be conformed to this world." So, what does balance look like?**
- 3. What are some different approaches you could use for sharing the gospel?**
- 4. Is your passion for winning your friends and family growing or is it shrinking as you become all things to them? If it is shrinking, what can you do to change that?**

PRAYER TIME

Spend some time in prayer asking the Lord for boldness and wisdom to intentionally win others to Christ. Pray for the lost people in your life and community.