
The Ministry of Reconciliation

We have seen in Paul that our calling is not to a vocation as much as it is to a responsibility. A key aspect of that responsibility is in relationship to others. Jesus expressed a duality of relationships in Matthew 22:36-40. Explain this duality of relationships with your own words.

So, we see that our horizontal relationships with people depends on our vertical relationship with God. In other words, if we are in a good and right relationship with God we can expect to have good and right attitudes in our relationships with people. However, our relationships with people goes beyond the idea of attitudes to actions. Love, in this case, is a verb that expresses both an attitude and an action. The apostle Paul recognized the importance of the attitude as well as the action.

Understanding Paul's Ministry

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

1. Paul shares several viewpoints in regard to his attitude and action of love in this passage. Write in your own words the apostle Paul's viewpoints on:

Life

People

Ministry

2. In verse 20 the apostle Paul uses the idea of an ambassador to communicate our relationship with other people. In your understanding, what does an ambassador do?

3. How does the role of an ambassador apply to our role in relationships with other people?

Communicating the Message

Of course, the primary role of an ambassador is to communicate the policies of his/her government. Likewise, our primary role in our relationships with other people is to communicate the message of God: the gospel.

1. The word gospel simply means good news. What, in your opinion, is the good news of God?

2. The apostle Paul had many opportunities to communicate the good news of God to people. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, what were the essential elements that Paul communicated?

3. Think back for a moment when you heard about the good news. What was your impression and how did it change your life?

4. The following are several passages of scripture that will help us understand the importance of communicating the good news of God to people.

1 Peter 2:9

2 Timothy 1:5-10

Acts 4:12

5. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and think of people you know who do not know God. In light of this passage and the previous verses, what would be your motivation to tell others about the good news.

Application

1. Imagine for a moment that you are in prison. You are not permitted to talk to any of the other inmates. Right in the next cell is one of your closest friends, _____ who hasn't heard about the good news. You and he have worked for months making a little sliver in the stone wall where you can pass notes to each other. Suddenly, a guard goes into his cell and beats him and yells, "tomorrow at the break of dawn you will be executed." You have one last piece of paper left. How would you explain the good news to him?

2. Make a list of your friends, family and other acquaintances and begin praying for an opportunity to communicate the good news to them as an ambassador of Christ.