

1. The Church as an Outreach Community (It does not take long to discover when reading about the church in Acts that a core part of who they were was outreach. Luke repeatedly records their efforts of evangelism and growth. It was practically embedded within their identity. Then we are aware of specific calls for outreach--Matthew 28:10-20 & 1 Peter 2:9 being obvious among them. So it is impossible to deny from a kingdom perspective that we--the church--are to be about sharing our faith; about reaching out to those who do not know Christ both across the globe as in our Harvest focus, but also right there at home. We know this, but we also know it is complicated. Complicated by cultural obstacles; complicated by our own fears and perceived inabilities; just complicated--but does it have to be? If we are to really be an outreach community we need all of us working together with our own giftedness to make it happen. How can we do that? Maybe taking a page out the apostle Paul's playbook can help)
2. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22
3. Become a Slave to All (now this is loaded language--actually become a "slave" to all. Loaded because of context--let's do the work on this--back to ch. 8 and Christian freedoms over meat. He applies that to himself as an apostle but specifically concerning being financially supported--defending himself against his critics. He had that right but voluntarily gave it up--just like those giving up meat--to further the cause of the gospel among them and not cause anyone to stumble. He also gave his freedom up to become all things to all people in order)
4. "To Win as Many as Possible" (now this was his outreach strategy. )
  - a. Intentional (made it his purpose)
  - b. Relatable (no cookie cutter approach--related to folks where they were--thinks Acts 17. To the weak he dared not eat meat for instance)
  - c. Personal (Paul gave his personal witness on several occasions--Acts 22,24, 25--told his story--made his outreach personal--like Legion--go and tell what God has done for you--everyone can do that)
5. "For the Sake of the Gospel" (two things--this is how he filtered everything about his life and he made sure in this not to cross any line that would disqualify his witness or his goal--verses 23-27)