



The President's Perspective



For the Gospel's Sake

"And this I do for the gospel's sake." These words express the Apostle Paul's passion and pursuit in life. In a day when most Christians, including preachers, have become enamored with things of lesser importance, we must keep the gospel central. Following Paul's example, WE, who live and minister in the 21st century, must do certain things for the sake of the gospel.

First, we must stay **PURIFIED** for the gospel's sake. In I Corinthians 9:27, Paul stated "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In a world gone mad with blatant disregard for anything to do with restraint, we must monitor our viewing habits carefully and guard our minds daily. There is more at stake than just our own selves. The very message of the gospel is at stake. For the message to have its proper impact, it must flow through a pure vessel.

Second, we must stay **CLARIFIED** for the gospel's sake. In I Corinthians 2:2, Paul unequivocally proclaims "I have determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Having been an evangelist for almost nineteen years, I can testify to the numerous distractions that cry for my attention. I have been encouraged to be involved in everything from selling vitamins to pawning long distance service, all in the name of having extra income for the ministry. While some may disagree, I personally believe that God meant what He said in I Cor. 9:14, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This is necessary for a very practical reason. It is too easy to lose focus and allow the things of this world to dominate and dictate one's allotment of time. We **MUST** keep the gospel central.

Third, we must be **DIVERSIFIED** for the gospel's sake. Paul says in I Cor. 9:22, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." This does not mean that Paul compromised, in any way, his Biblical beliefs or his moral character to reach people. It merely means that Paul did things, **ON PURPOSE**, to open doors for him to preach the gospel to others. I used to have no interest whatsoever in NASCAR racing. However, I have developed an interest in it, in order to afford me opportunity to talk with and minister to those who are interested in that sport. I am not much of a hunter. But, I have tried to acquaint myself with the various aspects of hunting to allow me to talk intelligently on that subject so that I might have occasion to preach the gospel to hunters. It is short-sighted and selfish to think only of self and what my limited interests are. On Mars Hill, Paul talked with the men of Athens on their terms, even quoting some of their own poets to them. He did that to create an open door with that particular group of people. Should we not, without compromise, do the same?

Finally, we must stay UNIFIED for the gospel's sake. In I Corinthians 3, Paul rebukes the believers there for their divisions caused by their carnality. If there is anything that will hinder the message of the gospel, it is unnecessary division. Just recently, a comment was made to me that went as follows: "If two men claim to have the spirit of Christ leading them, yet are arguing over non-essential items in a non-Christ like way, where is the spirituality in that?" I must confess, that is a good question. The one asking the question of me has been totally "turned off" and almost "turned away from" much of Christianity by unnecessary divisiveness. It is true that God used Paul and Barnabas' division over the "John Mark controversy" (Acts 15: 36-41) to create two evangelistic teams, rather than just one. However, much of our contemporary "controversies" have a detrimental effect rather than a positive one. May we not allow our selfishness or our self-centeredness to hinder the glorious gospel and its powerful proclamation.

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