

Tuesday March 17 ~ Common Ground ~ 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

With my kids grown, I find myself venturing out more. I guess I am one of those people who can't sit still. My family will ask: "So you're going to that ballgame or concert or exercise class or festival alone?" My answer is always, "Well, I won't be alone long." I meet a lot of people and without fail ALWAYS find something in common, thus creating a connection. I think this is what Paul was talking about when he wrote: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor 9:22b). Paul figured out early on that if we are going to have a meaningful impact for Christ, we MUST focus on our similarities rather than our differences. Common ground is the foundation of building relationships.

As we work on drawing closer to God this Lenten season, who is God putting in our lives today who looks, thinks and acts differently than us? How can we find some common ground on which to build a relationship?

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Paul's Use of His Freedom

¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

The Need for Self-Discipline

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.