



SOUL CRAVINGS: Topic #2:

Principles of Communicating the Gospel

This is the 2nd of 5 weekly topics for individuals or small groups @ South Abbotsford that introduces a creative approach to relational evangelism in partnership with Power to Change

WELCOME: (10 minutes)

What was the highlight for you of the Easter weekend?

REFLECTIONS: (40 minutes)

Text: I Corinthians 9:16-23

Read through this passage and silently reflect on Paul's attitude towards the gospel. Then share together your reflections in the group. Notice that unlike our perceptions of Paul as an "erupter," he was actually willing to do almost anything to find appropriate cultural ways to share Jesus. He shows great adaptability to the context of the relationship, in order that he might find favor for his message.

1. What can we learn from Paul's example in our approach to sharing Jesus with friends?

Today we want to look at some key principles for the communication of the gospel in our world:

- A. **The Principle of Friendship:** The key to sharing our faith is having meaningful conversations with unbelievers. As we invest in listening and conversing with people, we increase the opportunity to move from small talk to quality conversation. Conversation is the building block of relationships. And relationships are the foundation of sharing what means most to us—our Lord Jesus Christ.

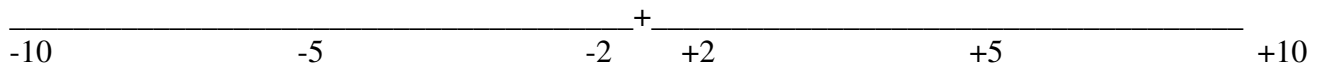
ACTION POINTS: Go back to the "Friend List" you made last week. If you did not get the chance last week, share with the group who sense may be the one(s) to invest in deeper friendships/connecting points.

- B. **Principle of Proximity:** In most cases, God has already uniquely placed you in close proximity to those who need the Lord. But sometimes we just don't realize it.

Action: Reflect for awhile on the patterns of your daily life and schedule. What are your hobbies? What stores, businesses, and services do you frequent? How could you plan to linger a little longer in some of these places to strike up conversations?

- C. **The Principle of Process:** All people are on a spiritual journey but are at different stages. If we can discern where someone is on that journey, we can be sensitive to their needs and share what is appropriate for them. We can be God's instrument to move them in a direction that leads to Christ.

ACTION POINTS: Consider the Engel's scale below: Minus 10 would be someone far from God, with no exposure to Christian faith, atheistic or agnostic at best. Minus 1 would be someone repeatedly exposed to the gospel, and very close to placing their faith in Christ. Consider those on your friend's list who you circled last week as the focus of your prayers and attention. Where would they be on Engel's list? How will this affect your approach?



D. **Principle of Approach:** States that there are many ways to share our faith. Each of us will do this according to our unique personalities, gifts and experiences, but in equally effective ways.

Consider some of these styles:

- Intellectual: Analytical, logical, likes to debate, more concerned with what people think than what they feel.
- Servant: Sees needs and finds joy in serving them, shows love through actions sooner than words, attaches value to menial tasks
- Confrontational: Confident, bold, direct, has strong opinions and convictions.
- Interpersonal: conversational, sensitive, friend-ship focused, focuses on people and their needs

ACTION POINTS: Discuss which style best describes you? How could your approach be strengthened by the other styles apparent in the group?

E. **The Principle of Respect:** States that sharing our faith will always be done with a great deal of gentleness and respect. As image-bearers of God, we give honor to each person, and really listen to them, responding to what best meets their need at the moment. (I Peter 3:15, Colossians 4:5-6). The Principle of Respect means:

- Avoid arguing.
- Don't speak in a condescending manner (with superiority).
- Dialogue, don't monologue. Give them full opportunity to express themselves.

ACTION POINTS: Can you think of some unique ways in which you could honor someone in your world without Christ according to your approach style?

If you are part of a small group, you may want to compile a joint "Friend's List" and begin praying together for these friends who need the Lord.

Soul Cravings Experience: Sunday, April 11th kicks off the third week in our series. In all our services Len Buhler will be speaking on Initiating Spiritual Conversations in our Culture. Topic #3 will be available that week. Then on April 18 & 25 at 9:45am a creative approach to relational evangelism will be presented at South Abbotsford Church. Plan to attend these sessions with your small group

You may also want to check out the website www.icravechange.com