

## LESSON FOUR

# ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

*"I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:22).*

### **A. IDENTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION ARE ESSENTIAL:**

In winning a soul for Jesus, there must be an identification that we make with that soul. He can never be won until we find ways and means to communicate with him. This is true whether it be the generation gap that has separated people of various ages, whether it be racial prejudice that has separated people of various colors and races, or whether it be class barrier that has separated people of various social standing. Before we can convey the gospel we must communicate with him. To communicate with a lost soul is more than just preaching at him or handing him a tract. Communication means gaining his attention, his listening ear and winning a receptive heart. Communication often means that we are willing to listen to his story, and allow him to express the problems that have him baffled. To become all things to all men simply means that the soul winner is willing and ready to identify himself so that he may communicate the gospel to the lost soul.

Identification and communication are absolutely essential if we are to win men for God. When we become all things to all men it is easy for us to identify ourselves with them in our own hearts. Like the good Samaritan we can go where the needy soul is, go to the sinner and convince the sinner of our sincerity and love, where we can communicate with him, and by communication bring the gospel to his heart.

By becoming all things to all men, the soul winner will be able to reach a man of any class, of any race and nationality, of any age. He would be able to sit down at ease at the table of a millionaire, with servants waiting upon him, and with the same ease he would sit down at the table of the destitute with dirt and squalor surrounding him, with the kitchen swarming with flies. He will not only be at ease, but he would set his host at ease, and through a heart of love be able to communicate within this home of poverty the same as he would in a home that was spotlessly clean with a table filled with gleaming silver.

### **B. ALL BARRIERS MUST BE BROKEN DOWN:**

Everywhere men have erected barriers with separate them from their fellow man. The world is filled with prejudice, suspicion, fear and hatred. When we go out into the harvest field to win souls we meet these barriers everywhere. Before we can win a soul for Jesus, we must find ways and means of breaking down these barriers and reaching the hearts of those whom are lost.

Time is an important element here. Many times you have to live with people so that they may become acquainted with you, and to know you in a familiar way, before these barriers of prejudice and suspicion come tumbling down. It takes time to build confidence, and to convince men and women that you are sincere in the interest of their souls, that you have no other motive in preaching the gospel to them. There is no greater weapon in attacking these barriers than the love of God which is shed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. When we love a man, love has a way of reaching his heart and convincing him of our sincerity and interest in his soul.

One can easily test himself, whether or not he has been able to break down these barriers in his own heart, for it is impossible to break down prejudice and suspicion in the other man's heart, if there is prejudice in the soul winner's heart. The winner of souls must make sure that he is completely free from all prejudice, for it is impossible to remove prejudice in others, if his own heart is filled with this ugly quality. The test that he may give himself is to study his own reactions if he is dealing with someone with bare feet, reeking with body odors, or someone that is of a different color or race. Is it possible to forget these things completely, place an arm of love around the needy soul, and to lead him into an experience with the Lord?

If the evangelist finds that there is prejudice in his heart against another man, the only thing for him to do is to repent, ask the Lord to remove it, and to fill his heart with love for the person. He will be surprised just how easy it is to love the individual when the Holy Spirit comes to his help.

#### **C. ALL PATERNALISM MUST GO:**

To become all things to all men means that there is an identification in his own mind and heart so that he won't ever find himself talking down to an individual. When he talks down, the person to whom he is speaking may give respectful attention, but have his heart seething with bitterness and resentment. When one finds himself talking down, it means that he has not rid himself of class and racial prejudice, that within himself there is a feeling of superiority, and that he is thinking that he is talking down to someone inferior because he is a sinner. There is no such thing as a second class citizen, or that one race or class is superior to another. Man is what he is, not because of what he looks like but because of the condition of his heart.

#### **D. IDENTIFICATION IS NOT CONFORMITY:**

There is a note of warning that we should clearly state in this lesson. Identification and communication are not conformity and compromise. You do not have to grow long hair in order to communicate with the hippie. You do not have to go bare footed and dress in strange garb in order to communicate with one of these restless young people. You do not have to take a social drink in order to communicate with an alcoholic or drunk. You do not have to laugh at smutty jokes in order to communicate with a man with a perverted and depraved mind. You do not have to commit fornication in order to win the harlot on the street.

The communication and identification that we are speaking about is not a lowering of a standard of holiness, for if this is done, there may be an identification, but we have lost the message that we need to communicate, and after we had crossed the barrier we would find that we had nothing to communicate to the lost soul. Although we may mingle with sinners, eat and talk with them, and break down the barriers of prejudice, of hatred and fear, and go where they are, we must never compromise with sin in order to win them.

#### **E. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER IDENTIFICATION:**

Becoming all things to all men is so important that if we fail here, we shall fail all along the line. Possibly on this point we may need to do more praying, more heart searching, more dedication than on any other point. What is our reaction when we come in contact with a bum on skidrow or a hippie on the street corner, or a man of another race and color? Do we feel at ease and do we make him feel at ease? Is our heart completely free of prejudice and suspicion? If not, it is wholly impossible to rid these from his heart. If we have failed, we have failed in reaching him, and bringing to him the message of life eternal.

## LESSON FOUR

### SELF HELP TEST

*Place the correct word in each blank:*

1. It takes time to build \_\_\_\_\_.
2. All \_\_\_\_\_ must go.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is not conformity.
4. Before we can convey the gospel we must \_\_\_\_\_ with him.
5. I am made all \_\_\_\_\_ to all men. (I Corinthians 9:22).
6. Everywhere men have erected \_\_\_\_\_ which separate them.
7. There must be no \_\_\_\_\_ in the heart of the evangelist.
8. Identification and \_\_\_\_\_ are essential.
9. The soul winner should be able to reach a man of any class and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. You do not have to grow long hair to communicate with a hippie or commit \_\_\_\_\_ to win the harlot.

*Use these word to fill in the above blanks:*

nationality

paternalism

things

fornication

confidence

communicate

barriers

identification

prejudice

communication