

GRACE COMMUNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

(1 Corinthians 9:19-27)

If you are like me, you too have seen and visited a few castles. Most of the ones I have seen were along the Rhine River in Germany and in the UK. They were virtual fortresses providing safety, keeping enemies out. There are many who think the local church is like a fortress, a castle. Inside the church walls Christians gather and are safe from the worldly influences of the evil world. This way of thinking suggests that the church is to be separated from the surrounding community. "We don't mix with..."

The big problem with this is that it is completely unbiblical. We are to be a worshiping, discipling, loving, and impacting body of believers. We are sent out by Christ to be salt and light in our community. This is our mission. Our world is hurting and really needs genuine authentic Christians to be Christ to them.

THREE QUESTIONS HELPING US TO BE A MISSIONAL CHURCH IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITY FOR CHRIST.

This means we must leave the castle mentality and impact our community with the love of Jesus.

I. Why Should We Even Care About Our Community? (Why Be Missional?)

- A. To do so is to be like God the Father who sent His Son into the world to provide salvation. John 3:16...it involved leaving heaven, it was messy, it was costly, and yet provided salvation.
- B. To do so is to be like Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost. He did not remain in safe places, but went out and made contact with all sorts of people.
 - 1. It was Jesus' custom to have social contacts with sinners. (Luke 15:1-2)
Jesus reached out to the outcasts of His day..."tax collectors and sinners" and ate with them. He spent time with them. He cared for them.
 - 2. The common sinners felt comfortable with Him. "many of the them" (Matt 9:10)
 - 3. Matthew 11:19, Jesus is even called "the friend of sinners." Wow!
 - 4. Jesus' words to the disciples, "follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." To fish, you must go to where the fish are. Typically, fish are not in the castle.
...Jesus tells, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves..." (Matt 10:16)
- C. To do so is to be like Paul who lived his life impacting others with the Gospel. (1 Cor 9:19-27)
In this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul brings the spirit of the Olympian athlete to the work of evangelism. In essence he tells: "I will do anything, short of sinning, to win men and women to Jesus Christ."
 - 1. Paul tells, "to a Jew I became a Jew, so that I might win some" (v. 20)

