

Intro: We live in a very “transactional” culture. What I mean by that is, when I give of myself, usually expect return. Even in church sometimes we find ourselves falling into that pattern. If we aren’t careful we find ourselves reflecting culture.

Jesus knew that. He knew that in our day...just as in His, the battle for our hearts to be sold out to Him would rage So one day He called His disciples together...and had a TEACHING MOMENT!!! Mark 10:42-45
If you are going to be my disciple...You, just like me...are going to GIVE YOUR LIFE AWAY!

Instead of being like the world in which you live...you are called to be radically different. Be like Him. Give your life away. Paul shows us how to do that in the last few things he says to the Corinthian church.

Look at how he sets the stage for what He has to say:

First he tells us WHAT we do:

Then he tells us WHY we do it

Finally he tells us HOW we do it:

1. The Decision We Are Called To Make When We Choose To Follow Jesus: *Give Ourselves Away* Vs 11-18

I am going to invest myself in others...even when there is no return!

I do that because I want to be like Jesus.

I do that because I am called to it!

- Spend myself: Active decision: Choosing to invest my: Time, energy, resources
- Be Spent: Passive availability: Offering myself up to God to be used by Him. Used up, Poured out
- The Price: Jesus: Mt 16:24 “*Deny himself*” (completely disavow) Paul: 2 Tim 4:6 “*Poured out*”
- The Prize: “For you”: Lit = For you Souls!

Paul is not being some drama queen, some over zealous, dramatic self seeking hero.

He understands what is at stake...it is the SOULS of the people that he has been serving...and that’s worth his life!

Paul tells the Corinthian church...”I and everyone that works with me, Titus and the other brother I sent.. All about YOU!

We aren’t doing anything for ourselves, just like a good parent give to their children. We give to you

You are my spiritual children...and I am giving myself away for you...Because I want to...and Because I choose to!

2. The Way We Love People Well! “*We Give Them What They Need!*”

You see, Paul understand something that many people do not. Not everyone needs the same thing from us.

Illus: I hear young parents say this all the time. “*I’m treating my children exactly the same.*” Good...if THEY were the same! But...they aren’t...they are entirely different...And because of that if we seek their best we seek to give them what THEY need That is what Paul is doing as he says goodbye in his letter. He offers to people what they NEED. Not trying to be FAIR He, as their spiritual father...the under shepherd of their souls...offers them what the NEED...Different for Different people.

5 Different Ways Paul Loves People Well

A. *He Calls People Out When They Need It!*

Some of you are making me crazy Paul says:

Vs 11-21

- Didn’t commend me when you should: *To come and stand with; To support; To identify with*
- Didn’t recognize God’s work through me: *All signs of an Apostle there (YOU!) Run to them!*
- Didn’t appreciate me as you should: *You are like an ungrateful, selfish child (No burden, no exploitation)*
- Not loving me correctly: Vs 15b “*The more I love you...the less you love me!*”
- Not living correctly: 20-21: *Selfish and ungodly: Sexually indulgent habits (not once)*

Listen Paul says...Some of you...You need to stop and think about HOW you are responding to me and to my ministry w you

I am gladly spending myself for you and for your souls...BUT...I am not into being taken advantage of and used.

You are not living as a child of God should live! They way you treat me...and way you live w/o repentance or regret: Wrong

Applic: There are times in church when we don’t say and do something because we don’t want to “hurt someone feelings”

That’s OK, we should be gentle and loving and caring and kind.

Eph “speaking truth in love”/ NO License

But that doesn’t mean that we are called to hurt someone by supporting them in their bad decisions and actions.

Sometimes we need to simply look at someone and say... “*Hey, this isn’t right...reconsider what you are doing*”

That is in fact the most loving thing that we can do sometimes! And that is what Paul is doing

B. *He Challenges Others To Live Better Than They Are!* 13:1-8

In these next few verses Paul says to the Cor Church, Listen...I expect BETTER of you! I know it is in you

Just like a parent talking to a child that has slipped up...He encourages them to do better than they have in the past

He gives them two very specific actions they can take to improve and go forward spiritually

- Prepare yourself for my visit: “*Get ready: If you wanted proof that I am an Apostle, see the strength when I come!*”
Do not confuse my kindness, love and concern for weakness. If you want to demand proof...keep doing what you do!
Paul is not threatening them: He is simply saying: Get ready. Be careful what you ask for...

- **Examine Yourself...Test Yourself** 13:5
 You have made the mistake thus far of examining me, putting me to the test. That's OK Feel free
 But...While you are at it: Check your own life: Like Jesus said, Before you deal with my speck...deal with your log!
 >Examine: Lit = *Scrutinize your life; Examine your life; Objective evaluate your life:* "Man/woman of God?"
 >Test: Lit = *To prove by testing; UL approved: Examined...Tested, Evaluated and approved!*

Applic: Be careful Paul says, that you don't take anything for granted. I'm not being ugly, But what I see...isn't right
 It could be that you just have allowed yourself to slip, fallen into the trap of the Evil One,
 Or, it could be...that you really aren't in the Faith at all!
 What was that old 90's rap: Better Check Yourself...Before you Wreck Yourself!

C. He Commends Them Where He Can. 13:7-10

Paul isn't all harsh. In the midst of calling them out and Challenging them he also Commends them
 He does what every parent wants to do...He catches them doing the right thing and says, Good Job!

- Vs 7: I pray you will not do wrong: I know You will do what is right!
 I Believe in you! I think you will do the right thing!
 Many times people live up to our expectations...or Down to them! Paul says...I believe in you!
Illus: Many years ago...Dime: I believe In you!
- Vs 9: I am glad when you are strong!
 Lit = I rejoice when you are spiritually strong and do the right things!
 I praise God when you get it right. It blesses me to know that you do. Like a proud parent
- Vs 9: I am praying for you to be everything that God intended you to be
 Perfection: Lit = to be completely equipped with everything you need
 Unfortunate translation...we would more accurately translate that...When you reach maturity
 When you become what God created you to be...and do what he created you to do

Applic: Paul goes out of his way to build them up. 12:19: Everything we do is for your strengthening
 Lit = I am doing everything in my power to build you up and make you strong
 1. I do that by encouraging you when you are right
 2. I do that by correcting you when you are wrong!

D. Paul Consecrates Them To God Through Prayer. 13:11-14

Paul closes out his letter by doing the single most powerful thing he can do for the Cor church. He prays for them
 This prayer is one that has been used over and over throughout the centuries. IN fact it has been used as a benediction

- Grace of Jesus: Unmerited favor be yours. Love you in a way you do not deserve
- Love of God: Love that would give you His one and only Son
- Fellowship of Spirit: Knowledge that He is with you...wherever, whenever, whatever you face

Applic: We can and should do a LOT of things for people...The most powerful thing we can do...Is PRAY

CONCL:

WHAT ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR LIFE ON?

What..or Who...gets your very best?
 Is it the people God has put in your life...or do they get the leftovers?

ARE YOU LOVING THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WELL?

Calling them out:	Who would God have you speak to? Who needs to hear...Change
Challenging them to do better	Who needs you to come along side and encourage? Build up
Commending them when you can	Who do you need to say...Good Job: Sometimes we forget/Granted
Consecrating them in prayer	Who are you praying for?

Different people in your life need different things from you...
 Prayerfully ask God who needs what...then make the commitment to step up and do what He would have you do!