

The Ambassadors | Declaring the Good News in Challenging Times July 23 | The Contexts - parties, dating, and the workplace: opportunities and risks.

PART 1 - HOW ENGAGED ARE WE?

John 17:15-19 **15** *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.[a]*
16 *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them[b] in the truth; your word is truth.*
18 *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*

Radically in, (sanctified, kept from evil one), sent radically out. Just as Jesus was. Jesus is our message and our model for our methods. Jesus was God, but he also showed us how to live as a human representative of God, as an ambassador. 3 big areas of our social lives. Gospel proclamation and demonstration happens along relational lines and for many of us this is a problem.

Why? Research shows that for unchurched people, within 3 to 5 years of becoming a christian, they will have no MEANINGFUL relationships with unbelievers. In essence, their organic, natural connections to their host community are snapped. Its the trend that we must lean against. We need to be intentional in contexts that God has given us.

Is this true for you? Why or why not?
Do you have meaningful relationships with unbelievers?
What have you done to cultivate those?

MORE INCARNATION IMPLICATIONS

Jesus did not do this just as God. He did this as the perfect man. Jesus is unique among the world religions and world views, because he unites the secular space and sacred space. he brings the righteousness and holiness of God into contact with sinners. In the gospel, we can keep these together. However, as we strive for gospel-centeredness, we tend to separate them.

The religious person. (the one who relies on external behavior for righteousness) tends to stay away from irreligious people, particularly while they are sinning. “I need to get away from the physical, I need to be spiritual, I am going to be polluted by this party, those people, or this environment.”

Irreligious people, on the other hand (the one who does not care about righteousness) worship the physical, because that’s all they have. Alcohol and all that attends a party is all they have. And here are the two ditches we can fall into: either the celebration will become your idol and it will drive you, or the celebration will become something you’re afraid of or you consider unimportant.

Do you tend to think like a religious or irreligious person?

JESUS REDEEMS CELEBRATION

- 1) **Jesus exhibits a “contagious holiness,”** Blomberg calls it. “Jesus discloses not one instance of fearing contamination, whether moral or ritual, by associating with the wicked or impure. Rather, he believes that his purity can rub off on them, and he hopes that his magnanimity toward them will lead them to heed his calls to discipleship” (167).
- 2) **Gospel redeems celebration as normal everyday rhythm.** We gather (Sunday, Community, homes) together to celebrate God’s extravagant blessings in Jesus. We are created to worship and one of the ways is through celebration. If we truly understand and believe the gospel, we should be the most celebratory people on the planet. God regularly called his people to celebrate through feasts and parties because he did not want them to forget His grace and abundant provision. The very celebration wasn’t just a response – it was also a demonstration of what God is like and has done. We must enter into a regular rhythm of celebrating God’s extravagant blessings.

The people God has sent us to are also celebrating – they happen to be celebrating a different god and a different story. We need to enter into their celebrations and do it unto the true God, fully aware that even this celebration is within His Story. Then, within the celebration we are to look for ways to serve, redeem, bring gospel light, etc...

What celebrations should you be creating in order to invite others into?

What celebrations could you be participating in to bring the gospel to others?

GOSPEL INTENTIONALITY?

Take note that there's no passivity in Jesus's approach. And no sin. He's there on mission — in the unbelieving household, at the party — not aiming simply to defy conventions, but actively seeking the salvation of sinners. He sees associating with unbelievers as a strategic place to call for repentance.

Prepare (intentionality starts here)

- **Pray**
- **What's the next step with _____?**
- **Decide ahead of time what you will eat, drink and enjoy.**

What do you want to do in order to be more intentional at parties?

PART 2 - AMBASSADOR DATING

2 wrong ways to look at this: **Both of these frustrate our efforts as an ambassador.**

- 1) Can't marry an unbeliever, so can't date an unbeliever.. so run from unbelievers.
- 2) I'll date an unbeliever so I can bring the gospel to them (at worst) I'm attracted to this person, I am going to preach Jesus to them (say I am preaching Jesus to them) so then I can marry them.

Which one of these most describes what you think now or in the past?

AMBASSADOR WAYS OF THINKING:

1. God will lead you to have gospel conversations unbelieving people of the opposite sex.
2. Ambassador is our identity. At the CORE of our being, we are to represent Christ to dying people. It will be tested.
3. Unbelievers can ONLY love you as an idol.
4. Unbelievers are looking to see if Jesus plus nothing is EVERYTHING. If you are putting your romantic interests in them above Christ's interest in them in your OWN HEART. What are we SHOWING them? Jesus plus nothing is NOT everything.
5. Unbelievers are going to hell.
6. They need to meet Jesus still.
7. Pray for them introduce them to the church asap. see how real spiritual friendships work.
8. Need to back peddle?
 - You have sinned against God... first. Confess sin, repent, be restored.
 - you have sinned against them. Confess your selfishness in not loving them for who they are but who you hope for them to become.

Which one of these points above do you need to reinforce in your own mind/convictions or put into practice?