

# *Winsome:*

## A NEW WAY OF BEING

### GETTING STARTED

In our sermon series “Winsome” we will be leaning into what it would look like to partner with the Holy Spirit to be Jesus’ heart and hands in our lives. How we can be present to God, ourselves and others...where we live, where we work, where we play...in any area of our lives.

The apostle Paul was immersed in this way of living at the time he wrote this letter to the church at Corinth. We will focus on his conviction to be “all things to all people” in this study.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, we bring ourselves to you in order that we may be filled with your Spirit of grace and truth. Pour out on us a new willingness, a new way of living so that we can partner with you to spread the Good News. In Jesus name, may it be so.

#### STARTER QUESTIONS

How would you describe your circles of influence? Do you find it difficult to offer loving, grace filled, or no strings attached friendship to others? Maybe some more than others?

After the last couple of years, our world doesn't seem open to this kind of friendship. What is one thing you could add or action you could take to begin to bridge this gap?

## READ ALOUD

Consider reading the passage twice in different translations.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (MSG)

"Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!"

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Paul mean when he says he is free of the demands and expectations of others?

Possible further question: how do you experience the grace of God when it comes to how you live your life?

2. How might you go about entering someone's world without "taking on their way of life"?

Possible further question: are you able to listen to someone who is or believes something different than you without needing to judge them?

3. What kinds of practices might make it more possible to lead others into a "God-saved life"?

Possible further question: could becoming a good listener help? How about praying for a specific person with time built in to listen for God's leading?

4. Have you ever wondered if you are missing out on what the church was created for? When Paul says "I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!", what do you feel or think of?

Possible further question: do I avoid participating in this kind of life due to fear or self-protection? How might I bring this fear to Jesus?

## PRAYER MINISTRY TIME

Encourage people to settle into a comfortable position and pray, “Come, Holy Spirit.” Wait. Breathe. Have people share if they heard the Lord speak, give space for the Holy Spirit to move. People can divide into smaller groups to pray together or you can stay as a large group. Also make space to pray for needs & requests.

## FURTHER REFLECTION & ACTION

As you ease into this way of being, you might want to try practicing praying for one or two people each day (or several times a day) and allowing a time to listen for God’s leading. This is a “practice” and that is exactly what you are doing. Anything we want to get better at or to learn we need to practice. Spend some time asking the Lord to bring to mind one or two people in your life.

You may also want to begin to practice asking curious, genuine questions of people you encounter. When being curious you might be able to find out more and avoid making quick assumptions about a persons openness. What if there is more to the story than you realized? Where can you find a persons humanity in how they are living their lives? What might god be up to in the persons life?