

Using Paul's Letters in your Ministry

There are five case studies presented below. You are required to write about three of them, according to your choice. For each case study you must do the following:

Select several relevant passages from Paul's writings that address each issue. Your discussion of these relevant Scriptural passages should include both interpretation and application comments.

Interpretive comments should consider the context, theme, word meanings, structure of the grammar, etc. of the chosen passages.

Application comments should be specific and relevant insights that would be convincing and clear to your friend.

Here are the case studies:

1. In your apartment building there are a number of Indian medical students. You make a friendship with one of them and one day you have a conversation about religion. When you share your testimony of faith in Jesus, they are open and appreciative. In fact, they say they have a very high regard for Jesus. "But," they continue, "in India there are over 300 million gods, Jesus is just one of them. Since Jesus is not unique, there is no reason to give him exclusive allegiance." What would Paul say?
2. Another one of your neighbors is an Uzbek national. One day you share a cup of tea and they begin to brag about the great advances of Uzbekistan, greater than any other Central Asian country, they say. As you continue sipping tea you mention that you are a follower of Jesus. The Uzbek is not impressed. In fact, they say "Jesus is not the religion of Uzbeks." When you ask what prevents this person from following Jesus they say, "Uzbeks are a superior people, why should I follow this Jesus who is worshipped in nations much inferior to Uzbekistan?" What would Paul say?
3. A respected citizen from your city begins to attend your church. Soon they decide to attend classes for baptism, and at the service for baptism they present a powerful testimony. They become a highly respected member of the congregation. Soon they are inviting their friends to church and showing many evidences of a growing faith. One day you decide to drop by their apartment for fellowship. When you enter their apartment you think you are in a Museum of Liquor. You find bottles for every kind of liquor in almost every room, most of them empty. You leave that visit quite confused. Later that day you meet the person's spouse, who has been refusing to come with their mate to the church. The spouse confides in you saying, "My spouse has such a terrible drinking problem. They get drunk every night. In fact, they cannot fall asleep unless they are drunk. I have wondered why your church has allowed them to join?" What would Paul say?
4. Another devoted and respected member of your church is a very successful business person. They live in one of the largest homes in the city, drive a new car, and dress in the latest fashions. They are often away on business trips throughout Central Asia and the entire CIS. One day you are having a prayer time with this person and sharing about the Christian walk, as you have done frequently with them. On this day the person is much more open and troubled. They pull a number of papers from their briefcase which lists the "business expenses" for their firm. They show you the names of top leaders in government, tax officers, customs officials, from your country and the neighboring

nations. When you ask them about this list they say, “Without such personal payments a person cannot do business in Central Asia.” What would Paul say?

5. One of your school classmates is a devoted Muslim. You have been friends for many years and that friendship continues through occasional visits. You have long admired their moral values and sincere devotion to Islam, though you wish they would come to know Jesus. One day God opens the way for a very good spiritual conversation. You share how you have just completed a fantastic course on Paul and his letters. “Paul?” your Muslim friend asks, “who is that?” “Oh, he is one of the great Apostles and authors of the New Testament.” Your friend politely responds, “Our Imam has often said the Bible is corrupt, and it sounds like he is correct. I admire ‘Isa (Jesus) and know about his ‘Injil (Gospel), but the Quran says nothing about any Paul and Paul’s letters. Why have you left ‘Isa and his ‘Injil for this unknown man named Paul?” What would Paul say?

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