

LOOK TO THE CUTTLEFISH

–MESSY (BUT BEAUTIFUL) CHRISTIANITY, WEEK 30–

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)

I. OUR _____: VOLUNTARY _____

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

II. OUR _____: SOCIALLY _____

²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.

To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law.

²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak.

I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

III. OUR _____: _____ IN THE _____

²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

(or: *that I can be a participant in it [NET]*)

THE BOTTOM LINE

_____ Yourself and _____ Yourself _____

On a scale of 1-6, how willing are you to be a slave for others?

On a scale of 1-6, how concerned are you about reaching others?

On a scale of 1-6, how socially adaptable are you generally?

If you think your numbers are low, what would it take to raise them?

Who are you uniquely positioned to reach for Christ?

What can you do this week to be more socially adaptive for these people?

What can you do this week to advance gospel engagement with them?

On a scale of 1-6, how likely are you to do anything in response to this passage of Scripture and message? Are you okay with your answer?

On Paul Becoming “Like A Jew” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 430)

The clearest example of what Paul means by becoming “as a Jew” and “as one under the Law” is his description of the thirty-nine lashes he suffered at the hands of the Jews (2 Cor. 11:24). We can only guess that the synagogue inflicted this punishment for Paul’s proclaiming his faith in the crucified and risen Christ, which they presumably considered blasphemous, and his altered understanding of the hope of Israel that now included uncircumcised Gentiles in the people of God. Paul’s motives for submitting to this discipline are a little more difficult to penetrate, but rulings from the Mishnah may help. The Mishnah lists thirty-six sins, including blasphemy, that warrant being cut off from the people without warning (*m. Ker.* 1:1). What is important to note, however, is that flogging averted both a harsher punishment at the hands of God and being cut off from the people (Lev. 18:29). The Mishnah rules, “*And thy brother seem vile unto thee [Deut. 25:3]—when he is scourged then he is thy brother*” (*m. Mak.* 3:15). This axiom clarifies what it means for Paul to become like one under the law (though he himself is not under the law). He bowed to synagogue discipline to maintain his Jewish connections. Jews were given special privileges to settle their disputes in their own courts. If one wanted to stay a member of the Jewish community, one had to submit to its discipline. Paul accepted these penalties to keep open the option of preaching the gospel message in the synagogue. For Paul to submit to this punishment *five times* testifies not only to his mettle but also his extraordinary sense of obligation to his people. They are his kindred, for whom he has great sorrow and unceasing anguish and could wish that he were accursed and cut off from Christ if it meant their being saved (Rom. 9:2-4). His identification with Christ so controls his spirit that he would cut himself off from Christ, if he could, to save his people.