

TALK IT UP

TOOLBOX

- THINK
- OBSERVE
- CLOSE-UP
- WRITE
- DISCUSS
- FEELINGS
- BRAINSTORM
- REFERENCE
- PASSAGE
- ARTICLE
- BIG IDEA
- CROSSROAD

BLIND MAN

A blind man named Ling, who lived in the remote wilds of Asia, arrived at a crude Chinese hospital. An eye specialist recently started volunteering his time there to help natives in local villages. That afternoon, the physician examined the blind man's eyes and surgically removed cataracts from both of Ling's eyes. Wild sounds of daybreak screeched the next morning waking the physician and staff. They eagerly assembled at Ling's bed for the removal of his bandages. As cloth was slowly withdrawn from Ling's face vivid colors penetrated his senses and distinct lines clearly defined the inviting face of his physician. This blind man was no longer blind.

Ling's pilgrimage for sight was finally over. Even though Ling left the hospital the memory of his miracle remained. The hospital continued to aid local villagers over the next several months. One day the physician noticed something peculiar. He looked from a hospital window and counted 48 men approaching. It seemed odd because they were slowly walking toward the large hut in single file. Each man was linked to the other by one long rope tied around each man's waist—much like a team of mountain climbers approaching an alpine summit. But there were no mountains on this plain. Unknown to the doctor, these men walked 250 miles to come to the hospital. They traveled through rough terrain, dense vegetation, and past the ridicule of indifferent spectators. When the men arrived the staff discovered the 47 of the 48 were blind. Their guide at the front of the rope was the only man who could see. With amazement the physician realized the guide's identity. It was Ling.

DISCUSS

What motivated Ling?

WHY

Why do you think Ling returned to the hospital?

OUR EXPERIENCE

What are some of the barriers that hold us back from leading others to Christ?

FACTOID

- A recent *Christianity Today* survey of 1,500 randomly selected subscribers—with an unusually high 60 percent response rate—revealed a strong interest in evangelism but also areas where the respondents strongly felt the need for help:
- 72%** Applying what I already know about evangelism
- 57%** Overcoming my fear of sharing my faith
- 54%** Training in how to share the good news about Christ with others
- 46%** Learning how to befriend non-Christians

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE

"I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the Gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." *Romans 1:14-16*

What motivated Paul?



2 Corinthians 5:16-21

3. Worldly point of view (verse 16)

WHAT DOES THIS PHRASE MEAN?



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?



16 So from now on **we regard no one from a worldly point of view.** Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

17 *Therefore,* if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors,** as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God.

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, *so that* in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(emphasis added)

4. Christ's ambassadors

WHAT DOES BEING AN AMBASSADOR MEAN?



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?



RECONCILIATION

How man is brought from his alienation from God to fellowship with God.



SUMMARY

Four motivations for a lasting ministry:

1. Fear of the Lord
2. Love of Christ
3. Spiritual View of Others
4. Calling as Ambassadors



PERSONAL REFLECTION



If you were writing in a devotional journal how would you express the truths of 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 in your own words?



LIFE APPLICATION



What is one way you can represent Christ to others this week?

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society.
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