

Hands-On Ministry

By Kimberly Sowell

*I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake.
1 Corinthians 9:22b-23a NKJV*

Yuck! That was somebody's gum. Ugh, it's so sticky. Gross, gross, oh, this is nasty! These were my thoughts as I fumbled around in the dark at the movie theater, feeling on the ground for my daughter's ring that had just dropped from her petite finger. "Found it!" she cried, much to my relief.

As I settled back into my seat beside her, wishing desperately I had a mega-sized bottle of hand sanitizer, I had disparaging thoughts about that little ring. My daughter's prized jewelry was worth all of 25 cents, yet I had just massaged the disgusting floor where drinks have spilled, where gum goes to die, and where filthy shoes have trod. I would have gladly paid 25 cents not to have to touch such filth. How did I talk myself into doing it? The ring was a treasure to my daughter. I did it because it mattered to her. By stooping down to help my daughter get her ring, simply because it was something she cared about, I expressed love and concern to her. Also, the finding of the ring helped her release her worry and turn her attention to something new. I was a tad queasy from my hands-on ministry, but my heart was thrilled that my daughter was relieved.

It's curious how each of us has such different priorities and interests. Sometimes people enter our lives whose concerns are nowhere close to being on our radar screens. Does it really matter that we share their concerns? You may enjoy little league about as much as I enjoy touching the movie theater floor, but imagine how God might bless a relationship you could build with your unsaved single mom friend as you go with her to watch her children's games. Or ponder the possibilities if you were to listen longer to your neighbor as she goes into detail about her herb garden's woes; you may prefer your basil from a plastic shaker, but taking an interest in your neighbor's garden might be the best way to say "love" to your neighbor.

Being all things to all men for the sake of the gospel may include delving into a hobby, conversation, or project that will render no personal satisfaction to you. Are you willing to sacrifice your interests – or touch a sticky, gummy theater floor – to build a bridge for the gospel of Jesus Christ? As you pray, ask God to reveal to you any opportunities to share the gospel you can explore, simply through showing interest in the interests of others.