

# becoming all things



**STUDY  
GUIDE**

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This study guide serves as a companion to the book, *Becoming All Things: How Small Changes Lead To Lasting Connections Across Cultures*.



*Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 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. 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. To the weak I became the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings*

— 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

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# INTRODUCTION



1. What challenges have you experienced in the past when trying to connect with people of other cultures?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Then imagine for a moment what it would look like today if everyone committed to becoming all things to all people for the sake of the gospel. How would our world look differently?
3. In what ways is it hard for you to adapt and change? What questions, fears, and hopes are stirring within you as you read this introduction?

# CHAPTER 1

## DEVELOP YOUR CULTURAL IDENTITY

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1. What were you taught about cultural identities growing up both within the church and within society at large? How have these messages shaped your ability to see and value (or not see and not value) your cultural identity on a day-to-day basis?
2. In your own words, explain what the Bible says about cultural identities and why they matter.
3. What are your ethnic roots? What generation did your family arrive in the U.S., if you are from a non-Native context, or what tribe(s) are a part of your story? What stories can you recall or discover about your ancestors that demonstrate cultural narratives or customs within your own family?
4. What are specific ways you can begin to lean into and develop your cultural identity? What narratives do you need to learn and/or unlearn? In what ways can you explore the attitudes, mindsets, and values embedded within your ethnic heritage?

## CHAPTER 2

# MOVE BEYOND STEREOTYPES



1. None of us are exempt from racial biases. Take a moment to reflect on a time that you stereotyped a person of another culture in your mind (even if you didn't verbalize these thoughts). How did this bias impact how you felt about that person or how you treated them and/or their community? Additionally, recall a time that someone intentionally or unintentionally stereotyped you and how that encounter felt.
2. In your own words, explain what a cultural stereotype is.
3. In what ways are you a unique individual? How are you both similar to people of your ethnic heritage and also different?
4. What is one practice you can begin implementing today to see and treat people of every culture as unique individuals?

## CHAPTER 3

# EMBRACE CULTURAL DISCOMFORT

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1. Recall a time you became angry or uncomfortable around a person of another culture. What provoked those emotions in you? How did you respond? If you could replay that situation, how might you say or do things differently?
2. What lifestyles, actions, and perspectives do you consider “normal”? What is a way that you can become more mindful that your way of life is not the standard?
3. How can you better embrace discomfort? What thoughts, prayers, or practices can you apply *despite* feeling uncomfortable in order to love your neighbor?

## CHAPTER 4

# RETHINK CODE SWITCHING, PRIVILEGES, AND RIGHTS (FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR)



1. Whether you were on a date, at a job interview, or hanging out with friends, think of a time you chose to code switch (i.e., create a different image of yourself). Why did you choose to code switch? Was it out of shame or pride? If you were to replay that situation, would you do anything differently?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, when should we choose to code switch? When should we not code switch?
3. What is one new practice you can utilize in order to be “free in Christ” when interacting with white people?
4. In what ways are you more privileged than others? In what ways are you disprivileged? What is one way you can dismantle your own privilege in order to pursue true equality for all people of color?

## CHAPTER 5

# AVOID CULTURAL APPROPRIATION



1. What is your gut reaction to conversations on cultural appropriation? Does this topic bring painful memories to mind? Does it make you angry, like people are making too big a deal about it? Why or why not?
2. In your own words, how would you define cultural appropriation?
3. According to the Apostle Paul, what should our motivations be to engage with objects and activities outside of our own cultural heritage?
4. Do you ever use isolated terms from another language or culture? Are there changes you need to make within your own vocabulary so that your words authentically represent your own cultural codes instead of taking someone else's words out of context?
5. What is one way you can make more thoughtful choices so that your purchases benefit local people and/or local communities?

## CHAPTER 6

# DON'T EXPECT PEOPLE TO COME TO YOU



1. Think of your neighborhood, your favorite coffee shop, your school, your go-to grocery store, your workplace, church, and local park. In these places, does everyone look like you, talk like you, and come from a similar socio-economic bracket as you? Do people in these spaces have similar views as you on friendships, politics, religion, marriage, and punctuality? Based on these answers, would you describe the circles you inhabit as cultural comfort zones? Why or why not?
2. How often do you travel to other parts of your town or city? Do you ever experience feelings of anxiety or fear to drive through a neighborhood where people look differently from you? Why? What are some practical ways that you can value people of other cultures *and* their unique locals?
3. In the same way that Jesus wandered to meet people where they're at, how can you wander throughout your town or city in order to make friends with people of other cultures?
4. What are ways that you can make yourself available to the people around you? Who can you eat with? Are you willing to go to their homes and eat their food?

## CHAPTER 7

### REDEFINE FLUENCY

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1. Have you ever met someone with whom you didn't share a language?

Recall what that experience was like. Did you avoid conversation? Did you try to communicate with each other? Did you attempt to build a friendship or was it a one-time encounter?

2. How do passages like 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Romans 1:14 and Acts 28 challenge us to be more flexible and open when it comes to language and modes of communication with non-English speakers?

3. What is one practical way you can begin connecting with people who don't speak the same language as you?

## CHAPTER 8

# CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON JUSTICE



1. In your own words, define narrative justice.
2. Take a quick assessment of the major social and political issues of the day. Then consider: How often do you listen to voices on these issues that are different from my own perspective and experience? For example: How often do you approach the problem of racism through the lens of Black and/or Brown people, who repeatedly experience and witness violence against their communities and personhood?
3. What are tangible, practical ways that you can better see the world through minority eyes? Whose voices do you need to listen to? In what ways do you need to strengthen your muscles of lament and mourning? How can you actively pursue justice for *other* communities who are hurting?