

July 21 & 22

# Be Interested

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## Introduction

In the 1960s film *The Gospel Blimp*, George and Ethel become concerned about the spiritual welfare of their next-door neighbors. Over a barbecue with friends from church, they become inspired to co-invest in a blimp to evangelize their town. Equipped with airborne banners, loudspeakers and leaflet “bombs,” the group spreads their air campaign to a non-receptive community. Disillusioned, George and Ethel take a different course when one of their neighbors gets sick; they bring over meals, clean their house and offer a listening ear. The neighbor couple accepts Christ into their lives because of this relational love. This quirky tale illustrates the theme of Pastor Chip’s message for this week. God will use us to reach others for Him if we take the time to be interested in their lives.

## Discussion

1. **Read Matthew 9:10-13.** What risks did Jesus take by hanging around people of bad repute? Are there other approaches He could have used to equally influence these “undesirables”? Is there any evidence this fraternizing led Jesus to compromise His mission on earth [see Hebrews 4:15]? What can we learn from this example in carrying out our mission to reach others for Christ?
2. **Read John 1:43-49.** How did Philip use his relationship with Nathaniel to bring his friend to Jesus? Did he risk his friendship by persisting when Nathaniel protested? What do verses 47-48 tell us about Jesus’ interest in those He observed along His daily walk? How did Nathaniel react when Jesus recalled seeing this total stranger under the fig tree? In what ways can we take more interest in others to help prepare them for an encounter with Jesus?
3. Consider the following situation. Jessica, a Christian, has been thinking about inviting a new co-worker, Alexis, to join her lunch table. She’s hesitant to do this after others in the group start talking about Alexis’ “provocative” attire. What advice would you give Jessica to help maximize her Christian influence?

## Do Something

1. Practice questioning and listening to others you encounter in your everyday activities. After each conversation, think about how much of the time you were talking versus listening. Make a habit of listening to others’ ambitions, needs and concerns so God can use this tool to influence others through you. Consider John Maxwell’s quote, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
2. Ask yourself how God might use you to build a relationship with someone who is different from you. Write a plan to share Christ through this relational experience and start on the first step this week. “A Man Called Norman” [see Resources below] will help stimulate some ideas.

## Resources

1. “A Man Called Norman” is a compelling story about how author Mike Adkins responds when God prompts him to help his quirky neighbor.
2. “The Five Habits of Highly Missional People: Taking the BELLS Challenge to Fulfill the Mission of God” is an excellent article that provides practical steps for propelling us into the lives of others in a way that opens the door for faith conversations.