



We Persuade Men

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. (2Corinthians 5:11)

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Paul reminded us earlier that the gospel is in human beings: *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves”* (2Corinthians 4:7). This specifically refers to the gospel being in the inspired men like Paul. However, it is still in us, even though we receive it in a different way: *“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”* (2Timothy 2:2). **The task of teaching the gospel and persuading men belongs to us.** It does not belong to angels or even to the Holy Spirit, separate from the word which He provides. Men teach it. Teaching the gospel saves men. *“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe”* (1Corinthians 1:21; see also James 5:20). Teaching precedes the faith which saves men (Romans 10:13-16). Teaching must precede the baptism which is for the remission of sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:38). Are you part of “we”?

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Teaching the gospel is not a matter of forcing men, and neither is it a matter of scaring men. Did the folks in Scripture remind people of the dangers of disobedience? Certainly they did (2Peter 2:1-9; 1Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; 2Thessalonians 1:6-10). Teaching sometimes includes scaring people AWAY from destruction, but it is the gospel—that message of the Bread of life come down from heaven—which draws people TO God (John 6:44-51). That is why Paul could also state, *“we preach Christ*

crucified” (1Corinthians 1:23). If one cannot be persuaded by the teaching of the Christ, he won’t be won to the Lord. Are you “persuading”?

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In some religious circles, it seems that to be save one must persuade or beg God to be converted. This doesn’t comport with the words of Scripture. In conversion, God is not the one to be persuaded—God did not go away, man did (Romans 1:21-32). Is the gospel message directed toward God? The message is directed to man (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20). God can be persuaded through prayer by people those who become his children and have a right to call him “Father,” but nowhere are those outside His family told to try to persuade God to be willing to forgive. God “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1Timothy 2:1-6). We must let everyone we can know the message. Are you reaching out to all you can?

Persuaded of what?

The gospel message of the Christ contains many things of which men need to be persuaded. Begin with the foundational principles as did the first Christians:

- Men are to be persuaded to believe (Acts 26:22-29).
- Men are to be persuaded to repent and be baptized (Acts 19:4-5; Acts 28:23).
- Men are to be persuaded to live right (Ephesians 2:4-10; Ephesians 5:7-16; Philippians 2:12-15).
- Men are to be persuaded to be good examples and to show, as well as to teach, the lost the way (Matthew 5:13-16; James 5:20).

Why should we persuade men?

This should be obvious to all who are Christians. First, we should persuade men so we can please the Lord as obedient children. After all, the Savior Himself was obedient (Hebrews 5:8,9). Furthermore, we have a great incentive—the fear of the Lord (2Corinthians 5:11; Hebrews 10:31). Are you persuaded? If so, are you persuading men?