

BRINGING PEOPLE TO A DECISION

INTRODUCTION

Helping people decide to do something about the truths they have been studying and accepting is often the most difficult part of soul winning. Many individuals are led to study God's Word, believe the truths that are presented, but never take any action to bring their lives into conformity to these truths.

Leading people to decide for something that is often unpopular, out of step with society, and threatening to their financial well-being, is not an easy task. It is indeed, a science--and a most vital part of soul winning. The principles and techniques of this science are discussed in this section.

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Understand the mechanics of decision making which comes in three stages.
 - A. Interest - must be awakened, deepened, and sustained throughout each study. (sequence of studies vital)
 - B. Conviction - is accomplished by the Holy Spirit as the Word of God is presented.
 1. Truth is to be presented in a clear, convincing manner making known God's will in love.
 2. Sensitivity to signs of conviction is necessary to know when to call for a decision.
 - C. Decision - must be the personal choice of the individual assisted by the worker.
 1. Pressure must not be applied by the worker--do not push, or argue--lead.
 2. Much prayer and personal attention is necessary during this critical period.
2. Make decision progressive by making an appeal at each study.
 - A. Make responding to truth a habit by calling for simple decisions.
 - B. Ask questions as a means of getting a response to the presentation of truth.

ILLUSTRATION: "Do you see how we can come to know truth by following the method outlined in Scripture? I believe you want to know truth, don't you?"

- C. Make up order of subjects with progressive decision in mind, and appropriate action to be taken clear from Scripture.

ILLUSTRATION: The "Fall of Babylon subject" presents a golden opportunity, when reading Revelation 18:4, to call people out of Babylon, "Come out of her, My people."

"I saw that when the truth is presented, it should be in the power and Spirit. Bring the people to the point to decide. Show them the importance of truth—it is life or death. With becoming zeal, pull souls out of the fire" Testimonies, Volume 1, page 152.

3. Recognize the time factor involved in decisions.

A. Decisions must be called for when conviction comes.

"When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away" Evangelism, page 298.

"It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the soul of its need of Christ. Many are convicted of sin and feel their need of a sin-pardoning Savior; but they are merely dissatisfied with their pursuits and aims, and if there is not a decided application of the truth to their hearts, if words are not spoken at the right moment, calling for decision from the weight of evidence already presented, the convicted ones pass on without identifying themselves with Christ, the golden opportunity passes, and they have not yielded, and they go farther and farther away from the truth, farther away from Jesus and never take their stand on the Lord's side" Evangelism, page 283.

B. Not everyone comes under conviction at the same point.

4. Present Jesus as the One who is calling for their decision.

"Talk to souls in peril and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross dying to make it possible for Him to pardon us" Testimonies, Volume 6, page 66.

A. Acceptance of Christ is essential to all other major decisions.

B. Avoid presenting the church or yourself as calling for decision.

5. Employ Scripture as a basis for all appeals.

". . . be very careful how you handle the Word, because that Word is to make the decision with the people. Let the Word cut and not your words" Evangelism, page 300.

A. Clear Scripture appeals carry tremendous force.

B. Be careful not to make unwarranted applications from Scripture.

6. Employ prayer as a means of calling for decision.

- A. Pray for the person to have courage to make a decision.

"Pray with these souls, by faith bringing them to the foot of the cross. Carry their minds with your mind and fix the eye of faith where you look upon Jesus, the sin Bearer. Get them to look from their poor sinful selves to the Savior and the victory is won" Testimonies, Volume 6, page 67.

- B. Ask them to pray if appropriate.
7. Never close the door on a soul's salvation.
- A. The Holy Spirit may wait to bring conviction under more favorable circumstances.
- B. The individual may not understand the point at issue.
- C. Make friends for God, not enemies.
8. Exhibit understanding of a person's struggle and help them along with personal attention.
9. Understand the place of the will in decision making.
- A. The will is the master key of decision.

"What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends upon the right action of the will" Steps to Christ, page 47.

ILLUSTRATION: The ocean liner Queen Elizabeth weighs 85,000 tons and is guided by a 65-ton rudder. The rudder's size is way out of proportion to the rest of the ship, but still controls its direction. Man's will is the rudder of his life.

- B. The will is to be surrendered to Christ.

"Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God" Ministry of Healing, page 176.

II. MAKING SPECIFIC APPEALS

1. Appeal to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior--the most crucial of all appeals.

NOTE: The logical time to make this appeal would be when the study on the new birth is presented. However, this may not be the best time in every case. It is also possible that a person may feel he has already accepted Christ and not realize what is involved until later.

"Many are convinced that we have the truth, yet they are held as with iron bands; they dare not risk the consequences of taking their position on the side of truth. Many are in the valley of decision, where special, close and pointed appeals are necessary to move them to lay down the weapons of their warfare and take their position on the Lord's side. Just at this critical period Satan throws the strongest bands around these souls" Testimonies, Volume 1, page 646.

- A. Care must be exercised not to antagonize the individual and thus spoil future opportunities.
- B. We are only to assist and encourage the individual to make the decision he is considering.

III. REMOVING OBSTACLES TO DECISION

"One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man's ideas or arguments" Testimonies, Volume 7, page 71.

- 1. What can be done if a person:
 - A. Can not or will not decide.
 - 1. The person must not be left offended or unapproachable.
 - 2. We must remember that we are only instruments, the Holy Spirit leads people to make decisions.
 - B. Is indifferent and seems to have no convictions.
 - 1. We must be in earnest and make Scriptural calls for a decision.
 - 2. If unable to get responses, leave in the Lord's hands.
 - C. Feels self-righteous and that he treats his neighbors right.
 - 1. Use mainly Scriptural appeals waiting for his response before you proceed.
 - 2. Isaiah 6:1-5; Romans 3:10; 5:19.
 - D. Thinks it unnecessary to join a church.
 - 1. God's purpose in ordaining the church on earth.
 - a. Hebrews 12:23 - general assembly - church of the first born.

- b. 1 Timothy 3:15 - church of the living God (duty of church to protect truth).
- c. Malachi 3:10 - bring the tithe into the storehouse.

2. Advantages of church membership.

- a. 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10 - brings out unity.
- b. 1 Corinthians 11:18 - speaks about coming together in church.
- c. Acts 12:1-5 - strength in unity.
- d. Ephesians 1:22, 23 - Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18).
- e. 1 Corinthians 12:18, 25 - comparison carried further.
- f. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 - baptized into one body.
- g. Mark 16:15, 16 - membership very essential.
- h. Matthew 18:17, 18 - what we bind on earth.
- i. John 15:4 - ye abide in Me.
- j. Revelation 22:16 - Jesus speaks to the churches.
- k. Acts 2:37, 38, 47 - added to the church daily.

2. Meeting some of the common objections to decision.

- A. "I can't leave my church." Revelation 18:4; John 10:26, 27; Matthew 7:21-23
- B. "Its too hard to keep the Sabbath." James 4:17; 2:10-12; Matthew 7:21-23; 19:16, 17; 1 John 2:3,4
- C. "I can't make a living if I keep the Sabbath." Matthew 6:33; 16:25; Psalms 37:3; Isaiah 65:13, 14; 1 Timothy 4:8
- D. "It is inconvenient to keep the seventh day and follow this doctrine." Matthew 16:24; 10:38
- E. "I am too great a sinner." 1 Timothy 1:15, Hebrews 7:25; Isaiah 1:18
- F. "I'm afraid I can't hold out and live up to the truth." Jude 24; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 12:9; John 1:12
- G. "I'm not good enough." 2 Corinthians 8:12
- H. "My friends would ridicule me." John 15:19; Mark 8:34; James 4:4

- I. "My husband, wife, father, mother, brothers and sisters will oppose me." Matthew 10:36, 37; Luke 14:26, 27
- J. "My preacher and my friends advise me against this." 1 Kings 13:1-26; Acts 4:19; 5:29
- K. "It will cause trouble and division in my home if I take my stand for this teaching." Luke 12:49-53; 1 Kings 18:17
- L. "What about movies, rings, tobacco, etc." Matthew 19:16-22; 6:24; 13:45, 46; Luke 14:33
- M. "No, not now." Proverbs 27:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:13; Isaiah 55:6; Genesis 6:3
- N. "I am waiting for my husband, wife, or friend so we can accept it together." Ezekiel 14:20; Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:5
- O. "I will wait until I have the right kind of feeling." Isaiah 48:18; 1 John 2:3
- P. "My mother kept Sunday." John 9:41; 12:47-50
- Q. "Learned men keep Sunday." Ezekiel 22:26-28; Isaiah 56:10-12; Hosea 10:13; Proverbs 19:27
- R. "I don't see that it makes any difference what day you keep as long as you keep one." Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 3:1-5; 1 John 2:3-6; Luke 4:16

IV. FOUR BASIC APPEALS

1. Picture the love of God and the death of Christ for the individual—Romans 5:6,7.
2. Stress the influence of a decision on loved ones and friends — Romans 14:7.
3. Impress the thought that there will be only two classes of people at the end of the world, the saved and the unsaved — Matthew 7:13, 14.
4. Show the danger of delay and the closing of opportunity to be saved—Matthew 25:10; 2 Corinthians 6:2.