

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Focus on Evangelism

By Dan Barker

"I am persuaded"

Most, if not all of you, are familiar with Paul's statement in II Tim. 1:12..

"Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able, to keep what I have committed to Him until that day."

The word persuaded is an interesting term. Persuaded defined by Webster...."to cause (someone) to do, or believe something, especially by reasoning, urging, etc....induce, convince. Paul is saying he is persuaded (convinced) that Jesus is who He said He was, and that He will do what He said He would do! Paul further said that he was committed to Jesus until the end. Wow! What faith! Here is the thought/question for today. Are you persuaded? Are you convinced? Are you committed to the cause of Christ....especially for these

discussions in the area of evangelism?

Here are some quick questions for you to consider, (you know how I like to ask questions?)

1. Are you persuaded that evangelism is really something for you to be involved in?
2. Is there really a need? II Cor. 5:9-11
3. What does this mean, "the terror of the Lord" in the previous verse?
4. Christ is committed to you. Are you committed to Him? Really?
5. Are you convinced that God loves you?
6. Are you persuaded that Jesus really died on the cross so that you could have your sins forgiven?
7. Seriously now...Are you convinced that there really is POWER in the gospel? Romans 1:16
8. What about this talk about Jesus being raised from the dead. Are you persuaded that that is true? Paul was....Listen to

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- him in I Cor. 15:1-11.
9. Are you persuaded that there are those in "your world" that are interested in spiritual things?
 10. Are you persuaded/convinced that some of them would come to services if you invited them?
 11. Are you persuaded that some would study with you about this Jesus we are talking about?
 12. Are you convinced you that you can learn how to ask people for a study?
 13. Are you persuaded that you can learn how to present two(2) LESSONS to an interested student? Remember you will have a partner.
 14. Are you persuaded that God will keep His promise to help us if we are busy in the work of His Kingdom? Romans 8:31
 15. Are you persuaded/convinced that we as Christians, are truly victors - more than conquerors through Him who loved us? Paul said ...he was persuaded...Romans 8:37-39. Please read this one!

Can Prayer help us in our focus on evangelism?

I hope the answer to this question is obvious to you! Of course, the answer is yes! As a Christian, prayer should have first priority in our lives. Listen to

some of the things Jesus said about prayer.

1. "Men (Christians) ought always to pray and not lose heart." Luke 18:1
2. Teaching on prayer, Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
3. Jesus set the example by praying to the Father for help in every situation in His life here on earth....in choosing the apostles, (Luke 6:12-13), Transfiguration, (Luke 9:28, 29), reporting to the Father the things He had done, (John:17:1-8), in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44), plus many more.

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 3:20? "God is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think "according to the power that works in us!" If we are persuaded evangelism is our responsibility (yours and mine), and we go to work...God will help us do His work when we ask!

Can we pray for opportunities to teach others? Oh YES! Remember Paul's statement in Col. 4: 2-4? "God may open unto us a door (opportunity) for the word; to speak the mystery of Christ...as I

(we) ought to speak." Jesus urged His disciples (that's us), "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matt. 9:38

Think about this...If we pray for opportunities in the Greenwood area and we pray for laborers into His harvest....are we going to say?....."Here am I Lord, send me?"

Can prayer help us in our focus on evangelism? Yes, prayer can help us...but, also remember we must ask in faith! Nothing doubting! James 1:5-8.

Also hear Hebrew 11:6, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." What about us...When we as Christians sin?...hear Gods' Word, 1 John 2:1-2..."We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous". And also in 1 John 5:16..."If any man sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask (pray), and God will give him life". Also in James 5:19-20...Note what is said about those who are involved in evangelism...this should give us added motivation to do this work!

Prayer is a powerful privilege we have....let's not neglect it! Someone said, "We may not know how our praying

for another helps or aids that one, but our faith in Gods' plan and His Word leads us to believe that it does; so we pray. I like that!

Next week...."Committment to Evangelism"

The Valley of Vision

Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths, but see Thee in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin, I behold Thy glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine; let me find Thy light in my darkness, Thy life in my death, Thy joy in my sorrow, Thy grace in my sin, Thy riches

in my poverty, Thy glory in my valley.

--Unknown Puritan--

IS THIS OUR PROBLEM?

If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become ineffective in this world.

—Copied—

SAY WHAT?

Frank Puckett was preaching in a tent meeting in an Alabama community. The local preacher's small boy (8-10 years old) occupied a folding chair in the front row each night. One evening brother Puckett read or quoted Matthew 16:13-18 (KJV); reference Jesus' promise to build His church. Following the reading of the text, Brother Puckett asked the following rhetorical question: "What did Jesus promise to do?" The little boy, not recognizing a rhetorical question, piped up and said: "He promised to build His church in spite of hell." It brought the house (or tent) down!

--Hugh Fulford as told to him by Franklin Camp—

What Can be Known Can be Shown

By Tim Nichols

All rational students of the Bible want to be told, by teachers and preachers, not just what to believe, but also why those things are to be believed. Every faithful teacher of the Bible is prepared to deliver both in clear terms. Bible doctrines are all taught by specific Bible passages and the connections between them can be described in terms that the average man can understand.

Those who have devoted the time and effort necessary to mine truth from the gold mine that we call the Bible are able to clearly trace the path to the treasure-trove for others to follow. The Bible is not a mystical book that can only be understood by the scholarly few who can then only pass along the correct conclusions without expressing the reasons for those conclusions. Instead it is a living book whose meaning is available to all who will seek wisdom (Prov. 9:1-6). The true Biblical scholar is one who has truly discovered truth and who is willing and able to show that truth, and its source, to others.

This is why the pseudo-scholars of the first century stumbled over the simplicity of the gospel (**1 Cor. 1:18-24**). They demanded to hear what was "profound", "wise", "deep", and "intellectual" according to human standards and they were irritated with the "foolishness" of the simple gospel of Christ. To them, the gospel was shallow and they wanted what they perceived to be deep. When some with this mindset were "converted" they attempted to distance themselves from the simplistic, shallow teaching of the apostles and to elevate themselves as the truly wise and sophisticated in the early church. Paul's inspired sarcasm was designed to warn them and not to shame them (**1 Cor. 4:9-14**).

Pseudo-scholars exist among us today. The simplicity of the gospel is not enough for them. They are not content to simply learn what the Book of God says and to remain with it. They are constantly searching for something new and profound that will show others how wise they are. When questioned about the book, chapter, and verse of their novel "discoveries" they are not able to locate them specifically because they are often several steps away from what the scriptures actually teach and

separated from the Word of Truth by the great gulf of pure human speculation. Even so, they are seldom at a loss for words when questioned. Their answers emphasize their own wisdom in some way and suggest that their conclusions ought to be accepted because of the greatness of the miner who brought them forth. But they cannot point the way to the mother-lode.

One such brother argued, in my hearing, that we should accept his conclusion because he had spent several months studying the matter under consideration in the great library at Harvard University. A "televangelist" suggested recently that his doctrine was true because he had spent years with the subject constantly in his mind. Others are heard to affirm that their conclusions are to be accepted because of the number of hours they spent studying the subject, or because of the degrees that they hold, or because of their own ability to see what is not clearly taught. But they cannot produce a "thus saith the Lord". Such is just too shallow for the "wise".

The true Bible student who attempts to teach his subject to others is delighted to have questions concerning the source of all that he teaches. He takes those things in the Bible that may appear complicated at first and explains them in terms that a child could understand without the first thought

of whether he is or is not perceived by his hearers as "wise" or "profound". And he is not intimidated, in the least, by those among his hearers who call his work "shallow".

Pearl S. Buck, in her novel, *Pavilion of Women*, placed the following words in the mind of Madam Wu as she was being instructed by "Brother Andre": Now, his manner of answering questions was exceedingly simple, but this was because he was so learned. He did not need, as lesser men do, to talk over and above the pith of the matter. Instead, he knew how...to put into a handful of words the essence of the essence of truth. He stripped the leaves away, and he plucked the fruit and cracked the husk and peeled the inner shell and split the flesh and took out the seed and divided it, and there was the kernel, pure and clean (p. 174).

This is a good picture of a true scholar. He has knowledge to share but no need to prove that he is noteworthy. His delight is in helping others to find what he has found. His goal is to know truth and to point the way to it without seeking recognition for his own abilities. He knows that what can be known can be shown and that the feigned knowledge of pseudo-scholars is fool's gold. Any map showing the source of such spurious teaching would have to

trace a path to the mind of some proud pretender who desires to be recognized as a great teacher, who does not understand what he is saying or what he is affirming (**1 Tim. 1:7**).

So be diligent in questioning what you do not understand from any teacher of the word. Anyone who has found the truth can show you its source. Others will point in obscure directions or simply become angry with the questioner.