
Words of Truth

Is There A Better Way To Teach People?

By: Brian A. Yeager

There have been countless times wherein I have been part of discussions where well intended brethren have sought to find better ways to reach people. Their intentions were to figure out how to help more people be saved. In those countless discussions, I cannot recall one time wherein the Bible was the standard of those discussions. That is sad, for those well intended brethren have always agreed that we need authority for all that we say and do (Luke 4:4, Colossians 3:17, and II Timothy 3:15-17).

God wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:3-4 and II Peter 3:9). Therefore, we should want to do everything we can to help others be saved. However, we cannot lose sight of God's way of saving people. We are not smarter than God (Isaiah 55:8-9 and Romans 11:33-36). He has a way for people to be saved. His way is the only way. There is no better way.

God's Way

We could oversimplify this part of our study by quoting this Scripture: "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Of course, this shows that God's way to salvation is through Jesus and He alone. We know this question isn't as simple as a one Scripture answer. While Jesus is the way to Heaven, the means to get to Him is really what we are discussing.

The means that we are to use to get people to Christ is really the course we need to take in our study. Again, as we shall discuss, it too would be as simple to answer as one Scripture if we were so fortunate. However, reality is there has to be a greater understanding (Nehemiah 8:8) of the means to bring people to Christ than just a one Scripture answer.

The Means

The simple answer of the means to getting people to Christ is this: "*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*" (Romans 1:14-17).*

Teaching the Gospel to those whom are lost is the means by which we can help people be saved. What we need to discuss and understand is that is the ONLY means by which we may bring people to Jesus. The inspired Apostle Paul wrote this to Titus the evangelist: "*Paul, a servant*

*of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; **But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching**, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour" (Titus 1:1-3).*

The word of God is the power of salvation to all. The means by which His word is to be delivered is through preaching (Romans 10:14-17). A careful study of the New Testament will show any honest person that there is NO OTHER WAY to bring people to Christ than teaching them the truth. This should solve it. This should remove the many discussions and gimmicks that people want to engage in to bring people to the Lord. Yet, again, we are not so fortunate. People use the Scriptures to justify other things. For one, people use the argument that our example is a teaching tool and then they spin from that other means to try and educate people about the Lord.

What About Being A Good Example And Expedient Measures From There?

Being a good example is a means in which people can see the Lord in faithful Christians (Matthew 5:14-16 and I Peter 3:1-4). However, even being a good example for others to see still leads to the undeniable fact that at some point, the word of God is still the only tool that can be used to help them be saved (Philippians 2:12-16). Therefore, in reality, our good example is merely a means by which we can bring someone to the Gospel.

Consider some things... Has anyone in the Scriptures ever seen a good example and then on that alone was baptized into Christ? Of course not. However, each example of conversion involved individuals or groups of people hearing the word of God and then obeying it (Acts 2:14-41, Acts 8:4-39, Acts 10:1-48, Acts 16:13-34, Acts 18:8, and Acts 19:1-7). Be a good example to the lost. However, at some point, we have to teach them the truth if they are ever going to be saved. A proper understanding of this removes all discussion about expedient measures that can stem from how to be a good example. Thus, the remainder of the discussion is a moot point. Even after all of this, people still try to find other ways to "teach".

Other Ways

You and I are not the source of salvation (Acts 4:10-12 and Hebrews 5:8-9). Being in Christ comes down to the simplicity of living in accordance with His will (II John 1:9). Being "born again" requires that one submits him or herself to the word of our Lord (I Peter 1:21-25). Any other way is not going to save anyone.

Conclusion

If you really want to help someone, trust in the power of the word of God enough to teach it to that person that you want to help be saved (Psalms 19:7 and James 1:21-25). Put your faith in the power of the word of God that is able to help sinners really clean up their lives (Psalms 119:9). By asking if there is "another way" you are expressing doubt in God's way. Do you really want to do that (Job 40:1-9)?

Milkshakes

When Did Miraculous Gifts Cease?

By: Brian A. Yeager

Throughout the entire Bible we see that men and women were capable of working miraculous deeds (I Kings 18:21-46, Acts 3:1-19, Acts 9:36-42, Acts 21:8-9, Acts 28:1-10, etc.). The Lord also stated that these things were temporary. Notice: "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:28-31).*

In the New Testament we see that these gifts were given to men and women in the Lord's church through the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:3-11). In the New Testament we see that the Holy Spirit was given to men and women in the Lord's church through the laying on of the Apostle's hands (Acts 8:4-23 and Acts 19:1-7). We have already read (I Corinthians 12:28-31) that both these gifts as well as the office of the apostles were temporary. Thus, we know that both were established with an end in the mind of the Lord. The question is, when?

The answer: "*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. **But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.** When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity*" (I Corinthians 13:8-13).

Some people get really confused on what "that which is perfect is". Some think this is in reference to Jesus. That is an incorrect conclusion. For one, Jesus is not a "that", but a "He". Secondly, the Scriptures themselves refer to that which is perfect. "That which is perfect" is the fully revealed work of God (II Timothy 3:16-17 and James 1:25). The word "perfect" in I Corinthians 13:10 is translated from the Greek word "τέλειος". That word means: "complete" (Strong's # 5046). What was incomplete during the first century while miraculous gifts existed was the written word of God.

During the first century the Apostles and brethren were teaching things that had not been taught before. The teachings of Christ were called a "new doctrine" (Mark 1:27 and Acts 17:19). There had to be a way in which men and women in Christ could prove that they were not the source of this "new doctrine". They could not tell people to turn in their New Testaments to certain books. They were not fully written or distributed at that time. Thus, they had to be able to do something to prove that the things they were saying really were of God. So, they were given by God the ability to work miracles to confirm the message spoken was of God (Mark 16:15-20 and Acts 28:1-10). We now have the completed word of God. The miraculous age is over! It ended with the last of those given the Spirit by the laying on of the Apostle's hands.