

The secret in gaining decisions for Christ

"the secret of our success and power as a people advocating advanced truth will be found in making direct, personal appeals to those who are interested, having unwavering reliance upon the Most High." (RH, Aug 30, 1892) "In every discourse fervent appeals should be made to the people to forsake their sins and turn to Christ." (4T 396)

To lead people to a decision is paramount. If you don't know how to make an appeal – make one anyway! But below is some information that will help. People make spiritual decisions in four steps:

- 1. Information** – Is the message clear to you?
- 2. Conviction** – Do you see that it is God's will?
- 3. Desire** – Do you wish to experience the benefits of following the truth?
- 4. Action** – Is there anything that would keep you from making the decision right now?

As a Bible teacher we can share information, but when it comes to conviction we are helpless. Only the Holy Spirit can create it: "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (John 16:8). When the Spirit of God speaks to the soul, he experiences conviction of what is right and what is wrong. The Spirit makes the Word come alive and it pricks them in their heart. The person realizes that they are outside of God's will if they do not follow the truth. It is crucial to recognize when a person is under conviction. *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8) We can't see the Holy Spirit working on the heart, but we can see the effects of when He does. There are positive and negative signs of conviction, but both prove that the Holy Spirit is working on the heart. As a Bible teacher we must be able to detect the signs of conviction in the student to help him/her to understand that it is God speaking to them and help him/her to make a right decision.

Positive signs of conviction	Negative signs of conviction
Joy	Sorrow
Sharing/Telling others	Rejection
Personal application	Argumentation
Tears	Tears
Can't stay away	Avoidance
Lighting up of face	Anger
Friendliness	Resistance
Questions	Objections
Studies on their own	Refusal to study
Positive attitude changes	Negative attitude changes
Lifestyle changes	Rebellion
Restitution	Denial
Peace	Restlessness
Praying about it	Irritability

There is a difference between pressuring someone and persuading someone. When you pressure someone it happens without the person seeing it from the Bible. But to lovingly persuade someone with the Bible as authority is to cooperate with the Spirit of God. When you share truth from the Bible, and see that the person is under conviction, you should ask a direct and specific question to give the Spirit of God room to work. The key question is: "What would keep you...?" After the question is asked, you should be quiet. The next word is theirs, no matter how uncomfortable the silence is. It is in silence that God speaks (1 Kings 19:12). If the person has objections meet them with the Word of God. When the person has responded positively to the appeal, seal the decision with prayer. Avoid, if possible, staying for refreshments or small talk after the decision is sealed.

Things to think about when making appeals:

- Write down the appeal in advance
- You are pleading on God's behalf (2 Cor 5:20)
- Speak with confidence, which shows that the truth is real to you (1 Cor 2:4)
- Love for Jesus should always be the main motivator. (2 Cor 5:14)