

And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:32

## Store In My Heart

### Genesis 18:19

For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.

Note three things God says about Abraham in this verse.

Choosing Abraham was not random, but God selected him for His purpose.

God's intent was for him to raise a family that would keep the Way. God expected Abraham give the teaching he received from God to those who would follow. There was purpose in God's choice.

God's plan depended on this legacy. A people devoted to keeping the way of the Lord was needed for God to fulfill His promise. Abraham was expected to carry out his part.

God has similar expectations for us today.

# Almost Persuaded

## Doy Moyer

Paul found himself in a position of addressing those in governing power. He spoke to Herod Agrippa and pleaded with him to accept what the prophets pointed to: *"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe."* Agrippa responded, *"In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"* (Acts 26:27-28). Whether Agrippa really was close to being persuaded is difficult to say because we don't hear his tone. But Agrippa did touch upon a principle that is important: he knew that becoming a Christian meant being persuaded to believe what Scripture said about Jesus. Unfortunately, we have no record of his submitting to Jesus Christ.

A faithful presentation of the gospel message is no guarantee that those who hear it will be persuaded to believe. The problem here is not with the message, but with the hearts of hearers. Even Jesus, after teaching truth about who He was and what He came to do, was met with disbelief. For example, after teaching that He is the good shepherd and the door of the sheep, we find a mixed reaction: *"There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, 'He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?' Others said, 'These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'"* (John 10:19-21)

The apostles met the same types of reactions in their preaching. Back in Acts 26, Festus, the Roman governor of the region at the time, interrupted Paul with a loud voice, *"Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind."* But Paul said, *"I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words"* (vv. 24-25). Christians need to show that they are reasonable in their discussions, but even then some will think we are being irrational. They will not be persuaded because they have already made up their minds.

Some seem to remain in a perpetual state of being "almost persuaded." They hear the message, sometimes even admitting to its truth, but still will not commit to it. On another occasion, when Paul reasoned with the governor Felix about *"righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,"* Felix was alarmed and said, *"Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you"* (Acts 24:25). The message was reasonable and Felix seemed genuinely touched by it, but he was still too politically entrenched to move on it. He would send for Paul often to converse with him. Perhaps he was almost persuaded, but no record indicates that he acted on it. This may be the reality far too often, but we must keep pressing on. We can persuade no one without



having the conversations.

Many seem to be on the brink of being persuaded, and we want so much for them to respond. In the meantime, we need to be patient and remain aware of at least these two related points:

1. Be careful not to push the issue in an obnoxious manner. We can make our points and stand firm in our beliefs, but then we must allow them to reach their conclusions and make their choices freely. For example, believing wives were told to keep their behavior respectful and pure with unbelieving husbands so that *“they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives”* (1Peter 3:1-2). This does not mean that the message is never spoken, but it does indicate that people can be driven away if we are constantly in their face about it without giving them space to consider, watch, and decide.

2. Seek to live consistently with what we are asking others to accept. This is consistent with the above point. People will watch how disciples of Jesus act. For example, Jesus told His disciples, *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35). Similarly, in desiring unity among disciples, Jesus prayed that they *“may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me”* (John 17:21). These passages show that how disciples act toward each other will impact how people receive the message. We cannot persuade by word alone, but also by lives of love and unity.

Why some never take that step of faith and commit to the Lord may remain a mystery to us, but all we can do is seek to be faithful to the Lord and His message. Present the message. Live the life. Plead with others to be reconciled to God. Pray earnestly for them. But then give them room to process what they hear, watch disciples in action, and make their decisions freely. The Lord does not force anyone to believe. He gave us the evidence and He allows us to make free will choices. We need to respect others in the same way.

Almost persuaded? What would keep you or anyone else from being reconciled with the Lord? The day of salvation is here!

(It is often hard to accept that someone can draw so close to the Truth yet hesitate at taking the final steps necessary to gaining the peace that comes through salvation in Jesus. The advice in this article can help us with such acceptance and guides us with some advice that might achieve the final push needed for obedience. Let us never give up on teaching the Truth and let us make certain we are teaching and living in a manner that promotes it. DLH)

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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## For Our Information

Sue Soliday continues therapy on her arm and has seen some progress from the treatment.

Ruben Keisler is dealing with some problems with his feet and some blood cell counts are being monitored. Other issues are also a constant concern for him.

Dottie Henderson continues a slow decline. She is now almost completely bedridden and has difficulty doing anything for herself. Her children are working together to be with her at all times.

Jeffrey Melton has had to postpone his hip surgery due to insurance interference.

Sunday Evening - **Daniel 2:17**. Wednesday Evening - **1Peter 1:3**.  
Keep one another in your prayers each day.

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

