

# **IS THERE A POINT WHERE A CHRISTIAN SHOULD STOP WITNESSING TO SOMEONE AND TURN THAT PERSON OVER TO THE LORD?**

**to answer this question...**

## **I. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OUR OBLIGATION IS AS A WITNESS**

As Christians we have an obligation first of all to "shine" before others in this world (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14,15). To shine before others means to live righteously before others and maintain a good testimony (Titus 2:11,12; 3:8). Notice unless we are living right we cannot fulfill this obligation. The apostle Paul declared this truth in I Cor. 9:27.

Notice secondly that Christians have an obligation to "stand" for the truth before others (Matt. 5:13; Eph. 6:13; Phil. 4:1). This may involve disassociating one's self from others on certain occasions (I Cor. 5:9-11; II Cor. 6:14-17; Gal. 2:4-6). This may involve withstanding others at certain times (Gal. 2:11-14; Titus 1:9-11; Jude 3). Taking a stand may also involve reproving others for doing wrong (Eph. 5:11). One thing is for sure - taking a stand for what's right will bring persecution. We see this came to John the Baptist (Mk 6:14-18) and to the apostles (Acts 4:1-21; 5:17-40; 6:9-7:60; 8:1; 12:1-5; 16:16-24). Even so, when persecution comes, Christians should take comfort in what the Lord has said (Matt. 5:11,12; Acts 5:40,41; I Pet. 4:14-16).

It is a Christian's obligation also to "share" the gospel with others (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8). This may involve full-time ministry as with pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, but this usually involves telling others what the Lord has done for you personally and giving them the gospel message. The Samaritan woman and the demoniac give us two good examples of what we should do (Jn. 4:28-30; Mk 5:18-20).

Sharing the gospel with others is what the apostle Paul exhorted fellow-believers to do (II Cor. 5:20; I Thess. 1:5-7).

## **II. WE NEED TO PRAY FOR OPEN DOORS AND LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHINE AND TO SHARE**

To be an effective witness and win others to the Lord we must have an open door. (Col. 4:3; I Cor. 16:9). An open door to witness to someone may come through the visitation program of your church. It could come when a friend or neighbor loses a loved one or is sick in the hospital. An open door may come when someone in trouble and needs your help. Most of the time when unsaved people are doing well they are closed to the gospel and opposed to those who would witness to them. For this reason it is needful to have an open door.

To be an effective witness we must show love toward others and let them see Christ in our lives (Gal. 6:10; Rom. 5:5). Someone has well-said, "no one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."

### III. WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE OBVIOUS AND MAINTAIN A PROPER OUTLOOK

It is obvious when a person is closed and doesn't want to hear what you've got to say. When this is the case you will not be able to help him. To be insistent with a person who is closed usually leads to resentment or worse.

It is obvious when a person is doing things to aggravate God's people and he is opposed to what is right. This was no doubt the case with Alexander against the apostle Paul (I Tim. 4:14,15). When this is the case beware of such persons and avoid confrontations.

A proper outlook toward unsaved people is essential. Oftentimes Christians display a self-righteous and "a holier than thou" attitude which turns others off. Christians need to keep in mind that the unsaved are blinded by the devil (II Cor. 4:3,4), bound by sin (Eph. 2:2, 17-19), and are in desperate need (Jn. 3:18). Also Christians should keep in mind that the battle they fight is not against men but against the powers of the devil which are working through men (Eph. 6:12).

A proper outlook also involves a proper motive on the Christian's part. What is the reason behind the Christian's witnessing? Is it because he loves the Lord and needs to take a stand to be faithful to Him? Is it because he really cares about others who are unsaved?

It should be noted there was a time when God gave the antediluvian generation over to their sinful thoughts and practices (Rom. 1:24-32). There was another time when Paul turned from preaching the gospel to the Jews and went to the Gentiles with the message (Acts 13:44-47) but this decision was according to God's plan and in obedience to His command. There was a time when the apostle Paul delivered certain false teachers over to the devil (I Tim. 1:19,20). On another occasion Paul exhorted the Corinthian Church to deliver a certain man over to the devil because of his sin meaning to be consumed by the sinful things of the world (I Cor. 5:4,5).

Is there a time then when a Christian should stop witnessing to someone and turn that person over to the Lord? It is evident that some unbelievers are closed and unreceptive to any efforts to share the gospel with them. When this is the case a Christian can continue to be a witness by "shinning" and "standing" for the Lord. In such a case the Christian should continue to pray for that person that he might have an open door to share the gospel. And when a door is open a Christian whose heart is right will use it as an opportunity to show the love of Christ. Is there a time then when a Christian should stop witnessing to someone? I believe the answer is **no!**