

To Capture Hearts...

by Robert F. Turner

Having spent many years trying to bring men to Christ, and pondering repeated failures, I have drawn a few conclusions from experience. We may have trusted the story of the cross too little, and our teaching ability too much. We have relied heavily upon the assumption that if we could teach men **what to do**, they would do it. There is something to do all right, but there will be little **doing** (and none that is valid) until the subject is made aware of a need, believes in a remedy, and desires the result of doing. Information may be adequate, but **motivation** may be lacking.

Motive is "that within the individual, rather than without, which incites him to action." Peter's sermon on Pentecost made the hearers aware of circumstances which produced self-judgment — "we have killed the long-awaited Messiah. What shall we do?" Under these conditions the answer can be brief and to the point. There was no need for charts, diagrams, and argumentative sermons on baptism.

This is no indictment of defense and proclamation of doctrinal details. Where such differences exist, and are the deterrent to full obedience, they must be thrashed out. But in many cases if we would expend greater efforts to convince men of their true status before a righteously indignant God, we would not have to press so fruitlessly the details of His will. A man who realizes he is drowning does not argue about the color of the life buoy thrown to him.

We strive for mens **hearts**: casting down man's evil reasonings, his pride, and bringing into captivity his thoughts (**2 Cor. 10:4-5**) to the obedience of Christ. If we are more interested in winning an argument than in saving a soul, we will certainly fail in the latter, and probably in the former. We are trying to **win** a man, not **whip** him.

To change the attitude of others, so that they will be open and receptive to the gospel of Christ, we may first have to revise **our** attitude. We must somehow become one with the Lord Jesus, who *loved* and *sacrificed Himself* for mankind; not because we were lovely, but "*while we were sinners.*"

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