ASKING FOR A DECISION

*By Brent Hunter*

***3 SAMPLE REQUESTS***

Introduction:

A After a prospect has heard the gospel, usually the teacher needs to ask the prospect if he will submit to (obey) what he has heard (Acts 22:16; James 1:22).

B. Here I suggest for your consideration three requests that others and I have used effectively.

C. WHY THREE?

1. Three are given because it is often necessary to ask the prospect to obey more than one time after he/she has given an objection to the first "request".

2. The other two (or more) are used to do some additional teaching. This way, one asks for the same response, but in three different ways.

**I. Request #1 "Would you like to have all the spiritual blessings in Christ?" (Eph 1:3)**

A. Physical blessings are given at random (Matthew 5:45).

B. All spiritual blessings are reserved for those in Christ.

C What are some of these blessings?

1. Romans 8:1 -- "no condemnation"

2. II Corinthians 5:17 -- "new creature"

3. II Timothy 2:10b -- "salvation"

4. John 8:32 -- "set free" -- Free from what? Free from Sin - and its resulting guilt, worry, anxiety.

5. Summary -- All these things are reserved only for those "in Christ"

6. From our study ...what is the only way one can get into Christ?

Well, baptism is the only way...two passages show this plainly... Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27.

D. Look the prospect in the eye and say firmly and kindly -- ***"Would you like to have all the spiritual blessings in Christ?"*** (Yes)  ***"Would you allow me to baptize you into Christ now, so you might have these blessings?"*** (Normally they will put their head down and break eye contact.)

1. Do not interrupt the silence...Wait a while...Then if no response...

2. The baptistery is ready, the water is warm, and garments are ready. It will only take a few minutes to go to the building and attend to this matter.

3. Won't you do it now? It is not necessary that you be embarrassed in front of a big group of people. The important thing is that you obey God.

4. Remember to baptize at all hours (Acts 10:33).

E. Wait in silence...give prospect time...to think about the truth he has been taught and to make personal applications. In this way the Holy Spirit is performing open-heart surgery.

1. If prospect is not immediately affirmative, don’t be concerned; they rarely are.

2. If he gives an objection, then respond briefly and ask him to obey again using Request #2.

**II. Request #2. "A Hardened Heart or a Good and Honest One?"**

A. ***The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15)***

1. Seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11)

2. The different types of soil represent different types of hearts.

3. vs. 4-8--Wayside (closed mind), Rocky (crazed mind), Thorny (cluttered mind), Good (converted mind).

4. vs 5 - "some fell by the wayside and it was trodden underfoot and the birds of the heaven devoured it".

5. vs. 12--Devil comes and takes the word from their heart that they might not believe and be saved.

a. Right now the seed is lying on top of your heart.

b. You have two choices--either to let it remain there or let it germinate and bear fruit.

c. What kind of heart do you have?

B. I believe you have a good and honest heart, just take this first step "hold it fast, and bearing forth fruit with patience" (vs. 15)!

1. If you choose to do nothing...let it lie there...Satan will come and snatch it away before it even gets a chance to germinate and produce 30, 60, or 100 fold!

2. Won't you demonstrate your good and honest heart and allow me to baptize you into Christ now?

3. Wait in silence -- same procedure as above, except go to Request #3.

**III. Request #3. "Do you understand all that God has required of you?"** (Don't show anger or frustration but instead concern and puzzlement.)

A. If he does not -- explain again...and ask him one last time!

B. If he does, but chooses not to obey, say, "I don't understand why you won't obey these truths you acknowledge to be right." Then have him read one or more of the following verses:

1. Luke12:47-48 - Read

2. Do you believe you know the Lord's will for you at present?

3. You know more now than you did before we started studying. God holds you responsible for what you know.

4. II Thessalonians 2:10--"The unrighteous will perish (why?)...Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." Do you have the type of heart that will receive the love of the truth?)

5. II Thessalonians 1:8-9--If not, God will "render vengeance to them that...obey not the gospel!"

C. Do you believe the Bible? (Yes)

1. Do you believe that what we have studied is from the Bible? (Yes)

2. The Word of God invites you to obey His will, will you?

3. Will you accept the gift of salvation now?

4. Ask--"Is there anything to keep you from being baptized tonight?"

D. Remember, though ultimately "few" will obey (Matthew 7:13-14) this person has agreed to study the Bible, and or hear the Big Picture, and has in most cases indicated he/she is a true seeker that Jesus said could "find" (Matthew 7:7). If you believe the prospect has a "good and honest" heart then you need to let your belief in him/her show and expect him/her to obey.

E. Another possibility is to ask him/her to write down based on the Bible all the reasons why a person ought to be baptized.

1. Hand him/her a piece of paper with,"Reasons why a person ought to be baptized" at the top.

2. Then after he/she has listed several reasons, a) cross out "a person" and write his/her name; b) add the word "NOW" to the end of the sentence.

3. Have these changes changed what should be written below? Then why not obey now?

F. If negative response:

1. Pray audibly with him. Why is this a good idea?

2. We believe God answers prayers.

3. Prayer causes a person to see himself as God sees him.

4. Pray that your prospect will realize his sinful condition and how much he needs God. Ask that God give him the conviction to make the right decision and to realize the dangers of putting it off. Ask forgiveness for any mistakes or bad attitudes you may have had as a teacher.

G. Why is it important to ask forgiveness for any mistakes you as a teacher might have made?

1. When you introduce "dissonance" into a person's mind they automatically strive for "consonance". Something known as "psychological equilibrium". They achieve this by doing one of three things:

a. They try to discredit source of the dissonance--by attacking it in some way.

b. They choose to avoid the *dissonance.*

c. They ***change.***

2. Let's consider each of these briefly.

a. When you hear something someone has said about you, what is the first thing you want to know? ***Who said it.***

b. If it is someone you and others respect then it bothers you. If it is "some jerk", then it has very little impact.

c. People often attack the source (for example, they will try to convince themselves you as the teacher are some sort of hypocrite, or worse) in order not to have to deal with the message.

d. This can usually be avoided by keeping a humble attitude and asking God and the prospect to forgive you for any bad attitudes you might have manifested during the study, or wrongs in your life the prospect may be aware of.

e. This keeps the focus on the message and not the messenger.

f. Do not take attacks personally. Christians will be attacked because of what we represent. This is the reason for II Timothy 3:12. Even without saying a word, our life and actions will "judge" some people.

g. People will go to great extremes to avoid "dissonance". Illust. People who say, "I never discuss politics or religion".

3. You will find occasionally a study is going well and to your surprise the person calls and suddenly cancels the study.

a. It was going well. The person was wrestling with truth and began to feel uncomfortable about the idea of changing, so he avoided the source of the dissonance by canceling suddenly.

b. If the source cannot easily be dismissed or avoided, and the person continues to expose himself to the truth, the only other way to deal with the dissonance is to change! And when he/she does --he/she feel great relief and goes on his/her way rejoicing (Acts 8:39)!

c. Tell him he can call you any time if he changes his mind.

d. See if you can study with him again at a later date; however, at some point you must determine whether or not you are "casting your pearls before swine." (Matthew 7:6) Our time is better spent seeking for someone who is seeking.

4. Often after the prayer he will ask to become a Christian.

a. Pray again and thank the Lord for his decision and for answering your prayer.

b. Then ask the prospect to explain why he wants to be baptized to make sure he understands.

5. Remind him that he must "count the cost" (Luke 14:26-35). This would be the time to go over the "Counting the Cost" lesson.

6. Remind him that he will have a responsibility and a privilege to teach others (II Timothy 2:2). ("Evangelism is not complete until the evangelized become the evangelists").

**Final Note:**  Don't ask, "Do you think you'll obey eventually?" Assure him that you have confidence he'll do what is right. Often they will call up the next morning because they couldn't sleep the night before. Remember -- people often live up to the expectations others have of them.