

Gaining Decisions

Joseph Carty / General

Learn Ministry / Decision; Valley of Decision; Evangelism; Conversion / Acts 2:37–39

The main reason for a public evangelism series to help people make decisions and to reap a harvest of baptisms. Unfortunately, public evangelism is not always mapped out for the perfect timing of each of our friends. In this case, how do I work with a friend through the process of gaining decision when I'm not able to do so in conjunction with a public series? Or it may be that you are doing home visits during a public series to help move someone through the decision process. How can we do that in a way that Christ would?

Background of [Acts 2](#)

- Emotional Roller Coaster
- Jesus Died
 - Disciples lost faith
- Resurrection
 - Believe Again
- Meet Jesus in Galilee
 - Great Commission
- Time of Reflection

- guilt
 - confession
 - prayer
 - reconciliation
-
- Passover
 - united prayer
-
- Crescendo
 - Peter's Sermon

Acts 2:36 ESV

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- Jesus is the Messiah
 - we rejected Him
 - we killed Him!

- Most Powerful Conviction

Acts 2:37 ESV

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

- See Truth
 - recognize error
- Accept Truth
 - Want next step...
- Pause there in the story...

Gaining Decisions

- Purpose of this sermon
 - lead people to decision
- The art of Spiritual Persuasion.
- How to do this
 - Not being

- Used Car Salesman
- First,
 - Do not force
 - They make choice
 - Information
 - Conviction

Conviction

What is conviction?

- Definition:

the state of being convinced of something

- convinced (intellectually) that something is true.
- have not yet done something about it.

After a trial had been going on for three days, John Smith—the defendant—stood up and approached the judge’s bench.
“Your Honor, I would like to change my plea from innocent to guilty of the charges.”

The judge angrily banged his fist on the desk. “If you’re guilty, why didn’t you say so in the first place and save this court a lot of time and inconvenience?” he demanded.

Smith looked up wide-eyed and said, “Well, when the trial started, I thought I was innocent, but that was before I heard all the evidence against me.” (from Cybersalt Digest)

How does someone experience conviction

- Information
- Truth
 - Conversation
 - Bible Studies
 - Prophecy Seminars
- Received informations
 - Accepted it as truth
- **Now what?**
 - must take action

Acts 2:37 ESV

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

- In this story
 - they ask for
 - direction on what to do next.
- Great but,
 - doesn’t always happen.

Programmed non-response

- Help them take action!
 - How?

Comfort and Discomfort

Job of the Evangelist:

- Quote:

Afflict the Comforted and Comfort the Afflicted.

A pastor was once conducting a rap session with high school teenagers. He told them that they could ask me any question on any subject, and He would try and answer it. Their questions were typical of ones he had received in similar sessions scores of times before. As the session drew to a close, one girl toward the back, who had not said anything, raised her hand. I nodded, and she said, "The Bible says God loves everybody. Then it says that God sends people to hell. How can a loving God do that?"

The pastor gave her his answer, and she came back to me with arguments. He answered her arguments, and she answered my answers. The conversation quickly degenerated into an argument. He did not convince her, nor did she convince me. After a few more questions He dismissed the session. After the session He approached her and said, "I owe you an apology. I really should not have allowed our discussion to become so argumentative." Then He asked, "May I share something with you?" She said, "Yes." So he took her through a basic presentation of the gospel. When he got to [Romans 3:23](#) and suggested that all of us were sinners she began to cry. It was then that this high school senior admitted she had been having an affair with a married man. The one thing she needed was forgiveness. When I finished the presentation of the gospel, she trusted Christ. The reason she did not believe in hell was because she was going there. In her heart she knew she had sinned. Her conscience condemned her, but rather than face the fact of her guilt, she simply denied any future judgment or future hell.

- Must be clear
 - Testing Truth
 - Must Obey

- Not Optional
- Allow Discomfort
 - Conviction comes with
 - Guilt
 - Allow process
 - Holy Spirit's Conviction

“cut to the heart”

- not comfortable feeling
 - but needed
 - and directed by HS

There is a story about a man who sat in front of a fire talking with his minister. He said to him, "Parson, I don't think I'll come to church any more. Religion is a very personal thing, I think I'll just try to work it out by myself."

The parson said nothing, but took a pair of tongs and lifted a live coal out of the fire, and laid it on the hearth. They both watched it slowly go out.

Then the man said, "I see what you mean. I'll be back next Sunday."

Directing Discomfort

- Others need help
 - not tuned to HS
 - help them hear voice
- Can you see what the Bible says on this topic?
- How do you feel about that?
- What do you think God wants you to do?
- How can you make a move in the right direction?

Sabbath Issues

Bring Comfort

Some truth Bring Comfort

- Jesus loves you personally.
- Jesus is coming back.

- Mom is in the grave.
- God will deal with sinners, you don't have to.

When Benjamin Franklin wished to interest the people of Philadelphia in street lighting, he didn't try to persuade them by just talking about it. He hung a beautiful lantern on a long bracket in front of his home. He kept the glass highly polished. Every evening at the approach of dusk, he carefully lit the wick. People saw the light from a distance and when they walked in its light, found that it helped them to avoid sharp stones on the pavement. Others placed light at their homes, and soon Philadelphia recognized the need for street lighting.

Not Ready

- Gaining Decisions
 - starts with Conviction
- No conviction
 - No decision.
- Go back to Information
 - Don't force process
 - Allow Holy Spirit to work.

Ready

- Conviction is clear
- They often ask
 - what is next step

Pentecost

Acts 2:37 ESV

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 8:35–36 ESV

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”

- Other times,

- they are ready
- but need encouragement

Ananias and Paul

Acts 22:16 ESV

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Persuasion

- Conviction
 - Ready
 - Need Help
 - Persuasion

[2 Corinthians 5:11](#) (ESV)

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, **we persuade others**. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

- We persuade
- Why?

- Because people hear
 - see truth
 - convicted
 - but take no action

Bill stopped in at Abie's little general store, looking for a bottle of mustard. The shelves were loaded with salt -- bags and bags of salt. Abie said he had some mustard, but that he would have to go down to the cellar to find it. Bill went down with him, and there to his surprise were still more bags of salt. Everywhere he looked he could see salt.

"Say," said Bill, "you must sell a lot of salt in this store!"

"Nah," said Abie sourly. "I can't sell no salt. But that feller who sells me salt -- boy, can he sell salt!"

Parable of the Banquet

Luke 14:16-24 ESV

But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you

commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' ”

- Key verse:

[Luke 14:23](#) (ESV)

And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'

- Compel them to come in!
- Compel :
- bring about (something) by the use of force or pressure.
- Jesus commands us to
 - compel others
- Notice,
 - They didn't compel

- those with excuses
- They persuade those
 - who are receptive
 - not rejecters

Coaching vs. Teaching

Teaching is focused on imparting knowledge and learning, where the teacher is in charge of the interaction. It has little to do with the student as an individual.

Coaches don't dictate change. They inspire and direct the student to see and sense the need for change.

- In Coaching
 - the student is in charge
 - of their final destiny
- Coaching is personal

- helping walk person
 - through process of change
 - student at steering wheel
-
- Holy Spirit Driving
 - Student responding
 - Coach encouraging

The North Wind and the Sun disputed which was the most powerful, and agreed that he should be declared the victor who could first strip a wayfaring man of his clothes.

The North Wind first tried his power, and blew with all his might, but the keener became his blasts, the closer the traveler wrapped his cloak around him, till at last, resigning all hope of victory, he called upon the Sun to see what he could do.

The Sun suddenly shone out with all his warmth; the traveler no sooner felt his genial rays than he took off one garment after another, and at last, fairly overcome with heat, undressed and bathed in a stream that lay in his path.

- Persuasion is better than force.
- Coaching leads people
 - to see answer
 - without pushing it on them.

Conversion

the act or process of changing something into a different state or form.

- Converting money
- converting ice to water
- converting the heart
- Acting on the conviction.
 - so much so
 - you are not the same.

Acts 2:36–38 **ESV**

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- They did something
 - about their conviction

- They took a stand
 - we must call
 - people to decision.

[In the middle of the twentieth century a] young Russian communist went to a meeting one night where he heard a Christian expounding his faith. The communist was angry. How could anyone still believe such nonsensical superstition in these days? He went home, determined to write a refutation of Christianity that would settle the issue once and for all. In order to get the quarry properly into his sights, he found an old Bible and looked into it.

He didn't want to waste more time than was necessary, so he decided to read the shortest of the four Gospels, that of St Mark. It was only much later, as he said, that he realized that God has a sense of humour. St Mark's Gospel is exactly the book written for someone in that frame of mind: pulling no punches, getting directly to the point, portraying Jesus the Messiah bringing through his death and resurrection a kingdom that outshines all the political dreams of the world.

He read Mark again, then the other Gospels; then, sitting up through the night, the rest of the New Testament. By morning he was a believing, praying Christian. That man is Anthony Bloom, who went on to become one of the great Russian Orthodox bishops of our generation, leading his flock through intense suffering but always seeing reflecting the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Appeal

- Be a spiritual Coach.
- Lead someone through decision.

- Lead someone to conviction.

- If you want to

- Convict others

- you must

- live a convicted life.

- William Bathurst once said,

“O for a faith that will not shrink,

Tho pressed by every foe,

That will not tremble on the brink

Of any earthly woe!

That will not murmur nor complain

Beneath the chastening rod,

But, in the hour of grief or pain,

Will lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear

When tempests rage without

That when in danger knows no fear,

In darkness feels no doubt.