

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. Gal. 1:8-11.

How do you get people to do what you want them to do? Everyone has had the desire one time or another that someone would behave in a different manner from the way they are behaving. There have been very many studies on the nature of human motivation—why people do the things they do. There are many reasons assigned to it, but it basically comes down to pleasure—people do what they do because they hope to derive some kind of satisfaction from this course of action rather than another.

My mother was old fashioned and changed only reluctantly with the times. She did not reason with us when we were small; we simply knew that there would be more pleasure in obedience than in disobedience. This works effectively with young children and I recommend it. When children are small their minds are not worth much as far as reasoning is concerned, but they do understand pain as a negative pleasure principle. Even then, however, some children’s pleasure in their own way is so great that spanking will not change them: they would rather suffer the pain of corporal punishment than to give up their own way. So the affliction of pain cannot be the only motivating force. It is impossible to afflict enough pain on the sinner to make him change his rebellion. Those who trust only in punishment are trusting in vanity.

Certainly God warns the sinner that there will be great pain and affliction if he continues in his own rebellious way. Men receive the fruit of their own way, but this does not in itself persuade them to repent. Even when men go into hell, they gnash their teeth in rage against God.

A very strong motive in human behavior is the approval of others. We experience pain when people disapprove of what we do. We spend a great deal of money and time on our clothes, our hair, our face—lest we be shamed before others. We want their approval, and we derive pleasure from it.

Sometimes we have trouble admitting that we do these things. I taught high school students for many years and realized that some will go to almost any lengths to be non-conformist. Some cultivate the image that they do not want to be like everybody else. But even these are seeking to win the approval of their non-conformist friends. They will go to almost any length to conform to the prevailing standard of non-conformity among their friends.

There are different kinds of pleasure. There is the pleasure of the body and we have all fallen into bad behavior because of this pleasure: sins of eating and drinking; sexual pleasure; intemperance, etc. There is the pleasure of the eye: the desire for beauty and balance. “The lust of the eye the apostle,” puts it. There is the pride of life—the desire to have the approval of others, whoever they may be.

There is nothing more revealing of the nature of Paul’s conversion than these verses here in Galatians that I read a few moments ago. He opens his heart to the Galatians and asks a most revealing question. Sometimes the most striking truth is revealed in a rhetoric question—on in which the answer is obvious, or should be obvious. “For do I now persuade men, or God?”

- I. The Gospel of Christ had been preached to the Galatians.

- a. What they had received was the measure of that they were to measure by. No one had any authority to change the message. No human being—not even Paul himself had the authority to change what had been preached to them. No spiritual being—no angel even from heaven itself had authority to change the message—beware of those who dream dreams and seek to give you new ideas from God. The ideas have been delivered—you will find them in the Bible. The only thing a new revelation can do is to seduce you from Jesus Christ.
 - b. This message was called the “gospel of Christ.” The gospel is from Jesus Christ, about Jesus Christ, and to the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only way to God, and those who turn away from the Gospel of Christ have no hope whatsoever of eternal life.
 - c. Men are expected to receive this message, understand it, believe it, confess it, contend for it, and live their lives in terms of it. All of these things are involved in the idea of biblical faith.
 - d. What was at issue here was nothing less than eternal salvation itself. Paul connects the Gospel he preached with Christ Himself—to turn away from the gospel that was preached was to turn away from Christ.
 - e. The Galatians thought that they were going to get a higher form of religion by listening to the false prophets that troubled them—but they were going to get a greater and higher form—they were turning away from the truth and it would be a disaster for them if they did not repent.
- II. Paul then goes to the motive for his preaching. He uses a very curious word, that is translated “persuade” in the King James.
- a. In the active voice it means to try to win over to your point of view. For instance in Matt. 28:14 the chief priests tell the soldiers that they had bribed to lie about the empty tomb of Christ, “if it comes to the governor’s ears, we will “persuade” him. We will fix it so it will be ok. We will gain the governor’s approval and good will toward what you have done. This is what it means here: Persuade means: “Am I seeking the approval of men, or of God.”
 - b. Paul declares emphatically that he was not the author of the gospel that he preached. In verse 11 he “certifies” this to be true. He ‘makes it known’ But the word means more than simply to make known in the sense of making you aware. It is not simply the cognitive, but knowledge that brings conviction. These are some of the places it is used:
 - i. Luke 2:15. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the things that the Lord had “made known” to them.
 - ii. John 17:26: Jesus had “have declared” the Name of God.
 - iii. I Cor. 12:3 I would have you know....no man can say that Jesus is Lord
 - iv. I Cor. 15:1. “I declare unto you the Gospel...”
 - v. Eph. 1:9 “Made known to us the mystery of his will...”
 - vi. Eph. 3:10 “The manifold wisdom of God is made known to principalities and powers”
 - vii. Eph. 6:19 “make known the mystery of the Gospel”
 - viii. Phil 4:6 Let your requests be made known....by prayer and supplication. Stronger than just being aware.
 - c. This is also reinforced by what he had said in the verses before:
 - i. It is possible to be so certain as of the truth of the Gospel that not even an angel from heaven can move you away. This is the reason for the strong language that Paul uses—they were so wishy washy that it could be questioned whether they had faith at all or not.
 - ii. There was no doubt in Paul’s mind that the Gospel was from God, and that Jesus Christ himself had revealed it to him—to Paul.
 1. Because of this, men’s approval was not what Paul was seeking. “Do you think that I came among you preaching the Gospel because I desired to win men’s

- approval, and receive the praise of men? Paul knew what it meant to suffer for Jesus Christ. Paul derived no earthly advantage from preaching the Gospel
2. Paul was so convinced of the truth of the Gospel that he realized that he preached under the approval of God Himself. Are you convinced that your work is approved of God?
 - iii. True faith carries with it this kind of certainty. You should not be satisfied with any kind of faith that leaves you in uncertainty.

Q21: What is true faith?

A21: True faith is not only a sure knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word,[1] but also a hearty trust,[2] which the Holy Ghost [3] works in me by the Gospel,[4] that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God,[5] merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.[6]

Q58: What comfort do you receive from the article "life everlasting"?

A58: That, inasmuch as I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy,[1] I shall after this life possess complete blessedness, such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man,[2] therein to praise God forever.[3]

Q129: What is the meaning of the word Amen?

A129: Amen means: so shall it truly and surely be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him.[1]

Eph. 4: 14, 15 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

Conclusion: Who are you trying to impress? Who are you trying to convince. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth, then what men say is not important. Let me read what Paul wrote on another occasion, which is very pertinent to this subject. It is possible to be certain—we must be certain concerning the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the covenant that He made with His people.

Romans 8:

- 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.
- 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
- 31 ¶ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?
- 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
- 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.
- 34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
- 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

- 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
- 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
- 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
- 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.