

## *You Can't Make Them!*

Often the most dedicated, zealous children of God are disappointed in the response from others to the gospel message. It might be that discouragement is knocking on the door as we ask questions. "Why can't he see the truth?" "Why won't he obey the gospel?" In truth, they could see the truth and obey it if their hearts were right.

The fact is that Jesus was rejected by most. His message fell on deaf ears. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (John 1:11). Jesus was angry at some "being grieved at the hardening of their heart" (Mark 3:5). Not every person wanted to hear Jesus. Some were "dull of hearing" (Matt. 13:15). Jesus sent the Twelve out with these instructions:

*"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city (Matt 10:14-15).*

When stubborn Jews blasphemed against the truth, Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust of their feet against them" (Acts 16:31). In Corinth, Paul was testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Their reaction and Paul's response? "And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood (be) upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6). You cannot convert a soul against his will! We wish people would open their hearts to truth. Tragically, most will not.

Why? Why do people reject truth? Here a few reasons:

- Some do not believe in God and thus, do not accept Him as The authority (Rom. 1:19-25).
- They have no love of truth (2 Thess. 2: 10).
- Truth exposes their evil conduct (John 3:19-21).
- Some hate authority and being told how to live their lives (2 Peter 2:10).
- Others just really are lust-driven and enjoy sinful acts (Heb. 11:25; 2 Peter 2:13-14).
- Some love family more than they love God (Matt. 10:34-37).
- A large segment wants to tell God how He will be worshipped; thus, they do what they like — not what God demands (Matt. 15:3-9; Col. 2:23; Col. 3:17; Matt. 7:21-23).
- Some don't believe they will ever face judgment (2 Peter 3:3-4).
- There are those who love praise of men more than God's approval (John 12:42-43)

Remember that there are still those lost souls are who hungering after truth. They are marked by sincere and submissive hearts. We are co-workers with God as we plant and water (1 Cor. 3:5-9). God will give the increase.

Do not be discouraged. Never quit seizing the moment to teach those with whom you come in contact. Our obligation is to diligently search, looking for opportunities to teach others the gospel. The Christian must meekly, patiently teach those in error (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Our goal is not "win an argument" but rather to win a soul. Sure, there are times when error must be refuted (Acts 9:22; 18:28). But there are souls that are sincerely wrong. A kind and gentle spirit may help guide them to salvation (1 Thess. 2:7).

—Lynn Parker