



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Persuasion

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PERSUASION

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

A school teacher asked her students to do at least one good deed every day. She explained that the next day she would ask them what good deeds they had done. The next day the dialogue between the teacher and the students went like this: "Michael, what good deed did you do yesterday."

"I helped a little old lady cross the street."

"Yes, very good! William, what good deed did you do yesterday?"

"I helped Michael help a little old lady cross the street."

"Uh huh! Jimmy, what good deed did you do yesterday?"

"I helped William help Michael help a little old lady cross the street."

"And why did it take three of you to get the old lady across the street?"

Together the boys replied, "Because the little old lady didn't want to cross the street."

That's the problem which a lot of us encounter. How do you get people to do things they don't want to do, whether it's convincing an employee to arrive punctually in the morning, or persuading a teenager to clean up his room? The three boys used muscle, but there is a better way.

Guideline #1: Strive to put yourself in the position of the one you wish to influence. There may be valid reasons for not doing the very thing you want done. Putting yourself in the shoes of the other person may convince you that what you want done isn't that important.

Guideline #2: Ask, "What motive is there for doing something?" If a person knows that being tardy for work three times in a month draws a negative review by Personnel, there is more of a motive to be punctual. If a person understands that not taking proper medication may shorten his or her life, and the person wants to live, there is a very powerful reason for taking the medicine.

There are two powerful motives in life: fear and love. A man with a mask over his face and a gun in his hand stops you on a dark street and asks for your money. You immediately respond and give it to him--at least, I presume that you would. Yet a wife can ask her husband for money (no gun at all!) and a loving husband opens his wallet freely. What's the difference? It's the difference between fear and love.

For all of God's children there should be an extension of this love motive into the quest for excellence which glorifies God. Why? God expects the very best from his children. Paul wrote, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24).

Here are two people working the same kind of job. The Christian should outperform the unbeliever, working harder, doing a more conscientious job. When Paul wrote to Timothy he directed that slaves who are believers should do a better job than their non-believing counterparts "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (Titus 2:10). Like the three school boys discovered, enough muscle will eventually persuade people to do what they don't want to do. But as the saying goes, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

Jesus put it, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). That's the better way. In the end, it is the only way.

Resource reading: Titus 2