

Witnessing to Desperate People

Proverbs 16:26- A worldly mindset wants to remove desperation from people. If something is unpleasant or undesirable we have denial, pills and therapy, but all too often no eternal cure. We as believers tend to believe the lie that removing suffering is the highest calling, but suffering actually is a great teacher (**Proverbs 20:30, James 1:2-4**) to enlighten us to our true need (**I Peter 4:1-2**).

Job 33:12-30, 36:5-21, Hosea 2:14-15, 6:1, Leviticus 26:14-42- God shows us severe mercy to bring us back from the brink. Desperate measures are taken by God to call people to salvation (**Lamentations 3:31-33**). Should we work to merely remove what makes people desperate or use it as an opportunity to show them their true need (**Acts 3:1-17ff**)? Despair is the point at which many find what they have actually always needed (**II Corinthians 1:8-9**).

Jeremiah 23:14, Galatians 6:2,5- There is a balance between mercy (**James 2:13, 15-16, I John 3:16-18**) and sinful enablement (**I Samuel 2:29, 3:13, Proverbs 19:18, 29:21**), between letting someone's need drive them to the Lord (**Luke 15:13-20, Galatians 3:24, II Thessalonians 3:10**) and selfishly letting someone suffer detrimental despair (**Colossians 3:21, Galatians 6:2**). We tend to error on both sides. We enable to soothe our own guilty conscience and we don't help because we are selfish and lazy. Rather we should intercede for their benefit in the Lord (**Proverbs 24:11-12, II Chronicles 30:18-20**) and if need be hold back (**Mark 6:11**) for their benefit in the Lord.

Micah 3:8- We are called to declare to people their true need. Not a popular or well-received ministry (**Jeremiah 15:19**). Often desperate people can be the most hurtful people because in their bitterness they lash out like brute beasts (**Psalms 73:21-22, Job 36:13**). But not so with us (**II Timothy 4:3-5**), we should not be people sitting in the judgment seat self-righteously telling everyone they are going to Hell (**Titus 3:2-8**). No, we are to be people of hope (**I Peter 1:3**) as we speak the hard Truth faithfully (**Jeremiah 23:22**), yet lovingly (**Ephesians 4:11**). Declare the true problem and proclaim the True solution (**Isaiah 61:1-3**). Tell them frankly (**Leviticus 19:17-18**) and plainly (**II Corinthians 4:2**) the Reason for your hope with gentleness and respect (**I Peter 3:15-16, Galatians 6:1-3**), without arguing or complaining (**Philippians 2:14-16**) all the while building the platform of the message by living the Truth before them (**Ephesians 5:8-20, II Corinthians 2:14-4:2**).

Jeremiah 14:11-15:2- Lies delude people (**Isaiah 44:20, Ephesians 2:1-2, II Corinthians 4:3-4**). They are misled and destroyed for their lack of knowledge (**Hosea 4:6**), but our hearts should be broken for them (**II Corinthians 2:4**) as they are not the enemy (**Ephesians 6:12**). When declaring the warnings of judgment from the Lord it should be done in pain. If you enjoy declaring death to the wicked you have a heart problem and it could be a hindrance to even the elect (**I Corinthians 10:32, II Timothy 2:10**). It is God's to judge (**I Corinthians 5:12-13**), it is ours to humbly beckon with hope for their repentance (**II Corinthians 5:11, II Timothy 2:24-26**). Are you appealing to people from a worldly mindset or a Heavenly one (**II Corinthians 5:10-6:11**)? Do you look at people as enemies and burdens or with mercy and love? Even if the Gospel is rejected, it is not you they reject (**I Samuel 8:7**). Grieve and pray (**Philippians 3:18, Matthew 5:44**), do not become angry and fear, that leads only to evil (**Psalms 37:8**).

II Corinthians 6:3, Matthew 23:13, Romans 2:17-24, Ezekiel 34:17-21, Luke 11:23- Have you become a stumbling block to those desperately searching for hope or are you showing them the light yoke of Christ (**Matthew 11:28-30**) in your apparent attitude of love for God (**I John 5:3**) and them (**I Thessalonians 2:3-12, II Corinthians 12:15**)?

Matthew 9:10-13- Mercy is a higher worship than ceremonial homage (**I Samuel 15:22, John 4:23-24**), humbly reaching out to those who are desperate is greater than religious elitism (**Romans 12:16, Matthew 23:4**). But beware of the casual relationship (**I Corinthians 15:33, Jude 22-23**), such things must be done with a heart to save (**I Corinthians 9:19-23, 10:33**) not to relax (**Isaiah 32:7-9, Amos 6:1-6**) or be generally accepted (**Galatians 1:10, Luke 6:26-28**). We must be patient with all people, but deal with them according to their true need (**I Thessalonians 5:14, Ephesians 4:29**). We must have the Word richly dwelling in, through and from our lives so that we may have the grace to give the appropriate answer (**Colossians 3:16, 4:6**) and do the appropriate good (**II Timothy 2:20-21**) for it is Christ Who is the Word (**John 1:1, 14-18**) and effects eternal change in the desperate (**Jeremiah 23:28-29**).