

## **WITNESSING TO YOUR ELDERS**

Psalm 105:21-22 ... “He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom.”

On occasion, believers can be uncertain about how to share Christ with parents, grandparents, tribal elders and others to whom they want to show respect. You might think through the advantages and disadvantages of speaking to your elders about Jesus. The advantages are that you might lead them to Christ and usher them into a relationship with God that leaves them on the path to Heaven, where they will live happy lives for eternity. But some believers find the disadvantages too strong. They wonder what their elders will think of them if they talk about Jesus. They do not want to offend or hurt the feelings of older persons. They might also fear being left out of someone’s will, or chastised, or banished from the family or the tribe. Therefore, many believers remain silent and let their beloved elders go to hell.

This challenge is what a missionary faces when sharing Christ with persons who worship other gods. The witnessing attempt may result in hostility or cursing by the ones being witnessed to because they feel they have been insulted and their own beliefs condemned. However, in witnessing to a friend or loved one, the risks can be higher because if you fail or your witness is criticized, you might lose that relationship. A missionary witnessing to an unsaved person, has no relationship to lose, so the risks are low. Certainly, the missionary does not want to offend or insult an unsaved person, but speaking the truth in love is considered more important.

I have met pastors who will not share Christ with their parents because they follow cultural rules that you do not insult elders by challenging their beliefs. Young people who are very active in the church are often afraid to share their faith with unsaved uncles, aunts or grandparents for the same reason. Some believers even consider it off-limits to witness to older siblings. These are tragic decisions.

If you decline the opportunity to share Christ with an elder, you are submitting to a false sense of respect, a type of respect that is dictated by tradition or culture; by family rules or tribal practices. Genuine respect is born out of love. If you love someone you should try your best to show them the door to heaven. If there is someone in your life – a parent, older sibling, older relative, or even a teacher or employer – who does not know Jesus as their personal Savior, you owe it to them to share the truth about their future without Christ. Today’s verse from Psalms tells us that no one is beyond the need for teaching and wisdom, not even our elders. If God has saved you from your sins, you have an obligation to inform others. Only, do it in love without condemning or accusing those you witness to. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict people of their sin, not yours’.

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