

## **WITNESSING TO DIFFICULT PEOPLE**

James 5:19-20 ... "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

We all have people in our lives who are hard to get along with. If you are blessed, you might have just one such person in your family, on the job, in your church, or in your community. However, some of us have several difficult people that we must deal with on a regular basis. The particular challenge we have as believers, is what to do about those difficult people who are not believers. The tendency might be to give up on them without even trying to share Christ. You might say, "John is just too stubborn. He would never listen to anything about God," so you do not even bother. Perhaps you have a neighbor who curses everyone she sees. You conclude it would be a waste of your time to talk to her about Jesus, so you avoid her.

You might work for someone who hates God. To avoid being fired or demoted, you choose to not speak to him about Jesus. You decide your job is more important than his soul. Your college professor may speak irreverently about God and Christians, so you keep your mouth shut to avoid getting a lower grade. When I was in grade 7, my science teacher introduced the subject of evolution. He sternly challenged the class, "Does anyone here disagree with the theory of evolution?" I was the only student to stand and politely tell him that I disagreed with that theory because I was a Christian who believed the earth and everything in it was created by God. The teacher became so infuriated with my response, that he picked up an object and threw at me with all his strength. I ducked and it hit the back wall of the classroom with a bang. All the other students were paralyzed with fear, but I remained standing. The teacher then ran out of the room and disappeared (we later learned he had been suspended).

As a senior in high school I was required to take a psychology class. In the second week of classes the teacher assigned us (males and females) to buy a pornographic magazine and write an article on the contents. Some of my classmates were the sons and daughters of pastors, and most of them were Christians. But I was the only student to stand and respectfully tell the teacher that I was sorry, but I would not be able to accept that assignment. The teacher was intrigued and asked me why. I told him that I was a Christian and that doing what he required would be violation of my faith. In front of the entire class, the teacher excused me from the assignment and told me I could write a paper on any topic I chose. I chose to write about a character in the Bible. This arrangement continued throughout the year, with the teacher always allowing me to do alternative assignments when my faith conflicted with his course and me always choosing Biblical themes, which he had to read each time. At the end of the year, he announced to the class that I was the only student to receive an A for the course because I had the courage to oppose him, and to do so respectfully.

If you avoid witnessing to difficult persons, you may be deciding their fate. You may be sending them to hell. I do not know if my psychology teacher found Jesus through the numerous papers I wrote in my final year of high school, but I chose to make his soul and my faith more important than his ridiculous and immoral behavior. Everyday we must decide to either stand for Christ or wither and hide; to defend our faith or pretend to be unbelievers. What will your choice be today? Tomorrow? Every day of your life?