

CONFRONTATION

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Col 4:5-6)

It is often good to use tact and diplomacy in witnessing for Christ. When dealing with “outsiders” the Scriptures recommend “grace, seasoned with salt”. This has led some to “market” Christ like a businessman. Highly trained specialists advise merchandisers on how to make a profit, and churches sometimes use the same technology to win souls. Certainly every child of God must follow the unique leading of the Spirit in his or her own personal ministry. If God is leading you to use focus groups and marketing techniques for Christ you must obey His leading in your life. Paul’s inspired advice about “grace” and “salt”, however, needs to be considered in the context of his own ministry. Paul said: **“Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.” (2 Cor 2:17)** Paul’s approach to evangelism was much deeper than merely using marketing strategies.

The purpose of this brief article is to point out that “men sent from God” are often called to a ministry of confrontation. This often involves no tact, no diplomacy, no marketing research, and no attempt to be “seeker friendly”.

- Let’s begin with Moses. He had been a shepherd for forty years. Since “all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians” (Gen. 46:34), you might expect Moses to discreetly not mention his occupation. Quite to the contrary, God specifically commanded Moses to take his shepherd’s staff when he spoke to the Pharaoh. Even more confrontational, God promised to perform miraculous signs through the lowly staff of a “detestable” shepherd (Ex. 4:17).
- Nathan did not rebuke King David from a distance, but confronted him face to face for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12).
- The decision on whether to follow Baal or Jehovah was not decided in a quiet intellectual conference, but by a bold and public confrontation on Mt. Carmel (1 Ki. 18).
- When wicked Ahab went to possess the vineyard of Naboth, whom he had murdered, God commanded Elijah to go to that vineyard and confront him (1 Ki. 21:19).
- Daniel did not cower in fear before the most powerful man on earth, but confronted him to his face in the presence of a thousand of his nobles (Dan. 5:1, 23).
- John the Baptist was less than tactful when he confronted the Jewish elite and compared them to a brood of vipers (Matt. 3:7).
- Jesus began His public ministry by a dramatic act of confrontation. He went boldly into the temple, turned over tables, and drove out sheep and cattle (Jn. 2:13 - 16).
- Peter was the man God selected to preach at Pentecost. This, in spite of the fact that his thick Galilean accent would be confrontational to the sophisticated Jews (Mk. 14:70; Acts 4:13).
- Sometimes the situation is so serious that godly people must confront sinners like “snatching them from the fire” (Jude 23).
- Every situation, of course, is unique. Sometimes the man of God is to “warn”, other times to “encourage”, and still other times to “help”. In every situation, however, the people of God are always to be patient (1 Thess. 5:14).

Regardless of the way God leads you to witness, there should never be a doubt in anybody’s mind whose side you are on. Please - **“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.” (Eph 5:11).**