

Take Me To Your Leader!

Joe Slater

In the old cartoons, the little green man from Mars crawled out of his UFO and said in his monotone voice, "Take me to your leader!" A reasonable request from a space alien, don't you think?

The New Testament uses the term "alien" to describe people outside of Christ. They are "*alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them*" (Ephesians 4:18). What greater favor could we do for them than to take them to our Leader?

Isaiah foresaw a church that would be actively inviting people to learn from the Leader, saying "*Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths*" (Isaiah 2:3).

Jesus' disciples brought people to their Leader even during His earthly ministry. Andrew "*found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah,' (which is translated the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus*" (John 1:41-42). Likewise Matthew, when Jesus had called him, hosted many other tax collectors in his home to meet Jesus (Matthew 9:9-10).

We must remember that our goal is not to make a name for ourselves, but to bring people to Jesus. Paul corrected the Corinthians who had formed divisions based on human personalities. "*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitude "*because they were like sheep not having a shepherd*" (Mark 6:34). Let us demonstrate that same compassion by introducing them to our Leader, the Good Shepherd!

Try A Little Kindness

Ephesians 4:32 begins with "*and be ye kind one to another.*" The inspired Paul added to that in 1 Corinthians 13:4, "*love . . . is kind.*" Paul listed kindness as one of the qualities a new Christian is to "put on" (Colossians 3:14)

Glen Campbell had a catchy song years ago that suggested, "try a little kindness, then you'll overlook the blindness of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets." Our world needs kindness. Kindness is the product of our love for others. Love and kindness make the world a better place to live. As Christians, we are in the world to change the world by our wholesome influence. We live with kindness radiating from our words and actions. We teach the gospel, which is God's expression of His loving kindness to mankind.

Hatred walks our streets, is seen in emails and other sources of communication, bubbles out in our political arenas, and produces wars. Many follow a god of bitterness and vengeance. The world needs the loving kindness of God to be personified in Christians today.

In our day-to-day dealings we need kindness. People will do things that disturb us. We can either jump on them with spurs on, or reply with kindness. Which will have the greater influence for Christ? We are here to with them to Christ, not to condemn them to the devil! Our words and actions must be seasoned with the wisdom of kindness.

Every day in the news we hear of people who are unkind to their fellow man. But every day there are those who go out of their way to show love and kindness to someone who is not in a position to help himself. Christians should be the ones who are more prone to be kind; and in my experience, they are!

If your life has not yet been marked by kindness, try it – you'll like it!

--Joe Dale Wilson (Vernon, TX) via *Old Paths*

THE TRAIL IS MARKED!

"And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18 ASV).

In a recent episode of *North Woods Law* the officers detained two ATV riders for riding in forbidden areas of government wetlands. When confronted with their illegal actions their response was, "We didn't know. There should be signs posted where we are not supposed to ride." The officer's response was, "The trails are marked where you are allowed to ride."

I was immediately reminded of a response often offered by those who think that "anything goes" regarding religion.: "The Bible doesn't say not to."

One of the fundamental understandings that many people seem not to grasp is that when directions are given for what is allowed, it is usually understood that everything else is disallowed.

When trails are marked where ATV's are allowed it is understood that if there are no signs permitting riding then you cannot ride where there are no signs.

Most parents have experienced this with their children. For example, you give your child a twenty dollar bill with instructions to go to the store and purchase a loaf of bread. Three hours later the child returns with the bread and no change. "What took so long and where's my change?" "Well I took in a movie and I also purchased candy and drinks." "But I told you to get bread!" "But you didn't say not to buy other things."

It all boils down to a matter of authority, and recognizing who has that authority. Many are the examples given to us in God's word. For example, in Genesis 6 God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood. In specifying what type of wood to use, He did not have to list all other types and tell Noah not to use those. The command was specific and excluded all other types of wood.

Understanding and following the directions of one having authority is vital to doing things the right way. It would have saved the ATV riders from paying a fine. More importantly, as it relates to our salvation, recognizing God as the only authority, and following His dictates, will save us from eternal condemnation.

The lesson is clear: Stay on the trail that is marked by the one having authority.

--Roy Allen Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)