**HOPE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE:** Relational Evangelism

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**DO WE PUSH PEOPLE TO BE BAPTIZED?**

It has amazed me over the years how many preachers ask unbelievers if they want to be baptized in their first conversation with them; or even from the pulpit in an invitation. Whoa, partner. Slow it up. We need to lay some groundwork first so they understand what it is all about. Talk about getting the cart before the horse at times!

Baptism has to come at the right time and place, you are right on that. We aren't PUSHING for a decision for it right here, we are, as Ambassadors, presenting what the King has commanded. If someone is ready (after hearing three whole presentations) then we proceed with them. But if they aren’t ready, we don’t push for it.

Just as pushing someone to marry you before they are decided in their heart you are the one, or that they want to accept your proposal and commit to an exclusive relationship for the rest of their life, just having a wedding won't work. It has to come in order.

Often I say to people who don't or aren't sure about their belief or willingness to repent, that to go ahead and be baptized is just taking a bath, they might as well take a bar of soap with them.

But IF and when they come to the place that they do believe and do want to surrender, they now know what God would want them to do next; get in the wheelbarrow; prove it. Then we go on to the next lesson next week. I don't push it. People really seem to like this approach. They see I’m not trying to force them to do something they aren’t ready for; they see they can trust me; people like that respect. It is THEIR decision. It helps them relax and think more about the whole subject at hand rather than focus on fighting me on this issue.

I leave most of the heavy lifting to the Holy Spirit. I am the deliverer of the message. The Holy Spirit does the convicting.

So we come back next week, do lesson four, and then I will often review the five steps with them and see if they are ready to take the next step/steps. They often are.

If someone says they believe and have repented, then I will try my best to help them understand what baptism is all about and I will encourage them to be baptized sooner than later. They need to sign the dotted line, take the oath of the New Covenant. But it is still their decision. Some in their efforts to push people to make a decision about baptism actually push people further from doing the right thing.

Share the Scriptures. Listen. Pray. Respond kindly. Encourage. Leave it with the Holy Spirit. Keep praying. Keep loving.