

# You Will Not Be Recognized At Home

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Here, we see that God points us to the root cause of unsuccessful ministry in one`s own country, one`s own house, and one`s own family: unbelief of people who consciously choose to deny the change in your heart and reject the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ.



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## Acts 22:17-21 (NKJV):

**17** Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance

**18** and saw Him saying to me, Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.

**19** So I said, Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.

**20** And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.

**21** Then He said to me, Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.

This is a very interesting scripture that I overlooked before when reading the book of Acts. Here, we see that God points us to the root cause of unsuccessful ministry in one's own country, one's own house, and one's own family: unbelief of people who consciously choose to deny the change in your heart and reject the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ. We'll see that although Paul tries to argue with God and give Him all these reasons as to why people would believe him in Jerusalem, God simply states to Paul to depart, so He could send Paul to the gentiles far away.

Paul gave all these reasons as to why people should believe his authentic conversion and instantaneously repent to get saved:

- He used to persecute these same Christians which he is a part of now
- He gives account of his marvelous conversion on the way to Damascus
- He gives an example of him approving of Stephen's stoning to death and him being different now.

Yet after all these arguments God simply directed Paul to go far away to the gentiles. Notice that God didn't argue with Paul or tried to explain as to why his arguments didn't make sense, but God simply commanded Paul to go to the gentiles. This is how God operates: when He says something, He never tries to justify or explain as to why. The reason for that is because we have the Bible to understand that. If we look at the Bible to understand as to why God commanded Paul to depart from his own country and his own house, we see these scriptures being so clear that there is no other need for explanations from God.

Look at what Jesus Himself said:

**4** But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house (Mark 6:4 NKJV).

**But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house. 58** Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:57-58 NKJV).

## You Will Not Be Recognized At Home

Jesus said that a prophet would not be recognized in his own country, and God knew when calling Paul to his ministry that Paul would not be recognized in his own home, his own country, and in his own house.

The interesting thing here is we see Paul addressing the crowd of the people in Jerusalem many years after his conversion. This is the place where Paul watched Stephen get stoned to death right before he got saved, yet people's hearts didn't change; their unbelief prevented them from accepting Jesus and now rejecting Paul's testimony. We can clearly understand as to why God commanded Paul to depart and to go to the gentiles when reading the following reaction from the people:

**22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!' 23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him (Acts 22:22-24 NKJV).**

This is the same kind of response Jesus received in His own home town when addressing people with teaching. So many years later since the day God commanded Paul to leave Jerusalem to go to the gentiles, hard hardened Jews still limited God with their unbelief; their hearts didn't change.

God knew that the people would have mocked him, and the same way they rejected Jesus and crucified Him, they would have killed Paul. Sometimes to move far away is the best thing we can do in order to be productive for the Lord.

I think this brings us to the most important aspect of salvation: how, when, and why does one get saved?

It is said in **John 6:44 (NKJV)**:

**44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

Only our Heavenly Father draws people to accept Jesus because He detects our hearts and knows who seeks the Lord. Those who seek Him, they find Him, but it is God who knows and discerns the authenticity of receptiveness to the Gospel.

We see how in **chapter 7** Stephen preached his sermon, and at the end of the chapter he got stoned to death. In **chapter 9** we read of marvelous Paul's conversion. When we look at these accounts, we clearly see how only God draws people; only He can appoint time and individuals to accomplish His plans. Hard Hardened people stoned Stephen to death, yet the same hard hardened heart of Paul's was softened by the light of Jesus on the way to Damascus. Only God knew what was in Paul's heart; only God knew his zealotry for His word and what it would take to draw him near.

One of the reasons why I never noticed this scripture is because I haven't been persecuted in my own house before. Now that I know what it's like not to be recognized in my own house, I understand why God commanded Paul to leave Jerusalem and instead sent him to the gentiles.

For the longest time me and my husband would have these arguments over his unsaved friends, and over the years these arguments became more heated because it brought even deeper marital issues into our house. I would argue with him that there is no point hanging out with the people that drag us down, and he would argue that 'they also need salvation', hence, we cannot cut them off. The problem with them needing salvation is it wasn't like we've been praying for them or fasting or being proactive in getting

## You Will Not Be Recognized At Home

them saved, but all that time amounted to living a carnal compromising life. We weren't acting as true believers, and they surely weren't getting saved by looking at our lousy example of Christianity when our lives were a contrary statement to what we preached to them. What's more, when we met with them most of the empty talk amounted to reminiscing over the decades worth of drinking and partying which bored me to death.

Jesus clearly stated: a man would not be recognized among his own because people generally have a hard time believing when a close one gets saved. The people would try to mock, to laugh, to test, but in the end it is rarely when one would accept Jesus unless Father drew their hearts.

**4 But Jesus said to them, â A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own houseâ (Mark 6:4 NKJV).**

I think it also important to understand that God didn't want for Paul to stay in Jerusalem because he wasn't spiritually mature to deal with his own people.

Look at what Paul writes:

**33 Do not be deceived: â Evil company corrupts good habitsâ (1 Corinthians 15:33 NKJV).**

It is never the other way around, but the evil drags the good down because our hearts are wicked and deceitful to begin with.

**9 â The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV)**

God would never send you back to the world to evangelize your unsaved friends or family when you are not spiritually equipped to stand the test; He would not send you out on the failure mission. We need to be rooted in the word of God and have that spiritual stamina before we could tackle the issue of our unsaved family and friends. If we are not grounded in the word of God, we are vulnerable to that â evilâ that we would face from our past when dealing with our home town.

This is an important point to clarify that I think gets mixed up and butchered by many sermons when identifying whether socializing with unsaved friends is acceptable. I believe that from the scriptures that we read and many more that there are in the Bible, we should be clear that the person would not be recognized in his own country and household. If that's the case, than shouldn't we try to reach them out, and the answer is YES, but through the guidance of the Lord. We should always start with PRAYERS. From what I've seen in many instances, it is not the close relationship that gets your closed one saved, but the outsider; however, the prayers for their souls make that difference for God to send someone or something to reach out to those unsaved people that we pray for.

I think God does this also, so we don't get tempted trying to â helpâ Him win our close people for Jesus. He doesn't need us to act as â providenceâ in order to save someone, but He needs our prayers for them.

God called Paul out of his home country to train him for 3 years before He used Paul in the abundant ministry. You will be mocked and laughed at by your friends and family if you will try to reach them by yourself without the specific guidance from the Lord. In order to do it the right way, you need to spend a lot of time in prayers for them and praying for guidance as to how the Lord would want you to handle particular people you are praying for.

Look at what kind of attitude Jesus received when He tried to reach out to the people in His own home town:

## You Will Not Be Recognized At Home

**41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven"?" (John 6:41-42 NKJV)**

Jesus was laughed at by the people who didn't recognize Him being a Messiah who was promised to come down and to die for our sins. If people mocked Jesus, they would mock you too. I was no exception, so don't expect that you will be one. I remember when I sent my husband a summary of what God's done in my heart, and the kind of alec response I received from him; it just turned me away. I wanted to drop everything and give up on God. Jesus said: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house"

The flip coin to that is God would direct you to the people that would match your abilities to reach them because He desires to make your assignment successful. This is why He almost always tells us "to depart" from our family and friends in order to: first and foremost, get rooted in God's word to be equipped for His mission; secondly, to be sent to the mission field where we would be the most fruitful.

God didn't argue with Paul because He knew that once Paul started studying the scriptures and listening to the disciples of what Jesus told them, Paul would find out that he would be bearing much fruit among the gentiles where they seek the Lord in their hearts, while the Jews hardened their hearts and rejected the Truth.

This should remind us to always seek God's will, direction, and guidance which at times we forget to do. This could also be because we subconsciously know that it would contradict our desires. We tend to hide behind these "noble" goals to "reach the unsaved friends" while when we meet with them, they drag us down instead of us getting them saved. We should really examine our hearts and repent if we prevented God from using us for His glory instead of holding on to our own "mission fields" that only fail.

When God tells us something not to do this is for our own benefit. It is because He knows our hearts better than we ourselves. The best recipe to being productive for God's Kingdome is to shake the dust off of your feet in your home town if the Gospel is not accepted and move on to reach out to those who truly seek the Lord. The harvest is aplenty, and the crop is ripe, yet the laborers are few. Let us be those who would be obedient to the word of God and "depart" when God tells us to do so. Also, let us pray to be those laborers who could go and harvest for God's Kingdome to bring much fruit for His glory.

**37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38 NKJV).**

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