

The Ministry of Invitation

with **Tim Madding** | **NADEI LIVE!** Webinar



Tuesday, February 10 at 1:00 PM Eastern.



Persuade with wisdom and grace. NADEI LIVE!

Welcome

Welcome to The Ministry of Invitation. This resource is designed to help you think more deeply—and act more faithfully—about how spiritual decisions are invited, not forced. Throughout Scripture, God honors human freedom while lovingly calling people to respond. This tension requires wisdom, patience, and discernment.

In this training, we will explore how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit rather than rush ahead of Him, how to recognize when someone is ready to move forward, and how to invite commitment without manipulation or pressure. You will be encouraged to see decision-making not as a moment to control, but as a sacred space where God is already at work.

As you reflect, discuss, and apply these principles, may this guide help you become more intentional, more compassionate, and more confident in inviting others to take their next step in discipleship—at the pace the Spirit leads.

“As you present testing truth, ask often, who is now willing, as they have heard the words of God, pointing out their duty, to consecrate their hearts and minds...to Christ Jesus.....Each one should be asked how he is going to take these things, if he is going to make a personal application of them.”

Ellen White, *Evangelism*, pg. 285

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What This is About

This seminar is *not* about:

- Forcing people to make decisions they are not ready for
- Moving ahead of the Holy Spirit
- Measuring success only by baptisms or visible results

This seminar *is* about:

- Working in cooperation with the Holy Spirit
- Respecting conscience and timing
- Helping people take their next step in discipleship

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect personally:

- When have I felt pressured spiritually—and how did that affect me?
- When has someone invited me to grow in a way that felt respectful and Spirit-led?
- Which approach to decisions do I naturally default to—and why?

*“Here is your work. Teach the sick. Proclaim the gospel to them,
persuading them to become Christ's disciples.”*

-The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters, 227

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Three Approaches to Securing a Decision

1. The Passive Approach

- Truth is presented, but no invitation is given
- Responsibility for response is placed entirely on God
- Risk: missed moments of conviction and opportunity

“We have a definite need to be more aggressive in our soul-winning efforts. We cannot wait for people to come to us; we must go after them and do all that we can to convince them to live for Christ, and act as if we realize ‘the peril of sinners’.”

— Ellen White, Gospel Workers, p. 65

2. Undue Pressure

- Decisions are pushed through manipulation, fear, or guilt.
- Often produces outward compliance without inward conviction.
- Risk: resistance, resentment, or shallow faith.

3. Persuasive Influence Without Undue Pressure

This is the biblical model. It involves:

- Asking effectively — invitations must be clear and intentional
- Evaluating attitude and timing — discerning readiness
- Building rapport — trust precedes decisions

“Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:11

Biblical Models of Invitation

- **Paul** reasoned and persuaded (Acts 13:4; Acts 19:8)
- **Joshua** called for a clear, timely decision (Joshua 24:15)
- **Peter** invited immediate response at Pentecost (Acts 2:38)
- **Jesus** consistently called for decisive commitment (Luke 9:57; Mark 1:14–15)

"Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, the evangelists work will not, can not, be without fruit."

— Ellen White, Review and Herald, June 2, 1903

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Two Stages in a Decision

Understanding these stages protects both the messenger and the listener.

Stage 1: Belief

- The person understands and agrees with the biblical truth
- Focus: clarity, understanding, and trust
- Caution: Do not push for action before belief is formed

Ask yourself:

Do they understand and believe this truth biblically?

Stage 2: Decision

- The Holy Spirit brings conviction to act on belief
- Focus: encouragement, support, and problem-solving
- Risk: delaying action can allow conviction to fade

Ask yourself:

Are they sensing conviction to act right now?

Discerning Readiness: Key Questions

These questions help identify where someone is in the process:

1. Do you generally agree with what we've studied?
2. Including this specific biblical truth?
3. If not—do you not see it, or not see how to live it?
4. If yes—have you ever thought about acting on it?
5. If you don't see it: Explain it and then ask, "Is it clear now?"
6. Is there anything that would prevent you from moving forward?

Key Insight:

Attitude—not information—is the best indicator of conviction.

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Excuses vs. Objections

In asking for a decision, you will most likely encounter either an objection or an excuse. The most desirable plan for dealing with objections is to answer them ahead of time. Anticipate them.

Objections

- Honest barriers to obedience
- Must be answered with biblical clarity

Excuses

- Attempts to delay or avoid decision
- Often surface-level “screen stories”
- Signal cognitive dissonance and internal struggle

Important:

Never argue with an excuse. Instead, go deeper.

Finding the Root Issue

Ask gently and directly:

“Obviously you have a reason for saying that—may I ask what it is?”

Then clarify:

“If that weren’t an issue, would you be ready to move forward?”

This helps separate real barriers from fear-driven hesitation.

Application

Consider one person you are currently working with:

- Where are they — belief or decision?
- What excuses or objections have you noticed?
- How might you invite them forward without pressure?

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Final Reflection & Next Steps

Action Steps

This week, commit to at least one of the following:

- ☐ Practice asking clear, respectful invitation questions
- ☐ Pause to evaluate attitude before action
- ☐ Identify one “screen story” and gently seek the root issue
- ☐ Pray intentionally for discernment, not just outcomes

Closing Thought

"Now the minister is not merely to present the Word of God in such a manner as to convince of sin in a general way, but he is to lift up Christ before his hearers. Christ's claims upon them are to be made plain. The people should be urged to decide just now to be on the Lord's side."

— Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 283

Faithful invitation is not manipulation.

It is love, clarity, courage—and trust in the Holy Spirit.