

# Persuasions

a dream of reason meeting unbelief

Douglas J. Wilson

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This book is dedicated to  
my father and mother, who have been  
used by God to turn many away from the Abyss.



## Contents

The Road . . . . .	7
Randy—Immorality . . . . .	9
John—Antinomianism . . . . .	15
Janice—Feminism . . . . .	21
Jack—Agnosticism . . . . .	29
Rev. Howe—Empty Scholarship . . . . .	35
Mark—Atheism . . . . .	41
Robert—Election . . . . .	47
Jim and Sarah—Marriage . . . . .	53
Dorothy—Hypocrisy in the Church . . . . .	61
Bill—Salvation and Sanctification . . . . .	67
Miriam—Pantheism . . . . .	75
Paul—Evolution . . . . .	81
Michael—Roman Catholicism . . . . .	89



There was only one Road in that region, but like all roads, it ran in two directions. In one direction, it ran eastwards up a gradual incline, and ended at the City. In the other, the end of the Road was the Abyss.

In some places, the two destinations were obvious; in others, where the Road wound down through some canyons in the badlands, the truth was less obvious. Still, it was impossible for anyone to travel for any length of time on this Road without coming to some realization of his basic direction.

Nevertheless, those who were headed to the Abyss were also headed downhill, and preferred that to the strenuous alternative. There were many who therefore chose to ignore the unpleasant truth. The Master of the City had posted roadsigns warning of the danger, but roadsigns could be ignored as well.

The Master therefore instructed his servants, who were on their way to his City, to do their best to persuade these travelers to reverse direction. Some of them, discovering that the Master had given them some ability in this, became quite effective in the endeavor.

This is the story of one such individual. As he traveled to the City, he encountered many who wanted to go the other way, for many reasons. From long experience, he found himself answering them according to their particular objections. I have gathered here some of the conversations, in the hope that others who are traveling to the City may make some use of them.



Randy



As I dreamed, I saw a man named Evangelist turn and look down a road. In the distance, a figure was approaching. He was certainly taking his time.

As he walked up, Evangelist greeted him cordially and they began to talk. They engaged in what appeared to be small talk for a few moments, and I learned that the man's name was Randy.

"Where are you going?" asked Evangelist.

"Oh, nowhere in particular. I just go where the women are."

"And why is that?"

The young man laughed, and his laugh seemed to be full of both mockery and shame. "What do you mean why? Everyone needs a little now and then."

Evangelist answered him gravely. "Are you speaking of fornication?"

"Fornication? You make it sound like a disease! Sex is a normal and healthy thing."

Evangelist replied, "To be sure, sex is normal and healthy. But I wasn't talking about sex, I was talking about fornication."

Randy laughed again. "And what's the difference?"

"Fornication occurs when there is no marriage commitment. Adultery occurs when a marriage commitment is violated. But sexual activity within the boundary of marriage is something

that God honors.”

“God! God! You’re not religious, are you? What does God have to do with sex?”

“He invented it. That’s like asking what Thomas Edison has to do with light bulbs.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that God is the one who designed sex in the first place.”

“Then why do you Christians have such a thing about sex? You’re always saying who should be sleeping with whom and who shouldn’t.”

Evangelist replied, “It is a common misconception that opposition to the perversion of a thing is the same as opposition to the thing itself. But of course the idea is absurd.”

“How is it absurd?” Randy asked.

“If someone wanted to draw a mustache on the Mona Lisa, would that be an act of vandalism?”

“Of course it would.”

“If you had the opportunity to stop such an act, would you?”

“Certainly.”

“Would you step in as a friend of art or as an enemy of it?”

“As a friend.”

“But suppose the vandal reviled you as an enemy of all that is beautiful. How would you answer him?”

“I would not need to answer him. The accusation is absurd.”

“Exactly so. Absurd is the right word. And if you have understood the argument, you will stop accusing Christians of being the enemy of the thing they desire to protect. Sexual immorality destroys a very great gift of God. Immorality is vandalism.”

Randy retorted, “If that is so, then why are you Christians so hush-hush about the whole subject? If you think it is so wonderful, why don’t you talk about it more?”

“It is clear you don’t know very many Christians.”

Randy paused for a moment, considering the point. Evan-

gelist's argument may have made some sense to him, because he tried to take the offensive again.

"Look, you religious types are all alike. You look down your noses at people having a good time, and you're envious. You wish you could get a little action. But you can't because of all your rules. So you cram your rules down our throats."

Evangelist smiled and slowly shook his head. "I will not defend the rules; they are not mine to defend, they are God's. He will apply and defend them adequately enough. As to your accusation of envy, I have only one thing to say. If I see a 400-pound man on the street, I do not envy him all the additional pleasure he has had at the dinner table. Nor do I envy you your time in bed."

Randy stepped back several paces, looking confused. He was not getting the best of the exchange, and he was not sure why. He usually had a good deal of fun with Christians.

"I can't imagine anything more boring than what you say God requires. Making love to only one woman for life. God! That's like buying one record and taking it home and playing it over and over and over again."

"I'm afraid your analogy is a faulty one. It is not like buying one record, it is like buying one instrument and learning how to play it. If you are committed, boredom is not a danger."

Randy's laughter was increasingly nervous, and he had a hunted expression.

"I just couldn't live like you do. I want to spend my time around pretty women."

This time it was Evangelist's turn to laugh, but there was no mockery in it. "Then why do you spend time with women who are not? My wife, Compassion, is a beautiful woman, and her beauty begins on the inside. I have never been ashamed of her. I would be very ashamed indeed to be involved with a woman who was willing to be used as a thing."

By this time Randy looked very uncomfortable. He was looking at the ground, and he started to move away.

"I really need to be going," he said.

Evangelist put a gentle hand on his arm.

“Before you go, may I ask you one question?”

“Go ahead.”

“You have a habit, and that habit has enslaved you to your lusts. So much is understandable. But why do you boast in the vice?”

Randy looked at Evangelist for a moment. He was obviously thinking hard.

“If I come back here later, will you be here?”

“If God is willing.”

“You say that I am a slave. Do you know how slaves can be set free?”

“I do.”

“I need some time to think. I may be back.”

With that, Randy turned and slowly resumed his walk down the road. It was clear that, for the first time in many years, a completely different kind of desire had come over him.