

Heroes Redefined

We live in a world that works very hard to explain God's Word and righteousness in their own terms. Our society redefines love, sin, addictions, laziness, guilt, and many other things. What is sad is when the world tries to redefine or eliminate greatness.

I heard a pastor criticize loyalty and "blind followers." It just seems to be a difficult thing for some to accept that a group of people would trust and follow their pastor. This pastor mentioned these verses;

1 Corinthians 4:16, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

He said, "Paul said those things and you are not Paul." Rebuking pastors who would have the nerve to put themselves in that context. I am OKAY with that if a guy wants to fuss about it, but there are so many other times God speaks of this principle;

1 Thessalonians 1:6 says, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:"

Now this is suggesting the people follow a group called "US." That is more than Paul, but maybe some would suggest this is first century Apostles, not the pastor in "small town" America. OKAY, if a guy wants to go there, but what about verses like these?

Hebrews 13:7, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

This is not a passage about apostles, it is to the one teaching the Bible. The spiritual leader.

I have always suggested believers pick their leaders carefully. I have suggested that if a Christian could not trust their pastor that they should find another one. Anyone who has read the Bible knows there are false teachers. We know that there are men who were right on tract then they got away from the truth. So, we must wisely pick or even change those who would teach us God's Word and who would influence our thinking and the thinking of our children. (And that would go for Bible colleges as well.)

The big problem in this critical thinking is the hatred for heroes, the lowering of men to make them common. Our society has for some time been trying to lower greatness and lift up average so we are all the same. Let me be the first to say, there are GREAT MEN! There are mazing people -- in education, in the ministry, in science, in politics! Who

would not lift up the amazing life and courage of Churchill, or Patton, or Jefferson? Yet today, we see writers doing their all to demean, especially our founders in America.

As I said, there is much in the Bible about great men and men we should follow. Many of the greatest were soldiers, warriors, and lovers of God at the same time. But look at this one illustration;

2 Corinthians 9:23-24, "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf."

Paul said the proof of their love would be shown by their proper esteem of these great men, AND DOING SO PUBLICLY.

Verse 24 says, "Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches..." That sure sounds public to me.

Paul said Titus and others were "the glory of Christ." These men are gifts from God to the church, "the messengers of the churches." When we try to bring down or demean great servants of God, we are simply showing that we have no clue about Bible love. Paul said to prove your love by lifting up these men before the church.

Again, verse 24 says, "Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love,"

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-12, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

God gives the church some special people to PERFECT THE SAINTS. These people are gifted to lead, to teach, to fix up the weak spots so we could edify the body of Christ. Some people are amazing preachers, leaders, and teachers. Enjoy them! Do not try to demean their gifts.

I have sat at dinner tables with some great preachers, quietly marveling at their insights. One such day I sat with Dr. Bob Gray, Dr. Jack Trieber, and a few others, and felt very much out of my league as a young pastor. These were brilliant men with understanding and insight I did not have. The next day the same small group was joined by Dr. Jack Hyles. Suddenly, I noticed the ground was leveled considerably. Brother Hyles' wisdom and ability to communicate and understand our world was vastly above those I marveled at the day before. He did not lower the others, but he brought us thoughts, truth and wisdom, and we all enjoyed being there in that small, personal, AMAZING environment.

Enjoy the opportunity to hear greatness. Grasp tightly those few fleeting moments when you may cross paths with brilliant men and women. I am still in awe thinking of conversations my wife and I had with Mrs. Marlene Evans. Her perception of life and people was off the chart. She had humor, wisdom, understanding, loyalty, and brilliance

of mind. We need greatness; we need leaders; we need someone to turn to in our hour of need.

All of these wonderful people God gave to the church are not preachers. Paul wrote of one family who seemed to be something very unusual in the ministry in 1 Corinthians 16:15, "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)"

These amazing people had ADDICTED themselves to the ministry. They were great Christians, above the normal. Heroes! Paul then said what modern critics hate in verse 16, "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth."

Paul said SUBMIT yourselves to these awesome people. Submit to these heroes. Do things their way, follow their lead, let them chart the course for various events or response to certain trials. Do not follow the smart or the rich or the big talker, follow, "every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." 1 Corinthians 16:16

Do not let the world rob you of these gifted people who were sent from God to help us be what we could be for the church and the people of God. My life has been enriched beyond measure by the amazing people God has placed around me. Many of my church members I trust completely and follow their suggestions, they are gifted and brilliant! I Love Heroes!

I lift heroes up, I submit gladly to them and their pattern of living. What fool wants the average guy who has succeeded at little, accomplished nothing, and wants him doing brain surgery on his child. No! Give me brilliant minds, give me greatness of character, point me to those who have divine insights to the Bible and ways to communicate. It is life giving truth.

I love heroes!

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