

## Not About You

One of the subtle emotions that creep into the life of a pastor is jealousy. If a pastor has any kind of relationship with God, he will have a good perception of life. He will be able to see situations and analyze the best action. There will be difficulties, and he will know the answer. Simple Christian growth and maturity will bring this about in the life of any pastor.

One of the big conflicts comes when someone comes to you with a child who has a problem of some kind, you give them advice and they do what they think is right and ignore you. Feelings of jealousy or frustration may arise, and you may ask yourself, "Why don't these people listen to me?"

There are times someone will notice the ministry working — young people being reached and people being saved and baptized. You will find a church member in a public meeting (a deacon's meeting or a group of people around church) who will still be clinging to the failed methods of his former church. He may have left that church — perhaps that church never saw a youth department like yours or people being saved like at your church — and yet he clings to these old ideas that are ingrained in him. It is not unusual for a pastor to feel a little jealousy or frustration, or a little bit of "why don't they trust me?"

Realize that the ministry is not about making you look good. Of course, the ministry is about glorifying God, and patience with people who do not listen is certainly a part of Christian leadership. How many times do we have to hear something before we grasp it? Educators say that one has to hear something at least seven times before it becomes theirs; advertisers agree. So a preacher should not think that simply because he took the Bible, showed a truth, and explained a principle that everyone is going to bow down to his feet and follow his exact instruction.

Though Hebrews 13:17 talks about following and listening to the pastor, do not expect everyone to do it, and do not be so proud that you have a wrong attitude if they do not. Plenty of people did not listen to our Lord, including each one of us. There are times we know the will of God and we chose to go a different path. Do your best to avoid jealousy. We are here to represent Christ and we are not to exalt ourselves.

When Samuel grieved over the people's desire for a king, God reminded him, it is not you they have rejected but Me. This is not about my looking good or my being the one in charge; this is about a relationship between humble, simple people and a glorious God. Let us do our best to keep pride out of the ministry.

Dr. Maurice Paulson taught missions when I was attending Hyles-Anderson College. He told of natives in South Africa who raised crops but did not plow; they simply planted. He, being from farming country, knew to plow. Proverbs 20:4 "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

He kept telling the natives that if they would plow in rainy times the earth would hold more water and crops would last through the dry times. They failed to listen. One year as he was out getting ready to plow, a native came by and said, "If Missionary will plow in rainy season, earth grow crops better." He was so angry, he said to himself, "This stupid man acts like he thought of that idea..."

Then he caught himself and realized, it did not matter who got the credit, as long as the native got the truth. I will never forget this lesson. It does not matter if I get the credit, as long as the truth gets out.

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