

THE KEY TO GREATNESS

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***Matthew 5:8- "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."
John 3:3- "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."***

Perhaps one reason that many of us seem to have so much trouble with spiritual authority is that we sometimes fail to see the presence of God in our leadership. If this is the case, then we need to examine ourselves and make certain that it is not because we ourselves are spiritually blind and simply cannot perceive God at all. If our leaders are truly walking in the will of God, then perhaps it is *we*, and not they, who are the true source of the problem. A person whose heart and mind has not been renewed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit will have trouble discerning the movement, operation, even the very presence of God in his own life, let alone the lives of those that God has placed over him. The Bible tells us that "the natural (or carnal, or fleshly) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (2Cor.2:14). Hence, having neither spiritual discernment nor biblical faith, we find it difficult to submit to whom we cannot see. The solution is that we must go back and determine how well grounded we are in the foundational truths of the Christian faith. Also, we need to be certain that we are filled with and renewed by the Holy Ghost. The saints of old used to say, "If you're not sure, then you don't have it." This may sound old-fashioned and out of date to our modern sensibilities, but if we have set out on a journey, and have neglected to bring with us the necessary spiritual equipment for the trip, then we must humble ourselves, and return to where we started (Rev. 2:5). This is hard on our flesh, but in the long run, it is the best thing that we can do for ourselves, our families, and our churches. ***The only short-cuts are those that are offered by the devil (Matt.4:1-11).***

Submission to authority helps to prepare us for ministry. Many of

us feel that we are called by God to do certain things, but will not allow anyone to tell us anything. Our pride causes us to forget that "fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov.1:7). We want to be great preachers, teachers, prophets and evangelists, but refuse to allow the leadership of our local bodies to lead and guide us as God has ordained that they should do. More than a few of us have decided to forego being under leadership, taken a title for ourselves, started churches, or gone out on our own under the pretext of serving God. Our intentions may be good, but if our true motive is that we "just don't feel like being in *nobody's* church", as opposed to having clear direction from God, then we are in **OPEN REBELLION**, and need to repent and submit ourselves to leadership. How can we stand the hardships of ministering in prisons and hospitals if we have no problem with staying at home from church when we feel the least bit sick or tired? How can we lead great ministries and evangelize in Third World countries when we are perfectly willing to argue with our local leaders over the smallest matters? There are times when we will hear someone say, "I can obey God, but I don't have to obey man." This is a most dangerous and foolish assertion, which, quite frankly, is often spoken in ignorance. Such people are, generally, not intentionally rebellious, but have not yet learned that there is such a thing as God's *representative* authority, as well as his *direct* authority. One cannot be subject to one, yet reject the other, and still please God.

As Watchman Nee, in his book, *Spiritual Authority*, states:

"...God, and his delegated authority (i.e. church leaders), are inseparable. It is not possible to maintain one attitude towards God and another attitude towards Moses and Aaron. No one can reject God's delegated authority with one hand and receive God with the other hand. If they would submit themselves to the authority of Moses and Aaron, they would then be in subjection to God."

Let us remember that we are "workers together with him" (2Cor.6:1). To reject the servant is to reject the One who sent him. Also, one's fitness to be an authority is measured by his willingness to submit himself to authority. It is imperative that we realize that leadership begins with following. It can truly be said of

every great Christian leader, from the Apostles onward, that he was first a follower (Lk.5:11). If we are going to "dish it out", then we must learn to "take it". If we do not become submissive, obedient followers, we will never lead anyone, anywhere.

1 John 5:7- "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

We must never claim to be led by the Spirit of God, and then refuse to submit ourselves to the authority of the Word of God, and vice versa. God is not going to tell us to do anything that contradicts his Word. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost always operate in unity (Gen.1:1-2). Jesus told the Pharisees that his words and actions originated in the words and actions of the Father (Jn.8:38). The Holy Spirit does not move outside of the Father's will. The three persons of the Trinity never contradict one another. Why would God place us in a local church, under the leadership of that church, and then call us to minister, both inside and outside of the church, in direct opposition to the Scriptures ("...obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Heb.13:17) and against the direction and vision that God has given to that leader? Remember, "...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft..." (1Sam.15:23), and the same spirit that moved King Saul to oppose God's will will operate in us if we allow it to. If God has called us, then he has called us first to obedience, to submission, and to humility. Our primary work as saints of God, called to the ministry of reconciliation, as stated in 2Cor.5:19-20, may be outside of the church building, but "he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov.11:30). One of the ways in which we learn wisdom is by submitting to, and serving under, strong biblical leadership. It is in the local church that we learn to work with others, to follow directions, to serve effectively, and to "rightly divide the word of truth". If we do not learn to "wait on our ministering", we will not minister at all. We will only bring confusion and disorder to the Body of Christ. Let us learn to recognize God's authority as he has delegated it, both to individuals and to organizations. As 1Pet.5:6 states, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in due time." **SUBMISSION IS THE KEY TO GREATNESS IN GOD.**

