
Words of Truth

Those That Are Power Hungry

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Let me first write, as to be clear at the onset of this study, it is not necessarily wrong for a man to desire a position of authority. Notice: *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"* (I Timothy 3:1). From that Scripture, we see that a man may desire [set his heart upon] a position of authority amongst the saints. The office of a bishop [overseer; elder; shepherd] is a qualified position amongst the saints (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) that does give him power [authority] (Acts 11:27-30, Acts 16:4, Acts 20:28-31, I Timothy 5:17, and I Peter 5:1-4). Now that we have made it clear that desiring authority is not wrong in itself, let's get on with what we are going to study.

What I am getting at in this article is not to state or imply positions of authority are wrong. Nor am I stating that the desire for authority for good reason is wrong. This is certainly a study that goes beyond the discussion of a position of authority. We are really going to be studying motives. We have to consider not just that a man may desire to be in authority, but why he desires such.

Motives are a hard thing to consider and discuss. As Christians we are instructed not to judge according to appearance (John 7:24). Thus, we cannot just jump to the conclusion that when a person is seeking a position of authority that they are doing so with impure motives. Therefore, we have to be aware of some of the impure motives that can be behind the desire for a position of power. Let's start with those that want to be in authority to have preeminence amongst the saints.

Those That Are Ambitious Of Distinction

Take note of this inspired example: *"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God"* (III John 1:9-11). Some of us have met individuals that resemble Diotrephes. These are people that want to have positions of distinction because they love the attention and/or prestige. They want to stand out. Is that mindset one of humility as Christians ought to have (I Peter 5:5-6)?

How does Jesus view those that want to stand above others for their own glory? Notice the answer: *"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we*

would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:35-45).

We can see from Jesus’ response to the request of James and John that He does not approve of the desire to be prestigious. He spoke in condemnation of the scribes and the Pharisees for such desires (Matthew 23:1-10). Jesus stated: *“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant”* (Matthew 23:11). That brings us to another impure motive behind those that want to have power.

Those That Want Power To Enslave Others To Their Own Will

Some desire to be put in authority over others so that they can bind their desires upon others (i.e. Luke 11:46 and Galatians 6:12-13). These are people who want to be elders, teachers, or evangelists so that they may have opportunities to impose their will upon others. They are forceful and manipulative. Their desire is not to serve others for sake of helping others be saved. Rather, they desire to have a position to appear as servants only to serve their own carnal ambitions. Truly, *“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed”* (Isaiah 10:1).

Faithful Christians are never going to be movers of their own agendas. Faithful Christians will always desire to honor others rather than seek their own honor (Romans 12:10 and Romans 12:16). Faithful Christians have learned from the Lord to serve each other (Galatians 5:13). Faithful Christians esteem others better than themselves and desire to look to the benefit of others rather than being self-serving (Philippians 2:1-8). The strong brothers and sisters in Christ will not seek to force their will upon the weak, but rather will seek to find lawful ways to serve and please the weak (Romans 15:1-3). Those proper mindsets do not exist in those that want power over others to their own service.

Conclusion

I certainly was minded to cover more than we have, but in the little that we’ve studied we can see some of the dangers in being power hungry. Let’s always examine ourselves and others to ensure any desire to lead is a desire to serve others rather than one’s self (II Corinthians 4:5).