
Words of Truth

Do Not Exalt Men

By: Brian A. Yeager

People like to be exalted. People like to exalt other people. Be the “greatest” is not just a theme, it is a life goal for many people. Recognition is both desired and often given. I saw three Facebook pages of so-called “preachers” within so-called “churches of Christ”. They posted step by step things they did that they think are “good works”. The praise they got was enormous by THEIR followers. Many people “liked” the pictures of them baptizing people. Is that what Jesus wants us doing? Should we be seeking praise for our “good works” (Matthew 6:1-7)? Should we be advertising those whom we baptize (John 4:1-2 and I Corinthians 1:10-17)?

It is not just a problem of our day or of our country. Even when Jesus walked in the flesh upon this earth, men sought to be recognized. Notice: *“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”* (Matthew 23:1-12).

For those who want to be exalted, they'll often do things just to be praised by men. In fact, some will even disobey God if it will get them praise from men. Notice: *“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:37-43).

There will always be those who seek glory of men. There will also be those who do their best **not** to be glorified by men (Acts 14:8-18 and I Thessalonians 2:1-6). If there were

more people who did not desire glory this subject would not need to be covered. Nonetheless, there is the problem of glory seekers that needs to be dealt with. As faithful Christians, we need to work hard at NOT glorifying men. This can be hard to balance since we are to give honor one to another (Romans 12:10 and I Peter 2:17). We have to find that balance though and be sure not to exalt someone above his or her place.

We Cannot Put Someone Higher Than God Has

It is hard for a glory-seeker to get what he or she wants if we do not give it to them. If you want to help these types of people, realize that glory is their "drug of choice". Don't give it to them. Teach them that they should seek the glory that comes only from God (John 5:44). When you notice someone is a glory-seeker, teach them. Remind those individuals that even when he or she has done something great, they are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10). Remind that person that the abilities we have are God given (I Peter 4:11).

It is wrong to exalt men and women to a status above where God has put them. Notice how Jesus handled a situation wherein men wanted to be exalted: *"And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"* (Luke 14:7-11).

When we do have great men and women among us, they will not need glory. They will have a full understanding of who they are and why. Jesus said: *"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant"* (Matthew 20:27). Paul, who was an Apostle, said: *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more"* (I Corinthians 9:19). Brethren, if we are going to give greater honor to anyone, let it be those among us who are lesser than others that there may be equality (I Corinthians 12:20-27).

If we end up glorifying the glory-seeker all we are doing is helping that person to be lost. A person who wants glory lacks humility. In that state of mind and being, that person is going to be rejected by our Lord (James 4:6-10). Let's not be part of helping someone be lost. Rather, let's be the ones who help humble the proud before they are humbled by God!

Conclusion

To God only belongs the glory that many men seek (Romans 16:27 and Philippians 4:20). When man is exalted let it be by the hand of God in due time (I Peter 5:6). Understand the balance between honoring while not exalting one another. Thus, in conclusion, consider whom exaltation belongs to: *"Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all"* (I Chronicles 29:11).