

## That Your Faith Should Not Be In The Wisdom Of Men

by Hendrik Joubert

What is the difference between low self-esteem and humility? When the Lord instructs us through Paul “***Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself,***” (Philippians 2:3 NKJV) in what way am I to consider others *better than* myself? When am I to submit to the preference of another and when am I not to *yield in submission even for an hour?* (Galatians 2:5)

The answers to these questions are not always as simple as they seem – does my differentiation agree with that of the Lord? How does this influence my relationship with my brothers and sisters in Christ? More importantly, how does my relationship with them influence my ability to correctly distinguish so I may maintain a proper relationship with God and Christ – How do we keep our preferences and our concessions from becoming *better* than Christ and take away the glory which belongs to God, through Him? (2Peter 4:11)

It is a challenge to get people to consider the fact that we are sinners, condemned to eternal damnation and therefore desperately in need of the gracious forgiveness of God. (Romans 3:23, Luke 13:1-5) We are not *safe* unless we really mess up badly; we are lost in our wickedness unless we (by faith) *call upon the Name of the Lord.* (Romans 10:13-17) It seems we feel that this kind of negative talk takes away our dignity and encourages low self-esteem. Sure we are sinners; however we are not *that* bad...

How does this attitude influence our sense of urgency; and our level of commitment? Do we truly humble ourselves in order that Christ may be the One lifting us up, and not we ourselves? (Luke 14:11; James 4:10) Are we justified in the diplomacy we often use to soften this *ugly fact* in order to get sinners to *join* the church? I realize we may not stoop as low as to invite them to *join*, but do the concessions we make stimulate the awareness of the terribleness of sin; that we are lost in our sin unless we are pardoned by God; and that on His terms? Do we in this sense become guilty of making *Church* members rather than helping sinners to be saved so God would add them to *the church?* (Acts 2:36-47)

Should we bribe sinners with all kinds of incentives into listening, hoping that they would develop the sensitivity and awareness it takes to submit to God totally - become living sacrifices? (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 12:1-2) Should we divert their attention so we may cunningly convince them to *repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance?* (Acts 26:20 NKJV) May we justify the concessions we make in the name of being *wise as serpents and harmless as doves?* (Matthew 10:16 NKJV)

What did the Lord intend to communicate when He warned through Peter: *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?* <sup>18</sup> Now ***"IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?"*** (1Peter 4:17-18 NKJV)

The gospel of God contains His righteousness, i.e. the manner in which a sinner may become and remain righteous in the sight of God. By His grace He decided to offer sinners the opportunity for salvation. The grace of God is not merely an abstract concept referring to a free gift in the sense that there is absolutely nothing for man to do in order to receive this grace of God. The sinner has to obey the gospel, which is also referred to as *the grace of God that brings salvation*, which is said to teach *us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,...* (Titus 2:11-12)

How much does it take to contaminate the gospel of God? How quickly do we discourage the deep consciousness of our serious dilemma, and the necessity of a total submission to God? The apostle Paul would not use clever speech so that the faith of sinners should be in God's power and not in his abilities or his smartness. (1Corinthians 2:4-5) Was this simply an obsession with the apostle?

Do efforts to entertain and to make the message more palatable not reveal a lack of faith in the gospel of Christ? The focus should be on our sinfulness and our need to repent without misusing or abusing the grace of God. Trusting in our own powers as we make adjustments to the gospel amount not only to rebellion, but also idolatry as we *worship* ourselves and please others rather than God. Why did the apostle not think of all the wonderful aids we come up with? Perhaps because he realized that our faith should be in Christ, and not in man. How do I express myself in order that the glory and honor accrues only to God and His Son who died for my sins? The challenge – How do I walk in such a way as to glorify God and not myself or others?