

Humble Authority

Part 1 - Paul's Defense of his Humility

Verses 1 – 2: Being gentle is not the same as being timid

Gentleness is not the absence of strength; gentleness is strength under control.

Matthew 11:28 – 29

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Isaiah 42:2 – 3

2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

- Jesus came gently, he didn't come to crush the burdened or to snuff out the fainting.

Verses 3 – 6: Being human is not the same as being spiritually powerless

The problem with the false apostles was they were fighting the wrong war.

2nd Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

- Even though Christianity is indeed intellectually superior to every other metaphysical perspective, you can't ever decisively out-argue any other philosophical epistemology or any other worldview with purely intellectual powers alone... why?

2nd Corinthians 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- There are endless arguments and opinions against God, but there is one spiritual truth that demolishes them all.

Verses 7 – 11: Being confident is not the same as being conceited

"I am your servant, but you are not my master."

1st Corinthians 15:9 – 10

9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Galatians 2:20 KJV I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- Great boldness in ministry, actually only comes from great humility.



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Part 2 - Paul's Defense of his Authority

Verses 12 – 14: The source of his authority is God

The false apostles claimed authority based on how they self-ranked against others.

1st Samuel 18:6 - 9

6 As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.

7 And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

8 And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?”

9 And Saul eyed David from that day on.

- Comparison trap - Envy comes out of our own deeply suppressed insecurities.

John 21:20 – 22

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”

21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”

22 Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

- Don't concern yourself about other servants, you be faithful to follow your Lord.

3rd John 1:9 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

- As long as we prefer to put ourselves first, we will have a problem with authority that's not our own.

Verses 15 – 16: The purpose of his authority is outreach

It's not about keeping score; it's about multiplying disciples.

2nd Kings 7:8 – 9

8 And when these lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent and ate and drank, and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and went and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent and carried off things from it and went and hid them.

9 Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come; let us go and tell the king's household.”

Verses 17 – 18: The end goal of his authority is commendation from the Lord

To one day hear from the lips of the one you've been boasting of and glorifying the entire time...

Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

