

Abandon Self-Preservation

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. **—John 5:30**

Now what are we like when we are full of ourselves? We want to talk about ourselves rather than listen; we want to defend ourselves and do not even want to consider the possibility that we could be wrong, which makes us defensive and touchy. We feel sorry for ourselves rather than look on another person's need. We want to excuse ourselves rather than facing up to our real responsibility, which makes us critical and negative. What we have is self-preservation.

I wish to focus on what I will call the abandonment of the self-preservation.

It is an abandonment, first of all, of rights. We live in the "me" generation. "Human rights" is a phrase that we often hear. But the New Testament says, "You are not your own; you were bought at a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Jesus gave up the right to Himself (Rom. 15:3). He said in John 4:34, "My food ... is to do the will of him who sent me." What does this mean for us? If He did not come to do His own will, and He gave up rights to Himself, how does this relate to us practically?

What will be the consequences if we do live like this? The other side of emptying yourself is really trusting God for the outcome. When we let go of ourselves, we affirm God's manner of working things out. As long as we hold on to ourselves, we may not be impoverished, but we lose the fruitful outcome. But when we abandon self-preservation, surprise, surprise, we get it back a hundredfold! It means, therefore, that we trust God for the outcome. It may not be the way we would have done it, but remember that, as Christians, we have a loving heavenly

Father who is all powerful and able to give what is best.

Excerpted from *Meekness and Majesty* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992, 2000).