

An Open Letter: Education Does Not Rival Holy Spirit Power

“Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23: 10-11 NASB).

Leader. President. Executive president. Senior pastor. Chairman. Apostle. The titles are never-ending. There is nothing inherently wrong with titles. They designate who is in charge and the chain of command in organizations.

The definition of everything lies within context.

In the verse above, Jesus was speaking to the multitudes and His disciples. He talked about how the scribes and Pharisees had seated themselves in positions of authority within a system. Jesus was condemning them because they had set themselves up as THE teachers.

Jesus was saying that real power lies not with men but with God. He was speaking about religious superiority.

I have a stark, multi-faceted confession to make. It is one that hits close to home because it represents much of my life's work and investment.

I have way, way, overvalued education. Yes, knowledge is right and necessary for life and particular occupations (I have a professional writer, doctor and nurses in my family). But, somehow, I bought into the notion that the more educated you were, the more valuable you are to God.

And then the more insidious deception, the more knowledge you have about the Bible and spiritual matters, the more

authority, anointing and service you can offer to God. The deception is that education makes you a better candidate to serve Jesus.

My observation at age 70 is that real spiritual authority, anointing (1 John 2: 20,28) and qualification of service to God, has little to do with education. The things of the Spirit are indeed so much more caught than taught.

The Spirit teaches best the things of the Spirit (Ps. 32:8) in stillness (Ps. 46:10), times of intimacy (into Me see) and waiting on the Lord (Ps. 25:5). It is more vital to know God than to know about God.

Another deception I bought into subtly insinuates that leaders are of greater worth to God and, therefore, we should strive to be leaders. Teaching leaders is what we should be about.

Thus, constructed into the system are the finely crafted programs to teach leadership skills. My more significant objections to these educational programs, public and private, is that many come out of secular programs, research and data gathering.

Look Around

Which is of more excellent value, the most remarkable leadership skills and terminal degrees or the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Which is more absent in our land today, leadership skills and advanced education or the power of the Holy Spirit?

When Zerubbabel was led to finish the temple reconstruction, he was given the word of the Lord by an angel.

“Not by might [strength of an army] nor by power [the strength of humans], but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. 4:6b, MEV).

Rebuilding the temple would not be accomplished by personal

charisma, military might or impressive leadership skills.

Are there dynamics of servanthood that are teachable? I think so.

Are there essentials of humility that can be instilled and modeled while making disciples of Christ? Most assuredly.

Along with prayer, which I say is the most extraordinary lack today, servanthood and humility are not apparent in Christian educational institutions' finely crafted curriculums. Why are they absent? Ask the Lord.

Servanthood and humility seem like conflicting ideas to many of the spiritual leaders and leadership models. The word "servant" does not connote the glamor, attention and limelight that follows spiritual leaders and leadership models.

Today's leader is the visionary, pacesetter, fundraiser and chosen one, on which everything hinges. And if he falls, oh, the wreckage, doubt and disappointment cast across the body of Christ.

Yet Jesus made it clear, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11). {eoa}