

How Jesus Dealt With Fame—and What That Means for You

“He told the disciples to have a small boat ready for Him because of the crowd, lest they should crush Him. For He had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed on Him to touch Him. When unclean spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him, crying out, ‘You are the Son of God.’ But He sternly ordered them not to make Him known” (Mark 3:9-12, MEV).

In recent years we have witnessed the spectacular falls of gospel ministers with high profiles. How does this happen? They forget how Jesus dealt with fame.

What did Jesus do when adoring crowds gathered around Him? This text tells us.

First, He genuinely cared for people with needs. That’s why so many came to Him. He came not to get something from others, but to give.

Jesus never asked, “What’s in it for Me?”

I was channel surfing one day and caught a television preacher saying, “God blesses those who bless rich preachers.” He told his live audience that they should come up and stuff his pockets with money. Jesus’ own example tells us He abhors such greed.

Any ministry goes astray when its focus moves away from helping others. Jesus didn’t heal to attract a crowd—He healed because He felt compassion for the suffering.

Second, Jesus placed limits on His use of power. When He saw that the pushing crowd posed an imminent danger to safety, He arranged an escape plan by having a boat ready.

He could just as easily have ordered an invisible barrier to

drop down from heaven and separate the people from Him.

Sometimes we want the Lord to do things for us that we can do for ourselves. Jesus' provision of the boat shows that He left to human agency the things that can be done by human means.

The evangelical and charismatic landscape is littered with examples of spiritual leaders who abused their power and position for self-interest. Jesus never did that.

Third, Jesus' ministry spoke for itself. He didn't need a public relations team "promoting" Him.

Notice how Jesus dealt with the demons. The evil spirits were the only ones thus far in His ministry who knew who He really was, the Son of God. But He completely muzzled them.

Why wouldn't He accept the demons' testimony? After all, it would have electrified the crowd—especially if Jesus had let them talk about their fall from heaven and the glory of Jesus before He became human.

But Jesus didn't want or need the endorsement of evil. His church needs to learn that as well. Too often we seek the approval of politicians, academics, entertainers and sports heroes. We somehow feel their recognition validates us within the culture.

Let the church's witness speak for itself! May our words, deeds and examples be the means to influence others to come to Christ. I talked with a noted public figure, a friend of mine, saying to him, "Your dad would be so proud of you."

"Oh," he said, "my dad would never use the word proud. He would say grateful."

Leaders in Christ's body have gone astray when they became proud. They let others "promote" them until they began to believe their own larger-than-life press releases.

Whether or not we are in the spotlight, let us live humbly—seeking God’s approval rather than the applause of people or demons.

A Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I pray that Christian leaders may truly follow Your example. Help them to keep the spotlight on You and not on themselves. {eo}*

Excerpted from Dr. Wood’s book, Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources.

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