

What Really Matters

We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. **–2 Corinthians 10:13**

Sometimes the hardest thing in the world is to accept yourself. I have struggled immeasurably at this point. To be myself has been about the hardest thing I've sought to do in ministry. My consolation is this: God will use me only to the extent to which I am true to what I know. This means I must not pretend to understand a verse in the Bible that remains hidden at the moment.

But in the early years I began to take myself a bit seriously, especially if I had preached a good sermon. While compliments can be encouraging, they almost ruined me in some ways because I tried to come up to a standard that some said I met. It wasn't my standard but theirs.

It hadn't been that way at first. I was merely myself. But my preaching began to change. Some said I had been shouting too loudly when I first preached, so could I please stop it. Still others said, "Don't tell anecdotes or refer to yourself when you preach." When I managed to remember these things, I would get praise from certain people who hinted that, just maybe, I came up to their standard!

But I was miserable. Before I knew it, I was bordering on moving outside my anointing. If I was truly myself, I was afraid people would think, Yuck. But if I was not myself, God would think it! I eventually came to terms with my limits—which is probably the hardest thing I have ever done. It became a matter of sheer obedience to God. I had to affirm Him for making me as I am and affirm myself, even if people didn't like it. After all, I began to see with ever-increasing conviction that what matters is what God thinks and the way I

will be regarded on the Final Day.

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