

When Believers Will Do for Money What They Won't Do for Love

There is a difference between covering and accountability. Real accountability is only present in our lives when we have a personal relationship with people who can and do speak into our hearts, our circumstances and our relationships.

Everyone needs these deep covenant connections—not primarily because they keep us from failing, but because they inspire us to reach for the high call of God that rests on each of our lives. Historically, accountability has majored in helping people restrain their bad behavior. But as new creatures in Christ, we all need to be accountable to people who regularly remind us that we were born to make history. (That is why it is called account-ability, not account-disability.)

Apostolic Mantles

It is very unlikely that leaders who carry the apostolic mantles providing the covering for entire movements will be able to provide relational accountability for most of the people under their covering. The very nature of their corporate responsibility prevents them from having the necessary time it takes to cultivate deep relationships with that many people, yet that kind of time and relationship are paramount in order for real discipleship or accountability to take place. When it comes to leaders who operate in these apostolic roles, however, the truth of Proverbs 18:24 applies: “A man of too many friends comes to ruin.”

Perhaps as you read this, the idea that someone has authority over us in God feels painful at best and impossible at worst. I know those feelings well, having grown up with two stepfathers who abused their authority in my life. But the

benefits of having true spiritual leadership in our lives far outweigh the internal struggle it takes to get there.

And for many believers, it is a struggle. Some people who seem to have the greatest resistance to the concept of spiritual authority would not dare tell even their unsaved employer, "You can't tell me what to do. The Lord is my Shepherd; I don't submit to earthly authority."

Shepherding Movement

Instead, they arrive at work at whatever time their boss tells them. They wear whatever uniform the corporate code demands. They carry out the tasks that are required of them five or six days a week. But on Sunday, they come to church and refuse to work in the nursery or perform some simple job that leadership asks them to do. I have had believers tell me that the Shepherding Movement of the 1970s or some church leader hurt them, so they will never submit to spiritual authority again. Their life message is clear: "You can't tell me what to do." Can you imagine what your income would be like if you extended that way of thinking into the marketplace? It troubles me when Christians will do for money what they will not do for love.

Of course, there is always "spiritual leadership" in the body of Christ who think it is their responsibility to control people instead of empowering them to fulfill their God-given mandate. Such leaders use fear and manipulation to get their flock to do what is needed.

These kinds of people should not be leaders, and others should not trust them or submit to them. True apostles always include the fulfillment of their people's dreams as part of their primary mission from God. Whenever shepherds lead in a way that does not significantly benefit their people, they are misusing their authority. In fact, the first group of people a leader is called to minister to their own family.

Scripture is clear that the foundation of a leader's authority

is in managing his or her family relationships (1 Tim. 3:1-5). Many leaders have forgotten Paul's exhortation and have sacrificed their families on the altar of public ministry.

Do you have a deep covenant connection with anyone? Tell me about it in the comments below. {eoal}

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