

# The Gospel of Me and the Curse of Trusting in Man

The first order of life for every minister and saint is to put your trust in the Lord—to keep your eyes on Jesus. That's easy to say, easy to agree with, but so many fail to see the importance of such a simple statement and the transformation it can bring in our lives.

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord” (Jer. 17:7).

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man” (Jer. 17:5).

Modern Christians do not understand the distance of contrast between those statements. “God helps those who help themselves” is about the only verse many can quote concerning this theme. Oh, wait a minute, that's not a Bible verse, is it?

American Christianity is infamous for what it has been able to do without God. We know how to raise money and make money; we're slick with our sales and know how to promote our product or service; we know how to market our churches and ministries and on and on it goes.

We are experts on almost everything, or at least we think and act like we are. We boast in our accomplishments. We love to talk about things we know, experiences we've had, our own status, important places we've been to, and important people we know.

Many are not happy unless they are talking about themselves, seeking for others to recognize them, acknowledge them, and be impressed with them. We are always trying to project and maintain a positive image of ourselves and hide that which we don't want people to see about us. When that positive image is threatened or challenged we are so quick to defend

ourselves—always careful to put ourselves in the best possible light.

Why is looking good and impressing others so important to us? If we can identify and extract that root of pride, we will have won a major victory and increase our chances hundredfold of staying on the path of life.

The world and so much of our American culture breed self-centeredness into us. We glory in ourselves. We worship man. Image is far too important to us. That is why God has chosen to reveal Himself through foolish things, the weak things, the base things, and the things that are despised. If He didn't, we would glory in our flesh (1 Cor. 1:26-29). There's a reason Jesus was born in a stable where animals are and not in a palace. There's a reason he was raised in the despised town of Nazareth. There's a reason he chose unlearned and uneducated men to train and commission.

Jesus said, "He who speaks from Himself seeks His own glory ..." (John 7:18a).

Another way to say that would be, "he who speaks from himself glories in man and trusts in man".

The wisdom of man dominates our thinking. We think being smart is the wisdom of God. The American way and the American gospel have taught us that. But 'smart' is often in conflict with the true wisdom of God. 'Smart' may even be ugly, sensual, and devilish because it can be so man-centered. The wisdom from above is not self-seeking (James 3:14, 16).

Let me simplify this for you. The beginning of the wisdom of God is when you fear the Lord and are not wise in your own conceits (Pr. 1:7, 3:7). Paul was a very learned man but put no confidence in his own flesh. The fear of the Lord produces that and is manifested when your eyes are fixed on Him and you put your total trust in Him. That is how you get saved and that is how you are to live. That is so easy to lose sight of.

That is so easy to forget.

What troubles and heavy burdens would be released from us if we would simply learn to keep our eyes on Jesus. Much of this has to do with our projections and pretenses—projecting a positive image, pretending to be someone we're not, and always seeking to impress.

The wisdom of God affects how we relate to man. Most people, even Christians, govern their fellowship with man based on what they can get from them, not what they can give. Here's a great truth: Eyes on man binds things up; eyes on the Lord looses things up in people's hearts and lives and in our times of assembling with other believers.

Yes, as the body of Christ we do receive from one another, but our faith and trust is in the head of the body, Jesus. You don't put pressure on people or manipulate them to meet your needs. You don't position yourself to receive some favor from them. You're not even supposed to do that with your spouse. This especially happens in ministry all the time.

When I was younger, I'd go to conferences and catch myself trying to get close to someone influential or of financial means in hopes they would help me, support me as a missionary, or promote my ministry in some way. I'd see others exchange their business/ministry cards and play the ole game of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours". When the Lord would let me see what I was doing, it was all so ugly to me. These things are all a manifestation of putting our trust in man.

Through the years I've swung in the other direction of making it hard for man to help me or promote me, not mentioning or even subtly hinting of my personal needs to anyone unless asked, and just being content with a hidden life in God. Oh, what peace comes when your motive is no longer to be seen or heard—when you just don't care about whether men recognize you, promote you, or favor you—when all you care about is

being known by God and walking in obedience to Him. Oh, how I wish I had learned that lesson better, earlier! But God is gracious, patient, and long-suffering with each of us, isn't He? That's why I love Him so much.

Something very simple as not placing your total trust in the Lord is the reason for so much of the strife, division, and competition in the body of Christ and among family members and friends. That's why in some cities there are churches on every street corner. It is also the reason your mind has no rest or peace. It is all because men seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ's (Phil. 2:21). They've got their eyes on man, and on themselves.

Have you ever asked yourself this question: Why do most people desire to minister in their gifts above their personal relationship with God?

Why do people esteem talent above character? Isn't it because they desire an honored reputation above relationship? Isn't the root of this a desire to be seen by men and honored by men rather than a private life with God as Jesus first taught (Matt. 6)?

These things are all a byproduct of the "gospel of me" heard in the West and our self-centered culture. It is rooted in trusting in man. It is a departure from the Lord and making flesh our strength.

Read Jer. 17:5-8 very slowly and allow the peace of God that comes from His wisdom to fill your heart and mind today.