

When We Lead Like Christ, We Should Expect Spiritual Pushback

It's very important to understand that betrayal and resistance are guaranteed to come if we are truly advancing as prophetic and apostolic leaders. Also, to despiritualize it just a bit, betrayal and resistance are guaranteed to come simply because we are weak, fallible humans.

We will experience push back when we lead rightly and also when we struggle and fail. This is why humility is non-negotiable. Pride is not the right weapon to use against our attackers.

I find it very interesting that resistance and rejection cause so many people to leave ministry or to leave the church. When Jesus faced the same issues to a radically greater extreme, he laid his life down for the church.

Betrayal was not enough to cause him to abdicate his responsibility to serve the church by giving his life. There was no gossip, no forcing his views on people and no attempt to be validated, affirmed or understood. He simply died.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you" (Matt. 5:43-44).

Healthy argument is OK. It's a part of life. We simply have seasons where we disagree, and it's important and appropriate at times to discuss it with our leaders. Of course, we don't involve anybody other than those directly involved (leaders, pastors, etc.). We don't gossip or allow ourselves to become irritable. We agree to disagree and remain unified.

In Amos we see that God will reveal corporate instructions to some but not all. The rest of us are called to respond to the call of God as given through an imperfect human, and that can be a challenge for the best of us!

But, when we humble ourselves and surrender our right to cause a disturbance we can still move ahead in strength. The corporate mission is not threatened!

“If the trumpet blasts in a city, are not the people frightened? If there is disaster against a city, is it not the Lord who has done it? Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing His purpose to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:6-8).

“By this we know the love of God: that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (1 John 3:16).

The Strategy

Is there a response to the Absalom assignment against churches? Yes.

Let’s look at some diagrams that will help bring great clarity to the necessity and power of holy agreement—which is what Absalom is attempting to destroy. There is a biblical process that we must embrace in the arena of differing opinions. As humans it is normal to have a variety of different ideas from those we are in relationship with—including leadership.

Just how we handle those differing ideas is the matter at hand. If we are holding strong to our own selfish ambitions (even if those ambitions are good!), and we refuse to place our will on the altar, problems will abound. Churches will split, gossip will flourish and division will actually be entertained as an optional method of resolution.

However, if we embrace integrity, humility, servanthood and the preference of others above ourselves, we'll easily be willing to die to our own opinions for the sake of the body.

When we're agreed, we're strong. In the midst of different ideas, experiences, thoughts, opinions and concerns we simply agree to disagree for the sake of the mission.

"Do two people walk together, if they have not agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

Here's where the problems begin. We know that Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and he loves it when he finds allies in the fellowship of believers to help him with his schemes of destruction.

At this point, submission has failed. Honoring others hasn't happened. Personal preference has turned into a personal mission of dominance.

"Your watchmen lift up their voices; they sing joyfully together; for they shall see with their own eyes when the Lord brings Zion back" (Is. 52:8).

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You. May they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down" (Rev. 12:10).

"Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

“These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness who speaks lies, and he who sows discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19).

The sowing of discord among brethren is an abomination! Did you feel the weight of that? It's not OK!

“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top will reach to heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the sons of men built. The Lord said, ‘The people are one and they have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do; now nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech’ ” (Gen. 11:4-7).

Division will lead to unholy agreement. As we allow ourselves to align with others against leaders we are enhancing demonic unity. Unity and agreement is powerful whether it's holy or unholy. Let's endeavor for holy unity even if it's at the cost of our own personal plans and dreams.

I've witnessed many people resist authority in their lives, and I've done it myself. The motives can seem pure and we may have the best interest of the body at heart, but it never produces anything good. The story of Absalom should speak clearly to us in regard to this issue.

“Absalom would go early and stand beside the way into the gate. When any man who had a dispute concerning which he had come to the king for a judgment approached, Absalom would call to him and say, ‘Which city are you from?’ And he would say, ‘Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.’ Then

Absalom would say to him, 'Look, your claim is good and right, but there is no one to hear you on behalf of the king.' Absalom would continue, 'If I were appointed a judge in the land, then every man who had a claim could come and I would give him justice.' When a man would approach to bow before him, he would reach out, embrace him, and kiss him. Absalom acted this way toward every Israelite who came to the king for a judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 15:2-6).

Absalom disagreed with his leader, and embraced the others who shared in his disagreement. We see this occur time and again within churches. It has a ring of honor to it as people presume to have the best interest of everybody at heart. However, it's rebellion in its purest form. The results for those who embrace this spirit are often devastating.

"Absalom was encountered by some of the servants of David. Now Absalom was riding on his mule. When the mule went under the branches of a very large tree, his head was caught in the tree. He was left in midair while the mule that was under him kept going. One man saw him and reported it to Joab, saying, 'I saw Absalom hanging in a tree.' Joab said to the man who was reporting to him, 'What? You saw him? Why did you not strike him on the spot, sending him to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt.' The man said to Joab, 'Not even if I had felt the weight of a thousand shekels of silver in my hand would I have laid a hand on the king's son. In our hearing the king commanded you, Abishai, and Ittai saying: Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!' " (2 Sam. 18:9-12).

Just as Absalom was met with judgment, I've witnessed over and over people enduring long seasons of struggle and frustration after rising up against God's established authority—even if the authority is truly in error. It's never acceptable to speak against the president of the United States, our supervisor at work, a teacher at school, our pastor or mom and

dad. We always pray and support and love with abandonment! A differing opinion should never cause us to remove ourselves from a place of agreement with these people. We unite with them and serve as people who honor those God has placed in our lives.

Rebellion against any established human institution is a serious violation of God's divine authority. We need to know and recognize the operation of God's authority in all human institutions.

We never speak against or elevate our own opinions above God's established authority—pastors, prophets, apostles, politicians, policemen, bosses, etc. We humbly support them, unless, and only unless, they were to cause us to violate a CLEAR scriptural truth. That's it. If a leader is clearly corrupt and unrepentant then most certainly remove yourself from that person's direct care.

Submit to God and be ready to serve Him through the process of love, prayer and encouragement for that leader. Watch what you say. Speak life always. Do not gossip.

It's important to understand that to submit to God's appointed leaders in our lives only to the point where we agree with the order is NOT submission at all. Submission is actually spotlighted when someone honors his or her authority when the order is contrary to their own opinions, experience or position. We can agree with our authority while not agreeing with the order or instruction or position. It is never appropriate to remove ourselves from a position of submission if the order given is inconvenient, bothersome or irritating.

In recent years, the body has increasingly put demands on the very ones who they are to be receiving leadership from. This is sin, and it must stop.

The passage in Romans goes on to say this:

“Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil works. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from him” (Rom. 13:3).

The enemy has caused millions of believers to be afraid of authority. It's time to renounce the alliance with the spirits of lawlessness and self-government and do what is good. Many people who have been hurt by controlling pastors made a foolish decision by embracing that very same spirit for themselves—the spirit of control. We absolutely need to sever that alliance. God is our great Protector. Fear of authority will dissipate as the Holy Spirit once again takes up residence in the place where the spirits of independence and control once ruled.

Even when the church isn't being run in what you would call an appropriate manner, it's critical to support God's government.

Gary Keiser said, “It is better for us to live with a wrong system and uphold God's authority than to destroy a system and thus destroy God's authority in the process. We have to learn to submit to men and not to touch authority in a light way. In all these relationships we have to learn to know authority and practice obedience. We have to know that there are lords and masters in everything; we cannot assume to be the master as soon as we touch something. We have to learn obedience through many situations. One finds authority in the hospital. As soon as he works in a hospital, he has to obey the authority in the hospital. There is even authority in a restaurant. Some serve as managers, and we have to learn to obey them. If we touch authority in a genuine way, we will find authority wherever we go. In obeying the authority of earthly institutions, we are actually obeying God because all authorities are from God. We have to see that every authority is from God. Only a rebellious and proud man is blind to authority; only he will not submit to God's deputy authority... Titus 3:1 says that we should be ‘subject to rulers and authorities, to obey them, to be ready for every good work.’ This is the proper attitude

towards human government... God's authority in the universe is being carried out through human government."

Editor's Note: For part one of this series, [click here](#).

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-after teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John also has a web- and graphic-design business and is continually developing new and exciting ventures. He and his beautiful wife, Amy, have five children and live in the Detroit area. He can be reached via his website at .