



DEALING WITH PEOPLE PRESSURE

God Chooses and Directs

Jesus chose the disciples that the Father told Him to choose, even though there were other people Jesus could have appointed. John 17 shows how Jesus prayed about those particular men. As He prayed to His Heavenly Father, He said, “These ones that You have given Me, I am now giving back to You. I have done what I am supposed to do with them. I have fulfilled what I was to do.”

Remember, Jesus ministered to multitudes; however, He did not spend most of His time with the multitudes. He spent His time with twelve men. From those twelve, three were selected for special times. Do you think the other nine wanted to participate in those events? Yes! Jesus did not permit them because it was not given to those other nine to join in. Yes, they were apostles, but Jesus was not to spend as much time with them as He was with the three. God ordained this operation. Jesus simply did what the Father told Him to do. He did not let people pressure Him with their likes, dislikes, or desires.

God is the one who directs our time if we are yielded to Him. Jesus, quite often, left all twelve of them and went off to spend time with His Father. When the Father wants time, go and spend time with Him and leave the people. Jesus shoved off the boat and He left multitudes on the shore. He recognized that those needs could wait until He came back. He also recognized that He did not have to meet those needs. If people would learn to believe God, He would meet their needs.

Jesus only did and said what His Heavenly Father gave Him to do and say. Any authority of God is under that kind of direction. Each of our lives should be run this way: “Father God, what do You want me to do? How do You want me to spend my time today?” Ask Him and He will show you. Ask God to direct your time. Jesus’ ministry was not dictated by what other people thought He should say or do. In the same way, our lives should not be run by people. They should be run by our Lord.

Often, when people are trying to get their own way, pressure comes. Pressure also comes within when you try to be something you are not. Sometimes you feel like you will pop! That

pressure has to be released and many times the way it is released is not really acceptable to the Lord. You may get angry at your spouse, children, neighbor, or you may just get angry inside. Many people keep the pressure all bottled up. They hold it in too long rather than giving it over to God.

I am the servant of all men. However, I am under the direction of my Heavenly Father.

Do you think the disciples became upset when they wanted to spend time with Jesus and He took off? I would suppose they did get upset because they were striving, jealous, envious and prideful at times. I know how those guys reacted. They stopped men from ministering in the name of Jesus and doing work for God because the men did not travel with their group. The disciples took glory in following after Jesus. They walked with Him and talked with Him. "We are the inner circle." People sometimes act that way. It is not right, but it does happen.

Jesus taught men and women to go to the Heavenly Father. He even told them in John 16 before He ascended, "Do not pray to Me. Pray to the Heavenly Father now in My name because the Heavenly Father Himself loves you." I cannot understand why people then think that they can pray to Jesus, or they can pray to other people who have died. Jesus Himself said, "Go to the Heavenly Father Himself in My name. That is the only way to the Father."

God's Authorities

Do you think the people of Israel were upset because Moses was chosen to lead them? They certainly were upset. They were constantly challenging his authority. At one point, Miriam said, "Who is Moses anyway? He's our brother. God speaks to us also." God showed very clearly in the next verse who Moses was. Moses was God's anointed chosen vessel for the flow of the Spirit of God.

God does not mess around with rebellion against His authorities. Miriam ended up with leprosy, but God showed her mercy because of Moses. Displaying the compassion and mercy of God, Moses prayed that God would heal her. God permitted the leprosy to stay on her body for seven days, though. Do you know why?... So she would never do it again!

When you go against God's authorities, when you are in rebellion, you open yourself up to the devil. Note: You get yourself out of line. Nobody makes you get out of line. The devil cannot even get you out of line if you do not want to be disobedient to God. Instead, he appeals to your pride to get you to fall.

Jesus operated by the Spirit of God and He let God determine His time. People in the flesh wanted that time with Jesus. If God directed it, Jesus stayed with them. In other words, He was not separated from them; He spent much time with them. However, Jesus did not let the people dictate how His time was to be spent.

Jesus always pointed people away from Himself so they would look to God. False prophets draw people to themselves and seek glory from men. True teachers do not want any glory, but they want all the glory to go to God. God uses them as vessels for the flow of His Holy Spirit. He uses them as a point of contact for the ministry of His Spirit. No true minister of the Lord Jesus Christ will seek any glory for himself or seek to attach people to himself. You are God's people! God showed me a long time ago that the people are God's people, not mine.

However, God sends people for us to minister to, equip and teach. God wants us to be the vessels for their deliverances. He gave the material for this book and He provided money to print it through people who contributed. You did not get it on your own. God put it in your heart to read it. Give glory to God that you were yielded to the Spirit of God. It is possible He would tell you to go somewhere and you could choose not to go.

Jesus pointed people to God, not to Himself. When one is under authority, one follows orders — nothing more or less. This is how Jesus operated. He did not do or say anything on His own. He told those men whose mother wanted them to sit on Jesus' right and left hand in glory, "I cannot give you to be on My left or right." Jesus' Heavenly Father was the only One who could decide this matter.

God told Jesus whom to pick for disciples. Such men were hand picked by the Heavenly Father for ministry. As Jesus walked and came across the disciples, the Spirit of God rose up inside of Him and said, "Choose him!" Jesus would simply say, "Follow Me." It was not just on Jesus' heart... those men dropped everything! They dropped their nets on the spot and took off to follow Him.

Matthew left all the tax money at his booth. There was probably a great amount of money there, but he did not even take a thought about it. He just stood up and left. Why? Because his spirit bore witness that he was chosen of God for the work. When the authority of God was moving in Jesus and when Jesus said, "Follow Me," that man already knew, "That is me. I am going" and away he went. This is the way it works. This is why God moves through His authorities first. Throughout the Bible the authorities of God knew what was right and pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

Many people get ideas like, "I feel strongly that I ought to be a teacher and I believe you ought to help me set up meetings." What will happen? If being a teacher and setting up meetings does not bear witness with the authority, it will not get off the ground. You can run to any authority you want, but God may tell them that you are not ready. However, when the time is right, the authority, God and your spirit will bear witness. Then things will start to happen.

To Get Involved or Not To Get Involved

In Luke 12 one fellow came and said, "Master, come and help me divide my inheritance with my brother." He wanted Jesus to get involved in his affairs. Many of God's people would save themselves much trouble if they would keep out of other people's business. Even when people are seeking your help... you should ask God, "What do You want me to do, if anything?"

What happens when an inheritance is involved? Usually there is greed, jealousy, envy, bitterness, hatred and pride. The man was saying, "Jesus, come and help divide the inheritance with my brother." Let me tell you, Jesus knew this verse: "He who meddles in another man's strife takes a dog by the ears." He knew better than to get Himself in the middle of that one. I believe Jesus also asked His Heavenly Father what He wanted Him to do. His Heavenly Father said, "Forget it." Jesus proceeded to say, "Go back and work it out with your brother. That is between you and him alone."

In other words, Jesus was not going to get Himself involved in that situation. His Heavenly Father did not want Him in it and His Spirit did not want in it. God was leading and God was directing. People will try to pressure us to be involved in their affairs. Learn God's wisdom.

Was Jesus being unjust to the man? No. He was simply sharing one of the finest principles that anybody could tell another: "Go straighten it out." That is, "You have the ability to work it out. God will help you if you ask." That involves a little humbling of yourself, giving of yourself, loving, sharing and trusting God. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Greed is what the Bible calls idolatry. This fellow had a desire for himself and he wanted to get as much as he could out of the inheritance. He figured if he had Jesus agree with him, then his brother would back off. Jesus refused to let him or others pressure Him for their own selfish purposes.

There are certain things that we all want. If we would ask God about them and turn them over to Him, we would no longer want many of those things. Selfish desires stand in our way. We do not really want them and we need to get rid of them. Not only are they unprofitable, but they drag us down. The next thing you know, the desires have become an obsession. Close behind an obsession comes a devil, saying, "You must have it. You must have it. You must do it." Then you are in bondage to your desire, which was opposed to God's will for your life.

Peter's Reinstatement

When the Father had Jesus tell Peter, "Feed My sheep" and "Feed My lambs," Jesus was speaking as the authority of God, telling Peter what he was supposed to do. Peter had been with Jesus for a long time.

In John 21:15 and following...Jesus reinstated Peter after he had denied Him three times. Three times He asked Peter, "Do you love Me?" and He told Peter to "Feed My sheep; feed My lambs." Finally, Peter broke down because he realized the truth. At first he had said, "Yes, Lord, You know I love You." After the third question, repentance came forth from Peter's heart. After all, he had made many flippant statements about his faith in God when he had been with Jesus. When Jesus really needed him, he had disappeared.

All the confessions of faith that Peter had made were empty. He could no longer make those empty confessions. He recognized that God loved him and had forgiven him. What happened then? Jesus told Peter what he was supposed to do.

In verse 17, when Jesus asked the third time, "Do you love Me?" Peter was hurt. Glory to God when people get hurt! I do not mean injuries, sickness and disease. I mean when they are cut to the quick on the inside. They know, "I am out of line with God and now something has to give." That is godly repentance. It hurts. It hurts badly. However, if you yield to it, your life will be changed. It will be like never before.

It is pride that hinders us. Peter had great pride, but he was humbled and he saw what he was doing. Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep." The Lord could not use Peter in the way He wanted until that pride was broken.

Mind Your Own Business

Then Jesus told Peter what he was supposed to do and Peter looked over and saw John. Peter asked, “Master, what about him? What is he supposed to be doing?” Do you know why Peter asked that? Possibly because he wanted to make sure that John would not do anything more than Peter would do. People are often just nosy about things that are none of their business.

People do this time and time again. They look to see what somebody else is doing, which is jealousy and envy. Such behavior leads to strife. It leads to an unworthiness in themselves and they cannot operate in what God has given them to do. They are thinking, “It is not important — it is not good — it is not special enough”. As a result, they miss out on what God would have them to do and in the freedom in which God would have them do it.

Jesus came back to Peter with, “It is none of your business what John is supposed to do. It is not for you to know. You do what I have given you to do and let John do what My Heavenly Father has appointed him to do” (paraphrased).

Do what God has given you to do. Be faithful about it. Be content in it.

The flesh is nosy. It always wants to know, “What is your ministry?” The religious leaders did not recognize Jesus’ ministry because they did not recognize the authority that the Heavenly Father had given Him. Why did the church leaders not recognize His authority? — jealousy, envy, strife and pride.

God confirms His Word with signs and wonders following, which means He works with His ministries. In due time, if you are called of God and anointed of God, He will give the increase and everybody will recognize it. Glory to God!

The government authorities and church leaders are responsible to God. All authority is accountable to God. All authority is accountable to the One who gave the authority — God.

In 1st Corinthians 4:1-17 Paul said that all that mattered was that a servant be found faithful. Faithful to whom? — to the authority he serves. Paul was a servant to the Lord God of Hosts. Yet everybody was judging his ministry and saying that he was a lesser apostle. Some were saying that he did not have the authority to do what he was doing. He came back with, “What matters is that I be found faithful to God.”

Let me tell you, if he is faithful to God, then he will be faithful to the people. If I am faithful to God, then I will be faithful to you. If you are faithful to God, then you will be faithful to me. This is the way it works.

Paul went on to say, “I do not care about your judgment of me.” In other words, he did not care if they thought his ministry was valid or not. He said, “And I do not even judge myself on these matters.” He was doing what God had given him to do. God will judge.

God calls and positions His authorities. Therefore, no man can take to himself something that God has not given from heaven. Most of God’s authorities did not seek their positions. They sought God. Tremendous blessing and responsibility goes with their positions.

Paul was saying, “Friends, I love you and I am just doing what God has given me to do in the way that God has given me to do it. And when the day comes, I will stand before my Father God and He will tell me whether I have done right or I have done wrong. In the meantime,

friends, I love you, but why do you not mind your own business and do what God has given you to do? Let me do what God has given me to do.”

At the end of Galatians 6 he said, “I bear in my body the marks of Christ — You quit this nonsense towards me.”

God Will Determine

It goes on to say that we should not regard men more highly than we ought. “What can a man do except that which has been given him?” (1st Corinthians 4:6-7). If God has given gifts, nobody should praise the person for the gifts that were given. The praise should always go to God for what He is doing through the person. That keeps things in balance, with a godly perspective.

Paul said that when you look to people instead of God, then you are carnal. In 1st Corinthians 3 some had said that Peter and Apollos were better than Paul. Paul asked, “Who is Peter? Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? — but co-laborers with God. It is God who gives the increase.” Do not get puffed up with what God has given you to do. Pride comes before the fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

Having desires like, “God, I want a worldwide ministry” brings pressure on yourself. Unless God gives you a worldwide vision, you cannot take it to yourself. “I have learned much about faith, though and I can believe God for it,” you may say. However, unless God has called you to it, you will never have one. In addition, the world-wide vision begins right in your own house. It starts from home.

There may be a pastor out in the Midwest with a ministry to a dozen people and that is the total growth in his ministry over all the years. What will happen when he stands before God? There were not 5,000 or 100,000 reached. Let me tell you, if God called him to that place to minister to twelve people and he ministered to them faithfully under the anointing of the Spirit of God; then he will receive just as great a reward as the fellow who ministered to millions. In other words, what matters is that we are faithful in what God has given us to do — no more or no less. If we are faithful with little, then God will increase, but that is not for us or anyone else except God to determine.

God has something very special for each of us as a part of His work. We need to be content with the gifts and the place that He has given us, for it is up to Him to give the increase. If He has put it on your heart to pray and pray and pray, give glory to God. Praying is what you are supposed to be doing. Be faithful and do it.

If God has given you a ministry of giving, then give and give thankfully and generously to the Lord’s work. If God has put it in your heart to be a helper, do not decide you are going to do this or that on your own. Ask your authority what needs to be done and then get direction as to what you are to do. Cheerfully do what you are given to do.

When we try to make something happen on our own, nothing but pressure develops inside of us. Nothing but strife occurs.

Still, do not feel that you are not needed. We need every one of you, doing what you are supposed to be doing. We all have a place in God's church. Thank You, Jesus! God needs each one of us doing what we are appointed by Him to do in His body.

Prayer: Father, in Jesus' name, help me to be faithful to do what You have given me to do — no more and no less. I simply desire to be faithful to You. Thank You that You are clearly showing me what I am to do and you are enabling me to do it for Your glory and the good of Your people. In Jesus' name. AMEN.