

Admonition to Prison Fellowship, 4 pgs

A message to Prison Fellowship from a brother in Christ who loves and supports your ministry: I know your vision and history - your small beginnings and growth pains, your financial and legal trials, when you got off track and how God brought you back, and how you have touched many lives. Please consider the following excerpts from a friend.

excerpts from NO LITTLE PEOPLE, by Francis Schaeffer

No Little People, No Little Places

Nowhere more than in America are Christians caught in **the twentieth century syndrome of size**. Size will show success. If I am consecrated, there will necessarily be large quantities of people, dollars, etc. **This is not so**. **Not only does God not say that size and spiritual power go together, but He even reverses this (especially in the teachings of Jesus) and tells us to be deliberately careful not to choose a place too big for us.**

Every Christian, without exception, is called into the place where Jesus stood ... The word **minister** is not a title of power but a designation of servant-hood ... Jesus commands Christians to seek constantly the lowest room. All of us - pastors, teachers, professional religious workers and nonprofessional included - are tempted to say, "I will take the larger place because it will give me more influence for Jesus Christ." **Both individual Christians and Christian organizations fall prey to the temptation of rationalizing this way as we build bigger and bigger empires.** But according to the Scripture this is backwards: We should consciously take the lowest place unless the Lord extrudes us into a greater one.

First, we should seek the lowest place because there it is easier to be quiet before the face of the Lord ... **Quietness and peace before God are more important than any influence a position may seem to give**, for **we must stay in step with God to have the power of the Holy Spirit**. If by taking the bigger place our quietness with God is lost, then to that extent our fellowship with Him is broken and we are living in the flesh, and **the final result will not be as great**, no matter how important the larger place may look in the eyes of other men or in our own eyes.

We see this happen over and over again...Someone whom God has been using marvelously in a certain place takes it upon himself to move into a larger place and loses his quietness with God. **Ten years later he may have a huge organization, but the power is gone, and he is no longer a real part of the battle in his generation.** **The final result of not being quiet before God is that less will be done, not more** - no matter how much Christendom may be beating its drums or playing its trumpets for a particular activity.

The second reason we should not seek the larger place is that **if we deliberately and egotistically lay hold on leadership**, wanting [driven by a desire for notoriety] the drums to beat and the trumpets to blow, then we are not qualified for Christian leadership. Why? Because we have forgotten that we are brothers and sisters in Christ with other Christians.

The Lord's Work in the Lord's Way

Doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way is not a matter of being saved and then simply working hard. After Jesus ascended, the disciples waited quietly in prayer for the coming of His Spirit. **Their first motion was not toward activism** - Christ has risen, now let us be busy... **The central problem of our age ... is this: the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, individually or corporately, tending to do the Lord's work in the power of the flesh rather than of the Spirit. The central problem is always in the midst of the people of God, not in the circumstances surrounding them.**

Is it not amazing: Though we know the power of the Holy Spirit can be ours, we still ape the world's wisdom, trust its forms of publicity, its noise, and imitate its ways of manipulating men! If we try to influence the world by using its methods, we are doing the Lord's work in the flesh. If we put activity, even good activity at the center rather than trusting God, then there may be the power of the world, but we lack the power of the Holy Spirit ... if we fight the world with copies of its own weapons, we will fail ... They may bring some results* - **activism** does have its results - but they will not be the ones the Lord wants. Our hands will be empty of honor from God because He will not be getting the glory. We must not try to serve the Lord with our own kind of humanism and egoism.

In this war if Christians win a battle by using **worldly means**, they have really lost. On the other hand, **when we seem to lose a battle while waiting on God, in reality we have won** ... Let us not think that waiting on the Lord will mean getting less done...by doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way we will accomplish more, not less...Is not **the central problem of our generation** that the world looks upon the church and sees it trying to do the Lord's work in the flesh?

excerpts from TRUE SPIRITUALITY, by Francis Schaeffer

Substantial Healing in the Church

... **Can faith be taught?... Yes ... but only by exhibition.** You cannot teach faith only as an abstraction. There must be an exhibition of faith, if faith is to be learned. Each group must operate on the basis of God's individual calling for them - financially and in other matters - but **there is an absolute rule, and that is that if our example does not teach faith, it is destructive.** There can be many callings but there cannot be a calling to destroy the teaching of faith. The church or other Christian group that does not function as a unit in faith can never be a school of faith. **There is only one way to be a school of faith and that is consciously to function by faith.**

Every Christian group must also teach in words the duty to exhibit that God exists and that he is personal, and then as a corporate body practice the truth. There is a cost in this, for the church's **methods** must be chosen with much prayer and care, and "results" alone will not now be the sole, simple criterion. It must practice the choice of **means** in its work which will exhibit that God exists ... **The Church's or Christian group's methods are as important as its message.** It is to deal consciously with the reality of the supernatural. Anything that exhibits unfaith is a mistake, or may even be corporate sin ... The simple tragic fact is that in much of the ... evangelical Church - there would be no difference whatsoever **[if all that the Bible teaches concerning prayer and the Holy Spirit were removed].**

Throughout Church history, one is aware that the danger always comes at a time of emergency. An emergency arises which causes us to cut off the exhibition of faith, and discount the possibility that God is guiding through financial matters. There always seems to be a legitimate reason for reaching out and steadying the ark [1 Chron.13:9-10] ... We tend to think of Christ building his invisible Church, and our building the visible Church ... So our building of the visible church becomes much like any natural business function, using natural means and natural motives.

excerpts from **Chap.9** of DEATH IN THE CITY by Francis Schaeffer

The Universe and two Chairs

We can carry on our church life that way [sitting in the materialist's chair]. We can carry on our evangelism that way ... But let's take note: there are only two chairs, not three. And at this present moment we are either sitting in one or the other. Unfaith is just the Christian sitting in the materialist's chair ... All of us sometimes find ourselves in the materialist's chair ... But is this ... the way we do what we call "the Lord's work"?

* *Schaeffer's work at L'Abri, was faith based and sustained. It existed to demonstrate the reality of the living God in the midst of an unbelieving world. This supernatural mindset (renewed mind) is the necessary foundation for every ministry and endeavor in Christ's name - not an exception, but the norm. It leaves room for God to be directly responsible and credited for their scope and depth. Is it possible to believe in the sovereignty of God, but behave as if we didn't? Sadly it is, and shamefully most of us who claim God's name and truth have at some point relied upon the same pragmatic reasoning and means the culture uses to achieve our spiritual goals - whether it is through planning by use of statistics, salesmanship in promoting famous/prominent people, bands to attract crowds, or through commercial marketing techniques and gimmicks to raise money. What is PF saying by sending out huge mailings with the claim of matching grants and phone solicitations? We don't trust God to lead you in your giving, so we have to entice you through incentives of gifts, special status memberships, and the allurements of having your donation count twice as much through someone's pledge to match it. We solicit your gifts by phone because God's Spirit is apparently not able to reach you or talk you into giving more.*

When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God, 1 Cor.2:1-5.

These are all obvious ways to rationalize doing an end run around the supernatural governance of the Living God in order to keep the ministry going at its current level. They are compromises of desperation that the leadership makes as their hearts shift away from faith. By such means we negate the claim that God exists and will provide. The marketing strategy generates the responses with mathematical precision, it's just a matter of the balance sheet - advertising expen-

ditures vs. receipts. *The ministry goes on, but the world wins because God's people have not escaped conformity to this age in doing the Lord's work. We are not strengthened in our faith, neither do we learn what God is telling us through the crisis.*

Schaeffer once commented on this when L'Abri faced times of economic hardship. He didn't doubt that one letter requesting financial help would do it. But that demonstrates nothing about the reality of God. He was asked *"What if the money doesn't come in?"* His reply was, *"Then we'll be smaller."*

See You Never Ask for Money (p.191) in Future Grace by John Piper; **Chap.3** of Prophetic Untimeliness by Os Guinness.