

Gender Bias

(Definitely)

Specialization

Regardless of what we do in the church, if we do not do it for the right reason, then we are wasting time. We are not just wasting our time, but we are also wasting the time of other members of the congregation. We can try to say that we have no responsibility for emotions of others, but that is wrong. As the apostle Paul taught us: we all need to be aware that our area of service is somewhat optional, as pertains to location of delivery. Consider this Scripture.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

(Romans 14:14-22)

Does this mean that I will not operate in the church unless there is a group consensus about what I am doing? Of course, that is not the answer. We do not have to give undue weight to group consensus. However, we do have to present clear biblical doctrine that supports our position of service. Among the times when this was clearly demonstrated was when Peter and the other apostles were told that they could not preach in Jesus' name. This is that episode of history.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that

dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

(Acts 4:13-18)

This is the response of Peter and John, in answer to that command of man.

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

(Acts 4:19-20)

To those of us who believe the Bible, it is clear that those apostles had a biblical basis for their area of service. In fact, they were at the dawning of the New Age biblical basis for all actions of service to the LORD, in the Father, through Jesus Christ. This is where we now stand. Therefore, if we want to truly stand, here, we need to apply the same care that the apostles applied.

Though, we must keep this fact in mind also: Even the apostles were subject to the rigors of having a biblical basis for their actions. In the one noted post-resurrection slip of Peter, the apostle Paul reminded him of this obligation that we all have.

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all,

If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

(Galatians 2:11-18)

The operative principle that applies is that we are both responsible for our actions, and

responsible for proper participation in the outreach of those who are in our circle of acquaintances. This responsibility begins by commandment of the LORD.

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart:
thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy
people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*
(Leviticus 19:17-18)

These responsibilities are emphasized by these words of the New Covenant, of the New Age.

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an
one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear
ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think
himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*
(Galatians 6:1-3)

We must always be confident in the fact that we are not brought near others for arbitrary reasons. This is a weighty thing to consider: that everyone you meet, and every situation you are moved into, is evidence of the power that is in the following Scripture.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to
them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he
also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the
firstborn among many brethren.
Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he
called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not
with him also freely give us all things?*

(Romans 8:28-32)

This is a somewhat easier thing to handle in the more catastrophic episodes of life, than it is to come to grips with in our ordinary living. When we see catastrophe, we really do not have much of a choice but to look for the Hand of God in the incident. We know that we cannot change the past; we try to concentrate on reconciling what has happened, as set against future possibility. Things are different in our normal, mundane existence, in everyday living.

In the normal life, it is too easy to reject a thing as being an ordained part of the course that God has set for us; because, we can reach for empowerment to change it. I am reminded of an incident in the life of the developing nation of Israel, which shows that even when one is in power, there is still a need to reach for the answer that is of the LORD. The incident is this one, of the time of Joshua.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

(Joshua 9:1-6)

The weighty part of that incident is summarized in the following sentences of Scripture.

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

(Joshua 9:14-15)

Please note that the LORD did not stop Joshua and the people from doing what they had the ability to do. Indeed, there had already been sufficient warnings about what not to do, such that there was no need for additional ones. These warnings were not considered, at that time; wherefore a portion of the blessing that accompanies this associated commandment of the LORD was nullified by the action of Joshua . . .

When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Gergashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

(Deuteronomy 7:1-6)

The specific part of their action that nullified a portion of their blessing is in this, their hand-

tying promise.

And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel.

And all the congregation murmured against the princes. But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

(Joshua 9:16-19)

We need to be very careful about immersing the things of the LORD in our own purpose. This includes the things of the LORD that are restrictions to our forward movement. Those are the kinds of things that give us a greater desire to eliminate them, by our insufficient means, and substitute even weaker conveniences of our own. In that regard, consider the fact that there were challenges that the prophets faced, during which they had to set aside personal preference and conveniences.

Sometimes, the prophet's submission was voluntary; as we see, here . . .

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then said I, Here am I; send me.

(Isaiah 6:1-8)

Isaiah's submission to the LORD is the preferable kind of submission; it is the place at which we need to arrive in our commitment to our election for service to the LORD. Of course, we

need the backing of the LORD, for us to be able to see the way to that place. The LORD dies this by triggering the specialization consideration in us. This is a part of the mind of service. Let us explore this in Isaiah.

At the end of the portion of Scripture that is quoted, it gives the impression that this was a voluntary act of the prophet. Actually, though, it was a reasoned action of Isaiah that had been preceded by proofs that the LORD brought him through. This is the same way that we are moved to our place of service; though, it is not always done with the same ease. Let us evaluate another time of persuasion that has more obvious phases of persuasion. We see this in the life of Jonah. Jonah is one of the prophets of old that added energy to this particular example of the New Age.

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(Matthew 12:38-40)

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In the beginning of Jonah's persuasion, he did what many of us try to do: Jonah tried to avoid the assignment, by substituting an activity of his own. You know: rather than donating to the church, because, obviously, our money would be wasted; we go out and buy a new computer toy or that latest phone thingy. In other words; we sequester our self in a competing, self-designed substitute. In Jonah's case, he tried to take a vacation, of sorts.

*Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

*But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.*

(Jonah 1:1-5)

Still, we discover that those annoying pop-up things and news flashes, on our new computer, keep reminding us that turmoil still exists in the world; and, therefore, also in the church. Our

mind cannot escape the waves of critical analysis that overtake it.

*So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.*

*Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

(Jonah 1:15-17)

Of course, we present our excuses to the LORD. In the end, though, these are really just, so very self-serving. Moreover, regardless of excuses; still, the LORD has His way with us.

*And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.*

(Jonah 2:10)

Let it be known that the LORD sees your frustration with your relative impotence.

*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*

*Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.*

(Jonah 4:1-3)

You know what: Jonah was absolutely right. The LORD "knew" the heart of the people, as opposed to their, then, present actions. This is a long-standing truth of Scripture, and it is the basis for the regeneration of the spirit of the infant nation of Israel, after it had been almost suppressed by the actions of king Saul. To regenerate the spirit of His infant son, Israel, the LORD provided this assuring way of yielding to His ordinances, then--and it stands firm for all time: *man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

*And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?*

*And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.*

*And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.*

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

(1 Samuel 16:4-7)

So, the LORD shifts your focus to a better, more durable, and far more inclusive, type of power; which is this: God's grace. Then, you are not able to deny that, even though you have been pulled into participation; still, the responsibility and majesty of the outcome is the LORD'S. God took the heart of the people of Nineveh into consideration in the remission of their sins, as based on their repentance. Thus, in the summary of the LORD'S Personal "Change of Heart", when Jonah said the thing that is recorded in Jonah 4:1-3, above; then, the LORD told Jonah that he had spoken the truth about God. This truth still mediates for us, with the LORD.

*Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*

(Jonah 4:10-11)

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Let the LORD show you the specialist that He has crafted for the situation. Do not presume that you can rush the LORD because you are willing to cram your self into that place of service. Exercise your faith; for, this message to Jesus' disciples is also a message to the church.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them:

for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

(Matthew 6:5-8)

And while you are waiting, put yourself in the quiet place of active participation that Jesus occupied. It is the place of both peaceful recognition, and quiet participation. In this place, you know that the specialist that is required is just a prayer away.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

(Matthew 9:35-38)

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**--- NEXT IN Gender Bias, Definitely --**  
**Amalgamation**  
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