

Thinking Of Men Above What Is Written

The Corinthian church was deeply troubled when Paul wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians. Members of the church harbored sin, sued each other, abused gifts of the Spirit and doubted the resurrection (1 Corinthians 5, 6, 14, 15). Too, Paul addressed their excessive esteem for men, that is, they were lining up behind certain men (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4).

In addressing this carnal attitude, Paul said, "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other" (1 Corinthians 4:6).

The Corinthians were not the last Christians to be stricken with "preacheritis." There are still those who tenaciously adhere to their favorite man. It may be because of his personality, past help, preaching style or prominence. Sometimes this disease goes undetected. At others, it is pronounced. Such is the case with a recent meeting announcement we received. In discussing the "guest preacher," the church's letter of invitation said, "Brother _____'s passion for truth and respect for our Lord coupled with his unique style of preaching will make, we believe, your time **even more well spent** in the worship of God" (emphasis mine, sfd).

Statements like these bring up questions.

Does this mean other guest preachers there or elsewhere have not been so beneficial to the worship of God?

Is time not so well spent when the non-guest (local) preacher is teaching?

What is it about this brother's preaching that is so great? Is it his unique style or does he have a greater "passion for truth and respect for our Lord" than other men?

In June 1960, Bill Cavender wrote an article titled Trends Toward Apostasy (The Gospel Guardian, Vol. 12, No. 8). In it he noted three basic elements needed for apostasy to develop: "(1) A lack of knowledge of the will of God and a disrespect for the same; (2) The exaltation of human leaders and human pronouncements; (3) Time." The first two of these has come to pass. The last is in progress.

Here is our point: More and more, brethren are exalting preachers above what is written. Paul said such people are "carnal" and "babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1). "To be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6).

Ask yourself if you are a follower of a man and his teaching or the Man and His Word?

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