***Reversionism

Mixed Motives in the Lord's Service

No. 1 - PH19-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:15-18***

Philippians 1:15-18 deals with mixed motives in the Lord's service. Paul's imprisonment in Rome has opened new doors of gospel witnessing for himself, and has stimulated the witnessing of other Christians as well. We read about that in verses 13-14. We found that Paul was going through a period of suffering, but this suffering, he has been able to cope with on the basis of the grace of God. The apostle Paul needs this kind of grace from God. He needs this kind of spiritual stability. He needs this kind of super grace status because he is confronted in his imprisonment by Christians who are serving the Lord, but from two different kinds of motivation. Christians are witnessing, as a matter of fact, that specific kind of service, but from divergent motivations. Our personal motivation is a matter of our mental attitude outlook.

False motivation for a right Christian service will result in loss of reward. You may give your money from a false motivation, and God will take that money (say to a missionary), and He will advance the gospel ministry with your money, but you will get not one iota of reward for it. God can take the preaching of the Word of God from someone who is out of fellowship with God, who is teaching the Word of God, and yet the truth of God is the truth of God. It will redound to your blessing no matter what the one who is teaching it may do. He will lose reward, but the Word will produce its fruit. Therefore, we Christians may be very earnestly serving the Lord, and the Lord may be using what we're doing, yet we're doing it from a false motivation and, consequently, the whole thing is disaster land.

Now I want you to think this through because this passage of Scripture on the surface seems to be a very innocuous simple passage of Scripture. It seems to be just another statement of historical background that faced Paul. However, this is a Scripture that has fantastic implications for you and me today. Our problem is not only what we do as believers in service, but why we do it. Unless you are certain that the why is right, you are on a course of collision with God, and of inviting great unhappiness into your life. Therefore, there is much Christian service from a wrong motivation. Paul uses here the illustration of witnessing in Rome from false motivation. However, the principle applies to any kind of Christian service as well as the service of witnessing. The communication of the gospel is certainly a legitimate function of the priesthood and the ambassadorship of every Christian. The witnessing can be an accurate presentation of the gospel while at the same time stemming from a wrong motivation.

So in Philippians 1:15, Paul says, "Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some also of goodwill." Here you have two motivations contrasted. First of all, he presents what is a false motivation. In the Greek text, there is a contrast indicated by using certain words. These two words are "men" and "de." These are not generally translated, but the implication as you read this in the Greek text signals a contrast. The idea is on the one hand, this is the case, while on the other hand (in contrast), this is the case. Therefore, here he is contrasting two kinds of motivations in Christian service. These are particles, not translated, but they signify a comparison.

He says, "Some on the one hand indeed preach Christ." The word "some" is the Greek word "tis." It does not have an accent, and therefore it is what we call an indefinite pronoun. If it had an accent, it would be an interrogative pronoun. It would be asking a question such as who, what, and so on. However, this is an indefinite pronoun and it should be translated "certain ones." It is in the plural, so we know that many Christians in Rome are in this category. It is a group of believers witnessing from the wrong motivation. He uses this indefinite pronoun because he is not going to name these people. He's just saying that out there in the streets of Rome and out there in the churches of Rome are a group of Christians who are going around sharing the gospel with people from a wrong motivation. "Some indeed preach Christ." The word "indeed" is contrasted a little later with "also" in this same verse: "and some also of goodwill." This again is a contrast--"indeed, also." It's simply the little Greek word "kai" matched against one another. The point is here again, one group over against another group.

What are they doing? Well, they're preaching. The word "preach" is "kerusso." This is not the normal word for witnessing. This is the word that is used about a herald who stands up and makes an announcement (a proclamation) for a king. Therefore, it carries with it the connotation of public speaking; that is, to speak to more than one at a time. This could be in the form of giving one's personal testimony before a group, or it could be in the form of a sermon. In any case, there are certain Christians in Rome who are making public pronouncements and public proclamations, namely of the gospel. They're doing it constantly. That's why it's the present tense. They're actively engaged in it, so it's the active voice. These people are proclaiming Christ. The Greek has "the Christ." It is the specific message concerning Jesus of Nazareth and the salvation which He has provided through His death for us upon the cross.

The point of all this is that these Christians are not heretics. They are not preaching a false gospel. They are preaching a true gospel as per 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. They are actually telling people what Christ has really done. They are actually describing the wall that stands between God and man. They are telling how the Lord Jesus Christ has removed one block at a time out of that wall until there stands nothing between man and God. God has provided everything necessary to cross the line into eternal life. They are not preaching a false gospel. They are proclaiming "the Christ," a true message.

"Some indeed proclaim Christ, but why? "Even of." "Even of" is the great preposition "dia," and here it means "because of." It has the particular case that makes it mean "because of." It introduces the motivation of the first group in their witnessing. Why are they proclaiming a true gospel message? They are doing it because of (of all things) envy--the number one thing. This is "phthonos." "Phthonos" means "envy" or "jealousy"--the same idea. The witnessing here, in other words, on the part of these Christians is motivated by a mental attitude sin. For some reason, these Christians are jealous of Paul, an apostle under house arrest. Perhaps some of these people were preachers in Rome before Paul came on the scene.

Remember that Paul did not found the church in Rome. Therefore, he was an outsider coming into the Christian community at Rome. Perhaps these were some of the leading personalities that were involved in this group who carried considerable prestige as celebrities within the Roman churches until Paul came along. Now they were constantly hearing. "The apostle Paul says this; The apostle Paul says that," and they may have gotten a little sick and tired of listening to what Paul, an apostle in prison, who couldn't even walk the streets of Rome in freedom, had to say about this thing and that thing. They didn't like the authority that was being invested in what he had to say.

The result of this was envy and jealousy. These are mental attitude sins, and false reasons for Christian service. However, it is possible for you and me to serve the Lord out of envy of one kind or another. It is possible for us to really get on the stick in Christian service in a big way out of jealousy of what somebody else is doing or the limelight that somebody else possesses. These Christians are out of fellowship, so no doctrine is flowing up from the human sphere into their minds. The directive side of their mind has been shut off from doctrine because this mental attitude sin of jealousy has closed off the flow of the truth. Therefore, this group, consequently, is operating under the control of their emotions, and their spiritual common sense is just not functioning.

Remember that anytime doctrine cannot flow from your human spirit up to your directive mind to lead you in your actions, there is nothing that your mind can do except to yield control of your soul to your emotions. At that point you begin operating on how you feel about things or how other people feel about things. Jealousy always draws with it other mental sins such as: competition; pride; vindictiveness; an unforgiving spirit; bitterness; and, so on. These sins gratify the emotions which are controlling the soul, and these emotions have been poisoned by the old sin nature so that your soul is moving into a disaster area.

Not only are they motivated by jealousy, but these people are also operating out of strife. The word "strife" is "eris," and it means "discord" or "contention." These Christians are in contention with Paul. Their witnessing is being used as a means of opposing him. Why are they so zealously witnessing in the streets of Rome? In order to fight the apostle Paul because they have a rivalry and a competition with him. These Christians are motivated by the fact that they have rejected Paul. They have rejected his teachings. They have rejected his methods. They have rejected his ministry. However, having rejected God's spiritual leader, it is necessary for them to show that they too are good Christians who are serving the Lord, so as to justify the opposition to a man who is doing God's work.

These people have lost their spiritual good sense. They are in the status of spiritual insanity. Here is the most magnificent apostle of all. Here is the greatest receptor of divine viewpoint truth that has ever existed in the history of humanity. Here is the man who is going to write a major portion of the New Testament which records the mind of Christ. These idiotic Christians in Rome, who are zealously witnessing all over the city of Rome, are doing it out of rivalry, contention, and with the desire to squelch Paul. They are rejecting the ministry; the methods; the techniques; and, the teachings of this man, the apostle Paul. Something has to be wrong up in the head. Something has to be terribly deranged with a mentality that would do that. Mind you that this is New Testament Christianity. This is right there at the very start, and we have had it down through the ages, this same kind of spiritual derangement.

Think through the nature of this kind of false motivation. It all started because these Christians at some point exercised negative volition to Paul's teaching; to Paul's methods; and, to Paul's personality. Consequently, they rejected his spiritual authority. That's step number one. They sat there; they listened; and, they said, "No, No, No, I don't like it. I don't think so. I won't do it." When they rejected his teaching, they were rejecting in effect God's divine viewpoint. Therefore, they fell into a state of carnality. The state of carnality immediately shut off the valve of doctrine from the human spirit up to the directive mind. When the valve is shut off, calluses begin to accumulate on the facets of the soul, and the emotions have taken charge of the soul.

These people now operate on how they feel about things instead of on what doctrine and what God thinks about things. Do you see the difference? They are now operating on how they feel about things instead of what God has revealed of His thinking through doctrine. It doesn't matter what you and I feel about things one bit. It only matters what God thinks about it and what the Word of God has declared in principle about any particular issue. What you and I feel about it is absolutely beside the point because Satan can deceive us. Satan can distort our feelings.

**Reversionism**

Well, they continue in this negative state and the process of spiritual deterioration sets in. The result is a backsliding from the spiritual maturity structure that perhaps they once possessed--perhaps even super grace level Christians. That mature structure begins deteriorating and breaking down until they have come into reversionism.

Here is the picture. Spiritual maturity is a building. Paul said he rejoiced in the five factors that represented this building. This is spiritual maturity. Here you are, standing in the doorway here, and you're just as happy as can be. Things are really beautiful. You're standing there looking out at the world. The sun is shining, and everything is coming up roses outside all over the place. Life is beautiful because you are at a point of spiritual maturity. You're able to meet your problems. You take things in stride. You understand people. Your happiness is not dependent upon people, circumstances, or things. You are a forgiving person because you're grace oriented. You're free of bitterness. You have a relaxed mental attitude. You know how to handle your money. You know how to be prosperous. You know how to be able to come into a million dollars and still keep coming to church. You know how to have a capacity for love. You're just a happy person. The thing is beautiful. This is perhaps the status of many of those Christians in Rome.

Then they heard something from Paul, and they went negative to what they heard. Then here comes a bomb, and this bomb is flying along here. It's whining; its detonator cap is in the end; and, it's headed right for your spiritual maturity structure because this bomb is called negative volition. You have said, "No" to the preacher indeed, but the preacher is nothing. The communicator is a nobody. He is no celebrity. He is simply a transmitter of God's viewpoint. Therefore, when you said, "No" to him, you said, "No" to God. Unless he is a false teacher and unless he is a heretic, when you have said no to him, you have said no to divine viewpoint.

**Backsliding**

Therefore, the result is a direct hit upon your spiritual maturity structure. Here you are with your big fat bomb sticking in here and everything is splattered and flying off in all directions here. The flowers have all drooped over, and you're standing here shattered as you can be because you've been hit by this bomb. Something is not right. The sun is no longer shining. It has lost its happiness. Everything is grim. Why? Because you thought you were standing. You were very confident. You were very mature, and you went negative. It has blown the top of your spiritual maturity structure. This is called backsliding. That was the good old time word for it. It means exactly that. What we are describing is a condition of going from where you have a maximum developed spiritual maturity structure to going all the way down to where you are just a junk pile of disaster. That is called backsliding. You're sliding backwards instead of continuing to let the grace of God overflow you in a super grace status.

Well, you can stop this thing at this point; go positive; and, reverse this trend, or you can hang in there with your negative volition; you can get more active in the Lord's work; and, you can go and find yourself some other church where you can get hot and get busy and go right to the top and be very impressive. Pretty soon you're a great servant of the Lord, highly esteemed by everyone else. However, within your soul their rots the quality of negative volition that you have never corrected. Therefore, what you are doing is functioning completely on your human capacities and gifts, and you are not advancing spiritual reward for yourself one bit. You continue, and the time comes when your spiritual maturity structure is in complete disaster. There is nothing but a cloud of dust rising up all around you, and you're flattened to the ground. That's called reversionism. The Christian can go from spiritual super grace status, sometimes almost overnight, to this position of reversionism.

What do you do in this case? Do you just stop coming to church? No, you don't. What you do is start hustling harder. You may find yourself another place to do your hustling, once you have come to this disaster because of your negative volition, but you will start hustling. You will start proceeding to serve the Lord with more zeal. That's what they did in Rome. They were the greatest witnesses you could find. The apostle Paul says, "I happen to know by information of God the Holy Spirit that these people that are viewed with such admiration as such great servants on the streets of Rome are doing it out of jealousy; competition; and, rivalry with me." They're operating out of false motivation, and God is not honored, nor does He reward that kind of service.

**Falling From Grace**

Therefore, these people have gradually come to the point now where darkness and spiritual insanity has developed in their souls. This is what Galatians 5:4 calls "falling from grace." The soul is in this state of anarchy. This is a soul whose mind is enslaved by the emotions. This is the same thing like a husband who is ruled by a wife because his wife, in reversionism, will not accept chain of command, and accept the leadership of her husband in that respect. This believer is in revolt against divine viewpoint and, consequently, he is also in revolt against those who proclaim it.

What's going to happen in this status? Here you are, sitting upon this rock. Your life is a disaster. You don't know what to do or where you're going. Your mind is disoriented to the Word of God. Therefore, what do you do? You get up and start moving again in this condition of reversionism. The result is that you give your loyalty and your support to false objects; to false people; and, to false causes because you're groping in spiritual darkness. Therefore, you don't know what you're doing. For example, in the Old Testament, what a wonderful gracious loving fantastic person God was to the Jewish people. Yet, how many times did they turn away from that God who had done so much for them, and who had demonstrated His care and love for them, and they turned to some bestial idol to worship it? I mean even down to the phallic sex cults of the most grotesque kind of worship. They said, "This is our God."

You say, "How could people do that?" It's because they're spiritually insane. The Jews came to a position of reversionism where they had fallen from spiritual status to spiritual nothingness. Consequently, they no longer could tell what was God's objects for them and what were false objects for them.

Remember Lot. 2 Peter 2:7-8 tells how sad was the case of Lot who desired Sodom, of all things, instead of the fellowship of the people that he had begun with people like Abraham. The exodus generation (Numbers 11:4-6) tells us that they preferred the leeks and the garlic of Egypt rather than the freedom that laid before them across the Sinai desert. The rejection of Paul's ministry by the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 10 describes the condition that often exists today. Here's the apostle Paul who brought these people of Corinth into spiritual enlightenment in the first place. He gave them their direction; he gave them their insights; and, he gave them the spiritual good judgment that they had and the common sense they had. Then 2 Corinthians 10 gives you the grotesque story of these people rejecting the apostle Paul--badmouthing him; abusing him; and, turning to false objects of loyalty.

Well, obviously, you can see that in time a reversionist who persists in this condition must separate himself in every way from his true objects of loyalty because his spiritual good sense is completely deranged, and so he devoted himself to what God does not approve. Then he gravitates toward false friends; false causes; the wrong pastor teacher; the wrong church; and, false patriotism. We have a great deal of that today. It is because our country is in a reversionistic state within its citizenship that it makes it tough for a politician to get up and be a great leader in the direction of the laws of God's divine establishment. Here we have the kind of insanity where our political leaders, who are devoted to communist countries, are seeking to aid and to assist communist countries; to feed them; and, to train them in technology.

Do you know that the biggest truck factory in the world was built by the Ford Motor Company in Russia--one of the most valuable assets in time of war? One of our senators said, "We believe in freedom in the United States, and Rhodesia does not give freedom. 5% of the country controls 95% of the black population in Rhodesia." Do you know where else that's true, dear friend (and that senator knows it)? 5% of the Russians constitute the Communist Party, and they run the other 95%. That is inanity. Oh they have freedom in Russia. It's like one American I heard of who talked to a Russian and said, "The trouble with you Russians is that you don't have freedom in your country. You don't have freedom of expression." The fellow said, "We certainly do." The American said, "Well, how is that?" The Russians said, "Well, you Americans can criticize Nixon all you want, can't you? The American said, "We sure can." The Russian said, "Well so can we. Don't tell us we don't have freedom." That's the kind of freedom they have in the worker's paradise. This is the idiocy. We have this false reversionism loyalty that the socialist countries are the wonderful countries of the world, where things are really done for people. These are the wonders of reversionism that distort and twist our thinking.

Well, these people gravitate toward all these false objects, so they treat the right ones with contempt. The wife (the right woman in a marriage) gets treated with contempt; the right nation gets treated with contempt; and, the right causes get treated with contempt. This is incidentally why Christian homes break up in divorce. It is because of this quality of reversionism. Somebody in the home go spiritually insane and then begins directing his devotions to the wrong object. This is why friendships do not endure. It's because somebody in the status of the friendship goes reversionistic, and the friendships break up. This is why people go for drugs instead of for doctrine in order to solve their problems.

Well, these Christians in Rome were going through the motions of Christian service, and they were doing it with a great zeal. Actually, one of the greatest stimulants to Christian service activity is this picture you have right here--this disastrous picture of reversionism. When a Christian comes into reversionism, he becomes often the most active church worker that you have ever met. It is very important that you understand this. This is what was taking place in Rome. That's why this is such a significant passage of Scripture. There were people in a reversionistic condition obviously operating from envy and strife and rivalry against Paul, of all people. They were the most zealous and the most active of Christians. These people are false in their viewpoint, but they are very pleased with themselves, and they are praising the Lord for what he is doing with them.

That's the same condition that you have with the charismatics. A charismatic is in this disaster area. He is spiritually deranged. He is in reversionism. You want to stay away from charismatics. They are very dangerous people. These people in Rome are operating on a true gospel from past knowledge. They know that this is what God wants them to do. Therefore, that's why they're doing it. However in reality, their motivation is constituted of these mental sins--not doctrine.

Therefore, we have people in the local church who will be breaking their necks to serve the Lord because there are negative to teacher, teaching, and technique. They feel that they must prove themselves. Here's Paul, being attacked by some cheap hustling Christians--but brainy Christians; clever Christians; and, calculating Christians. Make no mistake about that. However, they were cheap. Paul was attacked by these cheap Christians. Why? Well, we're going to find that the reason they did it was to add more misery to the current burden of imprisonment that he had. How could they do this?

Well, perhaps they were promoting legalism. They knew what Paul felt about that. They knew that his method of preaching the gospel said that there are no heroes in the Christian life. There are no celebrities. Of course, the professional leaders in Rome hated that. They didn't like his making the communicator a nothing person; and, the message, the everything. So they were probably using methods that Paul himself had spoken out against: salesmanship in witnessing; friendship witnessing; love witnessing; and, personality entertainment witnessing. They were doing all this just to gall Paul. That became their slogan. "Gall Paul." That was their motivation.

They understood one another. There was a certain thing about reversionistic Christians. It's like the old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together." Boy, this is true here. They do it in a local church every time. If you have any savvy, you can spot them. They can smell each other. They have a certain odor about them; they can smell one another; and, they recognize it. Therefore, they gravitate toward one another. They become animals. Animals recognize each other by smell. This is an animal state, by the way, of existence. You have lost spiritual orientation and contact with God.

Therefore, they recognize each other. They gravitate toward each other. They don't say anything, but they all understand one another; what they're out to do; and, whom they're out to get. Therefore, in effect, they were belittling the power of doctrine and the gospel alone to save, which was what Paul's position was. However, I want to warn you about these Christians in reversionism. In your own dealing with such Christians, these Christians have a desperate need for reassurance. They want to be noticed. It is very hazardous in Christian work ever to make over a sacrificial act of service that someone has performed. This is because you don't know what that person's motivation was. There were a lot of people in Rome being complimented for false motivation and witnessing.

When somebody performs a sacrificial act of service in the local church, you should not be thanking them and praising them for it, but you should certainly freely thank and praise the Lord for it. If they have done it as unto the Lord, that's the one that they want you to thank and praise for it, and they are not interested in what you have to offer them. You have the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Everybody thought they did a very wonderful thing. Some people, no doubt, were ready to commend them for that large sum of money that they gave the church. However, they didn't know the motivation of that man and woman, and it was false.

Christian Service is done for the Lord's glory, which is what Colossians 3:23 tells us should be our motivation. Any Christian service which is done for the Lord's glory, you will find, stays constant and faithful over the years. The person keeps doing it, and keeps doing it, and keeps doing it. He is moving on; building up; and, establishing the beauty of a mature spiritual maturity structure. When he is in this state, he goes on, and he doesn't need your thanks; the pastor's; the members'; or, anybody else's. He has no interest in commendation. By the way, when you want to examine your own motivation, probably the best time to do it is when you're feeling blue; you're feeling discouraged; and, you're feeling that you've got it up to your neck in this service for the Lord. That's the time to sit down and say, "Why am I doing this?" You'll get a more accurate answer if it's for the Lord's glory than you will when things are all coming up roses and it's all kicks for you in that service. When it's all kicks and roses, you may deceive yourself as to what your true motivation is.

A Christian who is in the disaster land area of his life has a fantastic desire, and he has a compulsion to have contact with you. He will reject everything you stand for; he will reject everything that you accept in spiritual things; and, he will reject the leadership that you accept, but he has a fantastic compulsion to have associations with you and reassurances from you. Consequently, the reversionistic Christian will seek out social contacts with those they separate from. They love you; they can't stand your pastor; and, they can't stand your church, but they love you, as if there was a difference. They want you to say, "Yes, there is a difference. You reject what I accept. You reject what I believe. Yet, I can have camaraderie with you spiritually even though you condemn what I accept spiritually." So they seek out these spiritual contacts. What they're looking for is weak Christians, those who are likely to be swayed by their false loyalties. If they can get you to accept their position, it sure makes them feel a whole lot better.

Reversionistic Christians, obviously, in this condition of disaster, are in misery. They're whistling in the dark. They're seeking to assure themselves in the graveyard that they have created here for themselves. They want to reassure themselves that they're not really the grotesque people they are. If you don't understand that, you're going to be an object of maneuvering and of attack. A reversionistic Christian will stoop to any level of gossip; of abuse; of maligning; and, of innuendo, and he'll do all of this while he's smiling sweetly; reassuring you that he's full of love; and, showing that he's only seeking the Lord's glory. A reversionistic Christian is a beast. He's a believer; he's going to heaven; but, he is a beast. You will get hurt, and he will break your heart if you do not guard yourself against him, and if you do not understand that he himself is to be pitied because he is out of it as far as his spiritual mentality goes.

When a person is mentally deranged, we treat him with the utmost kindness, and we understand that he is so far off balance that he has lost his orientation with reality. When a Christian grows spiritually deranged, we pity him, and we treat him with tact and with kindness, but remember that spiritual insanity is a communicable disease. Spiritual derangement is a communicable disease. If you hang around the reversionistic Christian long enough, you're going to pick up the germ. You will find that if you have extended relationships with a reversionistic Christian, you will in time accept his point of view.

Years ago, when I was a teenager, I had a pastor with whom I was very very close who had led me into the greatest of spiritual things. One day he said to me, "Johnny, if you proceed in your life at any point to associate with people who are rejectors of God's word and of what God thinks (That was his way of what we're calling reversionism.), and if you continue, you in time will become like them. Therefore, guard yourself against such associations." That was greater wisdom than I as a teenage kid had the capacity to understand.

The Christians in Rome who stood with Paul, and there were many who did, could not say to those who were operating under false motivation, the reversionists, "Well, I can maintain spiritual and social fellowship with you even though you reject Paul's ministry; his teaching; and, his methods." Had they said that, that was the first step toward becoming a reversionist themselves. No matter how sincere the conviction is being expressed by these Christians who seek you out, and no matter how convinced they are that they are right, when you interrelate yourself with them on an extended basis, you are telling them, "I think you're okay in what you are doing, and in your position and in your rejection." Therefore, you must either join the rejectors of your spiritual views or you must cool them.

Some of you think you don't have to do that. However, I want to at least clear this up with you, and before God, by telling you right now that if you persist in it, you will have the sad experience in time of looking back and realizing, "He was right. Because I did not cool those who rejected my spiritual orientation; my spiritual context; and, my spiritual associations, I have now accepted their viewpoint." It is a dangerous delusion to think that you can play both roles. They will break your heart.

Remember that when a reversionistic Christian declares his undying love, gratitude, and appreciation for you, the answer of wisdom is, "Sure. Sure you do." This is because the real intention is flattery to use you. Your greatest trap in your life then is when you come to the point where the spiritual and social associations with a reversionistic Christian become attractive and acceptable to you. You are then ready for the bomb on your own spiritual maturity structure. God does not bless a Christian in reversionism. What that Christian does may be very outstanding and impressive in service, but he does it himself. That's what the Christians in Rome were doing. It was very impressive, but they were doing it themselves. They were not doing something that God the Holy Spirit was promoting and producing through them.

**A Christian in Reversionism**

Let's tie this up with the telltale marks of a reversionistic Christian:

1. **He rejects the message of Bible doctrine** from the pastor-teacher. He may reject this message in cover-up terms. He may say about the pastor teacher, "Oh he's so negative. That's what I don't like about him." I want you to notice that they do not say, "He is so wrong." There's a great difference between being negative and being wrong. You will find that reversionistic Christians have this thing eating away within them such that they just can't say, "This guy is wrong. He's a heretic. He's misrepresenting the Word of God. He's teaching falsehood. That is not a true interpretation he's giving of the text. That's a false application. That's a distorted application." They don't say that. They have other terms to cover up, but it all reduces itself to the fact that they are rejecting the message of Bible doctrine from the pastor-teacher.
2. **He rejects the authority of the pastor-teacher gift**. He doesn't think he has to learn from someone. They don't think they have to learn from someone whom God has invested with the authority over them to teach them. So they seek someone who does not take seriously that authority by which they are going to learn. If they do not have a pastor-teacher who acts with authority over them, they are doomed. They will go nowhere in their spiritual lives.
3. **He maligns the life of the pastor-teacher**. He attacks the life of the pastor-teacher as if it was any of his business to begin with, and as if he could know it.
4. **He lacks the capacity to handle financial prosperity.** It took me a little while to catch on to that one, but I finally realized that one of the most telltale marks of a reversionistic Christian is that he cannot handle financial prosperity. It takes the capacity of super grace status to be able to enjoy your money. A reversionist is impressed by people who have money. He is preoccupied with what things cost. You can kind of test your own status here. Suppose that we could give each of you $10 million. The question is, where would you be next week? Would you still be here studying the Word of God? Where would you be next year? You have $10 million now. You may answer for yourself as to where you would be. Would you still be here, or would you go for where the inspirational powerful businessmen are?

I think that God is still looking, as He always does, for a super great Christian that He can really sock it to with prosperity. D.L. Moody used to say, "God is still looking for a man who will fully dedicate himself to the will of God, and this world will see some marvelous things when we find one." Well I think that God is constantly looking for a Christian with a real super grace capacity such that he could sock him with $10 million dollars, and who then could have the orientation to create a fantastic outreach through the Word of God.

I've often thought, "God, what would it be like if there was one super grace Christian who really understood doctrine; who really understood the role of the local church; and, who really then had the money to finance a concept like that?" Would there ever be the squirming out there in the religious world over something like that? God is looking for people that He can really shower with the money.

When these people are stymied in their game because they happen to be in the church where they've got a pastor-teacher who's got some savvy and insight and who blows the whistle on their plays, they go to another church where they can find somebody who will allow them to play the roles that they want to play unhindered. Usually these people go right to the top. They are doing things that they never could do in the other church. They become stars overnight, and they zero in on the administration. Pretty soon, they've got the new pastor over for dinner, and they're operating; they're working; they're maneuvering; and, they're setting up a whole new ballgame. These people are brainy; they are smart; they are clever; and, they are reversionistic.

A person can be saved by a true testimony from a false source. The faithful apostle Paul personally objected to what these people were doing by motivation. He became the object of their cruel attack because of their false motivation. However, he knew how to handle it. We're going to look further at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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