***The Marks of Christian Royalty, No. 2

RV101-01***

We have been considering the fact that the apostle John hears the elders in heaven singing praises to God, in part for the fact that He has made Christians (believers of the church-age – an exclusive group from Pentecost to the rapture) a special kingdom of God, and thus they have been constituted a spiritual royalty. So, Christians are classified by God as royalty to distinguish them from all the other saints of all the other dispensations. Christians are the body of Christ, and in the future they will be the bride of Christ, and they are destined to rule the world with Jesus Christ.

**Christian Royalty**

When He is described as being King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that means that He is the supreme ruler. We believers (the very people sitting in this room) are the ones we're talking about. We will someday rule this world with Jesus Christ from the city of Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom. However, the members of royalty must be trying to live their lives as befits the position of nobility. The basic training manual for the royal family of God is the Bible.

**The Commoners**

However, Christian royalty is under constant attack by the commoners of secular humanism. These commoners resent the divine authority which is expressed through the Bible, and the authority which is expressed through God's royal family, the Christians. They resent the children of royalty being educated and reared to function according to Bible doctrine truths, and to be in subjection to God's authority. For this reason, we see that the Christian school movement is increasingly under great attack by the secular humanist educational systems. The commoners resent the movement of Christian royalty into political and communication arenas in the hopes of leading our society back to the sanity of divine viewpoint, and away from the human viewpoint delusions that now control the average American mind. Commoners don't like Christians being in politics. Commoners don't like Christians getting into sources through which they can communicate with people on a large scale. That's why you hear that old frap brought up that you shouldn't mix church and state.

However, the liberal theologians have been mixing church and state (religion and politics) for a long time, such as in the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. They just don't want somebody mixing biblical ideas into the political arena; biblical ideas into the idea of government; and, biblical ideas into economy. It is the commoners who hate with a vengeance that little chapter out of Dr. Ron Paul's book. They despise that kind of information.

The characteristics of God's royal family help us to get some idea of the kind of people we should be. You are royalty. You are nobility. And it's time that you woke up to the fact that that's what you are. You're distinctively different from the mass of unbelieving Jews and gentiles. They are commoners. I don't care how educated; how sophisticated; or, how elitist they are. They are zeros when it comes to the Word of God, and when it comes to divine viewpoint. And you can be impressed by the commoners. That's the first thing you have to learn as royalty; that is, not to be impressed by commoners.

I have had occasion to be out to dinner with people who are unbelievers, but who are very sophisticated in ordering from the menu. They can pronounce words that I didn't even know existed, and they can tell the waiter to do things that only some elitist type of cook like Mrs. Danish would be able to tell you that you do with a chop or something. But you sit there listening to them, and then they order from the drink list, and boy, you can really get intimidated. They order form the wine list, and man, that is impressive. But someday you're going to be right there leading the pack, folks. You are the nobility. All that human worldly sophistication is zero with God. So, it is very important that you understand that now is the time to prepare yourself to fully execute your role as a leader in the kingdom that God is preparing for this world.

**Characteristics of Royalty**

We've already touched on some of the characteristics that should be true of God's royal family.

1. Royalty does not indulge the evils of the old sin nature so as to do injury to other members of the royal family. You control your sin nature, and you don't slander; belittle; and, do injury to other members of the royal family. You stand by them.
2. Royalty does not profess devotion to Christianity and Jesus Christ, and then compromise personal integrity in your daily living so that we bring discredit to the cause of Christ. You don't pretend devotion to the Lord as God's nobility, and then compromise your integrity in dealing with people.
3. Nobility supports other members of the royal family in times of their spiritual failures in order to bring them back to stability and godliness. You don't wash your hands of them. You hope to bring them back to where they will do better, and that they will live as befits their royal position.
4. Royalty performs the Holy Spirit-directed service for the Lord's glory: not for personal fame; not to be appreciated; and, not for personal gain. You serve for the Lord's glory whether or not anybody ever thanks you; praises you; or, commends you, or does anything else. You don't need the words of men. When you become a truly mature, royal person, all you need is just you and the Lord.
5. The divine good service of Christian royalty will absolutely be rewarded in heaven as well as being prospered on earth. You as royalty may have great riches. We attach riches and wealth with royalty. You will have riches indeed in heaven, and you will have that to the degree that you take what God gives you now in prosperity, and you parlay it into eternal riches. A lot of Christians who have a great deal of material wealth; of talent wealth; of influence wealth; and, other things are not going to prosper by that in heaven because they never let it go further down here. But those who are wise, and those who are mature royalty, recognize that earthly prosperity gives them a chance to so invest, that they become prosperous in heaven as well. So, wake up to what you're doing with your possessions; with your gifts; with your ability; with your time; and, with your influence.
6. Then, Christian royalty maintains a dignified image in public by dealing with its personal problems privately with the Lord Jesus Christ. Your business is your business, and you maintain a private position of dignity.

**Double Blessings from Christian Royalty**

Then the Christian possesses blessings from God on two accounts. Christian royalty is doubly blessed. No one else in any other dispensation had this double blessing – only Christians. One: you have the enormous blessing because you are in Christ. Therefore, you possess all that He possesses. You are a joint heir with Him. Secondly, you have imputed to you the absolute righteousness of God. God loves His own righteousness, and God blesses His righteousness. God prospers His righteousness. Incidentally, that's the only thing He prospers and blesses in us. It is His production and His righteousness (nothing that we do) that brings His blessing. So, Christian royalty have double blessings.

**Freedom**

The next characteristic of Christian royalty that we should look at is that Christian royalty must always act in a way that preserves the personal freedom which is given by God to every human being. Remember that our founding fathers had the good sense in this country to recognize and to enunciate very clearly, in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution, that freedom is not something that one person gives to another person. Freedom is not something that a government gives to its people. Freedom comes from God. Therefore, no other human being has any right to tamper with your freedom in any way.

In John 8:36, we read, "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Real freedom, of course, comes when a person is free from the devastating effects of the control of the old sin nature, and the devastating effects of the control of the innate evil which is within us. Those who have the freedom that Christ gives are indeed free.

In Romans 6:18, we read, "Being then then made free from the sin nature, you became servants of righteousness, freed from enslavement to the sin nature, and made slaves of absolute righteousness.

Romans 6:22 says, "But now being made free from the sin nature, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." So, the Bible is very clear that we as human beings have a freedom that comes from God.

**Preserving Freedom**

So, if you are a member of the royal family, you are very conscious of the fact of preserving freedom: yours; and, that of other people. In order to have freedom, there are certain things that must be preserved, and certain things that you must be careful not to invade and not to violate in other people.

1. **Volition**

Number one, obviously, is volition. This is your freedom to make your own choices. Volition must be preserved. To be free from enslavement to any element in creation is what freedom of volition means – to be free from any element in creation. That means that: you are free from drugs; you are free from tyrannical human beings; you are free from gluttony; you are free from overindulgence in using what God has given you (that is, you are free even from being a slave to luxury); and, you are free from any created thing. That is freedom. Your volition must be free to be exercised in that direction, because this, again, is what God has planned for you.

The apostle Paul puts it this way in Galatians 5:1: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage:" spiritual bondage; and, other kinds.

1 Peter 2:16: "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" – being free; not using our freedom for license; and, not using it as a cloak to do evil. So, you don't violate other people's volition. It is not right when you bully other believers. It is not right when you bring coercion either in secular or spiritual matters. A person's rights must be protected, and must be free to be exercised, within the context of the legitimate rules of the society. Christians are to be allowed freedom to respond to the Holy Spirit, and to the Word of God. They are to be allowed to go positive or negative. You are to be permitted to live a life which is free: a life of integrity; or, a life of shame, with the consequences of each. You may live a life of human viewpoint, or a life of divine viewpoint. As a royal member of the family of God, that is your freedom. While we want to see Christians do what is right and what is going to prosper them, we have to really be careful about becoming pushy; coercing people; and, putting pressures upon them.

Man's volition will never frustrate the sovereign purposes of God, and no human agent is necessary for God's will to be executed. That's the problem. Some Christians think that if they don't make it for God, God's purposes are not going to be realized. So, they get in there with all their offensive, grinding, legalistic pressures upon people to do what is right. And in the average church congregation, the name of the game is to put the screws on the people – pressures. Everything is high pressure; everything is by humiliation; everything is by exposure; and, everything is in some way to intimidate people so that they do (supposedly) what is right.

**Lines of Authority**

Properly constituted lines of authority do not violate a person's free exercise of his volition. You do not violate the volition of your children when you lay the law down to them. That is a constitutive line of authority. If your little 12-year-old has been watching the television programs to become so sophisticated that she wants to stay out till 12:30 with her boyfriend, you have the right to lay the law down, and you're not violating her volition, or crimping her personality. There are other parts on her anatomy you should crimp, but her personality you will not crimp. It is not imposing on a person's volition if he's a member of a school and you lay down rules for him, and these are the rules that are to be followed.

Phil Donahue had one of those wonderful, enlightening programs of his the other day, and they had a girl on there who was in a Christian school. I couldn't help wonder about this girl's training, because her mother, who sat next to her, had a very masculine haircut. I had to look at her twice to see that that wasn't her father. Indeed, it was not. It was her mother. She just looked like her father. But that sort of told me that here was a free-spirit type of soul, the feminist type of soul, who might have given her daughter some ideas. But here's this girl, and she was dismissed from a Christian school because she had written a note inviting some of her classmates out to a place where they could have a drink. And she indeed did go, and did have the drink. Others didn't choose to follow her.

Well, the school said, "That breaks one of our rules. It's a clear rule. It's incompatible with the objectives of this school. Therefore, you are dismissed." And another child was put into her place in the classroom. That's what the frap was about. The mother is suing: "You can't do that to my daughter. This is her right. This is her volition." This is a misconception of volition. Volition is a precious thing. You don't invade other people's freedom of choices, but under certain lines of authority: such as to children; such as to schools; and, such as to your employees, you have a right to lay down the law to your employees. There are constitutive lines of authority. That is not an invasion of volition.

1. **Privacy**

If you're going to preserve freedom, there's a second factor. Not only must people be able to exercise their will, but there is this important area of privacy. Here is one that churches violate frequently. On the principle of the universal priesthood of the church age, each member of the royal family of God represents himself, and himself alone, before God. In 1 Peter 2:5, we read, "You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." We are spiritual priests. We are all priests. It is not just Aaron and his family that are priests. We do not offer material sacrifices. We do offer spiritual sacrifices. All of us are, as priests, called upon to offer those sacrifices, and to represent ourselves before God. In 1 Peter 2:9 he adds, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," emphasizing the fact that we are not only priests, but because we are royalty, we are also a royal priesthood.

Revelation 1:6 and Revelation 5:10 (the verse we're looking at) emphasize that we Christians are priests. Therefore, a Christian learns to exercise his priesthood privately. For example, you must learn the Word of God privately without the curious bystander knowing what you are thinking. That's why God formed the local church – so that you could sit here in the context of the privacy of your own mind. You are listening to the explanation of the Word of God, and nobody knows what you think about it. Nobody knows how you feel about it. Nobody knows what your negative, rebellious response is, or your warm, positive acceptance is. It's nobody's business. God blesses the believer, or he disciplines the believer according to his response to the doctrinal truths learned. If you hear anything in this auditorium that is absolutely the divine viewpoint truth of God, you better believe it. If you don't, you will suffer the consequences. But whether you believe it or whether you don't is a private matter. It's nobody else's business.

So, don't go around here asking Charlie Boozer about what he believed about what I said this morning, because it's none of your business. Just be concerned about what you have responded to on what you have heard. If you don't believe something that you hear me say, you better be sure that I am wrong, because you have a great deal at stake. You have a great deal riding upon any rejection of truth.

This was the problem the Pharisees had with the Lord Jesus. He pointed out to them: "If you had not known the truth, you'd have been better off. Because you do know it, you're in a position of enormous condemnation now. You should not have attended so that you could at least have claimed ignorance."

Privacy of each believer's dealings with God has to be respected, and should not be intruded upon by nosiness; by gossip; or, by judging of other people. And there are some Christians who are nosy, and you can spot them. If you get a telephone call from somebody that hasn't called you in a long time, and you just got into some kind of problem personally, and you have some trouble, and they're calling you: unless you're dumb; stupid; backwards; and retarded, you probably should suspect that the only reason they're calling you is because they are nosy. And you should take your scissors and snip the end of the phone line right off, and not expose yourself publicly. You keep your business to yourself.

There are Christians who like to nose around and root around, and who like to then judge other believers on their performance. Royalty does not tolerate these kinds of intrusions into their lives, and does not tolerate the intrusions of these carnal and usually emotionally-dominated people who are looking for their kicks. That's why they're doing it. They're kick-seekers. Their lives are so bland; so empty; and, so full of nothingness that the kicks they get are by finding out: "What's the red hot scoop on you?" So, the kick-seekers are looking for a kick. And I would suggest you give it to them. But don't tell them your private business.

Also, in the matter of privacy, in order to maintain your freedom, you ought to be careful about telling all to your bosom buddies. Unless you have a clear leading of the Lord such that you want to speak on a specific item for a specific purpose to somebody (hopefully to somebody who knows something, and who's got some judgment, and who might be helpful for you to discuss it with), you should not expose your personal matters to other people. Some close confidant may be the epitome of friendship to you now, so you bare your soul. But these close friendships have a way of cooling off in time, and then you find that you deposited a lot of personal information with somebody who's no longer so keen on you. Human beings are not stable. Human beings are not consistent like the Lord is. Problems which may seem insurmountable to you at some point in time have a way of resolving themselves. They do. Insurmountable problems have a way of resolving themselves. Then, what you said while you were in an emotional frap when you thought the thing could never be straightened out is something that returns to haunt you.

This is why a good counselor will always respect the privacy of a royal member of the family of God. A good counselor will limit what people say to him. He will cut people off from saying more than they need to say in order for him to give them some guidance. So, you want to seek to limit the circle of the impact of the injury of your problem, and you don't want to be expanding the circle of injury by probing into the privacy of other people.

**Look to the Lord**

You have to remember that it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, who can solve your problems. So, look to Him, and look to the Word of God as the prime source. That's not just a little religious cliché. It is the Lord, and the Lord alone, who can solve your problems. If you wait upon Him; if you'll take it to Him; and, if you'll stand by to see what He's got for you, and how he's going to bring circumstances and people and events together, you will discover that the solution comes. Don't look to people. Look to the Lord.

**Paul**

This is the principle that the apostle Paul used shortly after he was born again. Here was a man who was knowledgeable in the Old Testament Scripture; a leader among the Pharisees; and, head-and-shoulders above his peers. Here was a man who was a die-hard opponent of Christianity. He murdered Christians left and right. The people he disliked the most were those who were the leaders of Christianity. He gets saved on the Damascus road. What do you think would have been the normal thing for him to do now? He's got all kinds of hang-ups; all kinds of problems; and, all kinds of terrible things he's suffering from, not the least of which is the fact that he murdered so many Christians. Where would you normally expect to go? Unless you have some spiritual discernment, you would say, "Well, I have to go talk to the officials. I'll go to Jerusalem and talk to those apostles." That was not so with the apostle Paul.

Here is the principal in Galatians 1:15: Paul says, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the gentiles, immediately (that is, immediately on the Damascus Road, at the point of salvation) I conferred not with flesh and blood." He said, "I didn't go running off to some human being" – but in privacy. He says, "Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me, but (in privacy) I went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus." And for some three years, he was out there being taught the gospel of grace and the doctrines of the church by God Himself. He turned to the Lord because the Lord could solve his problems. He had the problems of what he had done, and he had the problems of an enormous amount of ignorance.

The apostles knew a lot; they could have told him a lot; and, someplace along the line, no doubt they did. But first of all, this man, on the very threshold of his entrance into salvation, had the discernment to know that you talk to the Lord, not the people, when you want the real scoop.

1. **Property**

A third factor for royal people to preserve their freedom has to do with their property. No human agency, secular or religious, is authorized to violate the personal choice that you have concerning what you do with your material possessions. Matthew 20:1-16 and Act 5:1-11 are two classic passages, that we'll let you read on your own, concerning what a person has a right to do with his own property. In Matthew 20, you have the parable about the vineyard owner, and how he decided to pay his laborers. In Acts 5, you have the matter of Ananias and Sapphira trying to lie concerning how much money they had received for the property they sold. The point that was made to them was that: "It was yours. You didn't have to lie. You didn't have to give it. You were free to do whatever you wanted with it."

Those two passages of Scripture very clearly set up the fact that what you possess as the result of your labors belongs to you. Giving money to God's work is always by freewill, as the Holy Spirit leads to the amount. But that isn't the way churches want to do it. They want to talk about an Old Testament system of tithing. They want to send a committee of deacons around to your home and say, "Our church has established that this year our budget will be this much." Will you tell us how much you will subscribe to this budget?" Could you imagine somebody walking into a Berean home like that? Talk about tarring and feathering the deacons! Once people understand the grace principle, they wouldn't tolerate that for one moment. Yet, the members in many (if not most) churches, expect an official committee to come by and say, "How much are you going to subscribe for this budget this year?" Then they give a quarterly report? Churches just love to do that. They love to fill out these quarterly reports because they keep records about what people give, so that people can get their reports and see how little they gave, so that they'll be intimidated.

Once in a while, a government agency wants us to tell them how much somebody gave. We say, "We have no way of knowing that. We don't keep records." When you say that to a bureaucrat, his eyeballs start spinning in opposite directions. He'll say, "You don't keep records? You don't know what anybody gives?" And I say, "No, and I'm glad I don't, now that you're asking." In some churches, that's inconceivable. Boy, they love to fill out those quarterly reports. They say, "Here you are, Sam Jones. You gave $2.57," and then they put an exclamation point next to it. That means, "You dirty so-and-so." This is the wonderful way that churches have of telling you what to do with your material possessions – invading your freedom. The Word of God says that what you do is what the Spirit of God leads you to do.

The amount of giving, of course, is determined by your spiritual maturity. I can tell you that. The lower grade kind of Christian you are in spiritual maturity, the higher the percentage of what you keep, in comparison to the ratio of what you give. The more developed you are as a mature believer, your thinking is now properly anchored to the fact that the best is yet ahead, and your enjoyment of your possessions here is going to be only to the degree that you have stored them as treasures in heaven. That's where your best returns are going to come on your possessions. Then you will be ready to be a more generous giver to the Lord's work. But again, it's a matter of your maturity, and of the Spirit of God leading you.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 say this: "But this I say: he who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly. He who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so, let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver." And the more grown up you are as a Christian, the more cheerful you are to give. We do have the non-super grace types of believers in the royal family. They are identified. They are characterized by greediness; selfishness; and, being cheap and self-deceiving relative to what they do give to the Lord's work. If they ever have any question as to what they gave last Sunday, they give themselves the benefit of the doubt. They are hoarding; they're self-indulgent; and, they're possessors of material things. When they die, somebody else takes over and benefits by what they have. That is characteristic of the non-super grace type.

The super grace type of believer doesn't go for cheap things. He wants quality things, because that is befitting a proper reflection of the Lord whom he represents. No one, however, has the right to impose some type of force on a member of the royal family of God to make him to do right with his money, no matter how poorly he is functioning. You don't have the right to impose pressures to make him do right. It is only positive volition to doctrine that will make a person do right with his money. It is only positive volition to the guidance of the Holy Spirit that enables a Christian to act with the dignity of royalty with his money instead of being a grubby, clutching miser.

The lowest kind of insult to the Lord Jesus is when God has prospered him (as God has prospered most of us in this country), for him to pretend that we're too poor to afford something that everybody knows isn't all that expensive; or, we're too poor to be able to help support something. That is really the low-life type. As a member of the royal family of God, you should not be playing poor boy when God has well-supplied you. That's an insult to His grace. If you don't want to let everybody know how well-off you are, that's OK. That's your private business. But don't play poor boy, and insult the Lord Jesus Christ as if He's not taking care of you, because He has made it very clear that that is exactly what He's going to do. He will take care of you, and you have nothing to fear.

God prospers, with the ability to give, the believer who has developed the capacity for such blessing through the doctrines of Scripture. In 2 Corinthians 9:8, we read, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." And that has to do with the good work of giving.

1. **A Proper Attitude Toward Authority**

So, freedom means protection of volition; protection of privacy; protection of property; and it also includes one other thing, and that is a proper attitude toward authority. That includes the four divine institutions relative to volition; marriage; family; and, the political entity of the nation. This refers to the authority of the Bible. This refers to the teaching authority of the pastor-teacher in the local church. This refers to the authority of parents over their children; the authority of teachers over their students; the authority of civil government in its legitimately provided areas of responsibility; and, the authority in the military services. All of these are elements for preserving freedom in society. We do not resent authority. We respect it and welcome it.

So, it's disappointing to see members of the royal family of God who violate these basic elements of personal freedom, but only divine viewpoint wisdom of doctrine can change them and secure compliance with them.

**Christian Royalty does not act with Arrogance**

There's another factor that should be characteristic of royalty. Christian royalty does not act with arrogance when it is confronted with others who lower themselves to the commoner status in their lives. It is easy to look down your nose at other Christians when they act like commoners. A royal person does not become snobbish and detached from those who compromise their royal position. You don't take a self-righteous attitude. A member of royalty does not become intolerant of Christians who indeed do prostitute their knowledge of Bible doctrine and their Christian heritage in order to secure some approval from the world. That is a big problem for all of us who are members of royalty – that the world has things that it dangles out there. It has fame; it has positions; and, it has returns that we want. It is easy for us to see Christians who (in a Demas-like way) are attracted to the world, and we just hold them in contempt. That is bad business. We have to be careful not to do that.

In Romans 4:3, Paul says, "Let not him that eats despise him that doesn't eat (that is, meat offer to an idol). And let not him who doesn't eat judge him that eats, for God has received him." Live and let live, but do not become so arrogant that you are ready to wash your hands of the Christian who indeed is compromising and prostituting his heritage. To be patient with the immature believer who lacks grace orientation takes a lot of patience. That's the most irritating kind of member of the royal family – the character who is not oriented to grace, but who has a lot of opinions about how to do it; and, whose own legalistic hangups he considers the highest standard of living. Don't cut him down. Don't flaunt your superior insights.

Romans 15:1 says, "We then that are strong enough to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." If he stays in the Word, time will correct his pitiful inanities, and will bring him from a backward royalty to an understanding current royalty. So, don't act with arrogance when somebody lowers himself as a member of the family of God beneath his royal status.

**Royal Character is formed from the Inside Out by the Word of God**

Another characteristic is that royal character is formed from the inside out by the Word of God. You are not called to change and reform others on the outside with some imagined superior position that you have. People are changed from the inside, or they're not changed. Sometimes Christians victimize other believers and actually drive them from the truth when they put the pressures on them to seek some external conformity to a standard which indeed might be a good standard. There are many bad habits among Christians: habits that they should not have; habits that are injurious to their bodies; and, habits that are injurious to the soul. Yet, even then, you have to realize that the change has to come from the inside. The person's problem is that they need to get into the Word, and they have to be encouraged to be positive toward the Word that they hear.

Therefore, we come back to the principle that: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." That's a day-by-day living. That's the reason we put out a tape of the week. That's the reason that we tell you that the tape room is open. That's the reason we encourage you to get into good books on Christian subjects, and to be a student of the Word day-by-day during the week. Hopefully, that will straighten you up on the inside so that your external contact will be in keeping with your royal position.

**Christian Royalty does not Respond with Insults**

Another characteristic of royalty is that it does not respond to undeserved abuse with insult by descending to the level of the attacker, and responding in kind. Royalty does not respond to abuse and insult by reacting in the same way. And that is hard not to do. Here is some dummy who comes along and abuses your position that you have arrived at from the Word of God. They're so cocky, and so certain, and so assured, and they ridicule and insult, and you want to turn around and shred them.

Romans 12:17-21 put it this way: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, don't avenge yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him drink, for in so doing, you shall heap coal of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. That's the principle. You don't respond in kind. You hopefully maintain your dignity and you maintain a position of peace.

There will be times when some Christian will snap at you, and they'll really lay the word out to you. That is the time that you will demonstrate how much nobility you really have: whether you will take them on, and act in kind; or, whether you will respond with Christian royal dignity, recognizing that they are out of line, and, hopefully, that they will in time realize that. Because I can tell you this, and I just wish privacy did not prevent me from giving you case histories. I'll tell you this: that when they snap; when they act out of line; and, when they portray an arrogance which is unbefitting their Christian royalty, you do indeed leave that vengeance up to the Lord. If they do not turn around and realize that they were out of line, the consequences to them are enormous. If they persist, God grabs them up by their hair roots and he jerks them right out of this assembly, and he sends them packing. And only eternity is going to demonstrate what a terrible loss that was.

So, you can take the insults; you can take the rebuff; and, you can take the rebuking statement. It's not important. The tragedy is with the person who made it. If they don't straighten out, the consequences are going to be forever.

So, royalty instead reaches out to be gracious to those who attack in ignorance or in spite. God has reserved for Himself the executing of justice upon carnal believers who are opposing God's agent. Royalty exercises the discernment necessary to recognize those who oppose true doctrine, and who are governed by their emotions, and it exercises caution toward them. You don't want to be carried away by those who are opposing what is the truth, but you do treat them with grace. God will deal with it.

**Korah**

Korah (as the spokesman for his associates) came to Moses in the wilderness, and said, "Moses, we're sick and tired of you acting as the number one man around here. Who are you to be telling us what God thinks? Who are you to be telling us what God wants us to do?" Moses had all the authority. He had stood on the sacred ground at the burning bush. He could have cut Korah down like you wouldn't believe. He had all the authority; he had all the backing; and, he knew the ground upon which he stood.

However, instead, Moses said, "Well, I'll tell you, Korah. Let's ask God, and let Him settle it." And Korah said, "That's right. That's what I want." And Korah and his family and his associates ended up having the interesting experience of standing in the presence of an earthquake on the very spot where the earth opened up. They could have stood one foot on either side of it, but no, they had to stand right on the crack point. It opened up; they went down; and, then they had the interesting experience of having the crack close up. Now, that's one way of settling a debate. I mean, that presses the point home, so to speak. And there was no question as to why Moses had the authority to speak – because he was God's agent. It was great the way Moses did that. He did not do it in vengeance. He acted with dignity. He did not cut down that ignorance.

Romans 16:17-18: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them, for they are such that do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own body; and by good words and fair speeches, they deceive the hearts of the innocent." I am not saying that you go around saying, "Everything is wonderful. Everybody love everybody else." One of the great points of Christian loyalty is to know the difference between personal and impersonal love. We're not going to get to that one now, but that is perhaps the high point of the characteristic of royalty. We're not walking around loving everybody. We're not walking around saying, "That's wonderful. You're all OK." You're not all OK, and we recognize those who are not OK, and that is what Paul is saying here. You mark them, and then, while you do not act without dignity as a member of God's royal family, and while you do seek to move them in the right direction, you preserve yourself from their error, and indeed, if necessary, you separate yourself from them.

These are things we learn from the Word. When we put them into practice, we act in a way that is befitting our position. Next time, we'll look at a few more that are necessary features and characteristics of the conduct, and the thinking, and the performance of members of God's royal family.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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