

## Articles and Sermons :: We Are All the Same in Christ by K.P. Yohannan

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The Apostle Paul, a hero of the faith, was a man who had every reason to boast:

Born into a rich, prestigious family.

Taught at the finest academic school under the most acclaimed instructors.

Earned a Ph.D., so to speak, from the best university of his day.

Accepted as a member of the prominent Sanhedrin, the ruling council of his nation.

Natural-born leader. Philosopher. Thinker. Theologian.

Even with a track record like this, Paul didn't boast, he still tells Timothy, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1).

Of all that Paul could be strong in, he doesn't boast in anything he has in himself. In fact, he says in his letter to the Philippians, "whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ" (Philippians 3:7).

Why doesn't Paul boast?

Saint Paul knew that in order to live a life pleasing to the Lord, it must be a life of total dependence on Him. It is this kind of attitude in ministry that keeps us on a healthy course, honoring God and producing fruit that lasts.

Timothy was the complete opposite in temperament and in every other way from Paul:

He was young, sick and weak.

His family background was messed up a Jewish mother and a Gentile father.

He was most likely from a low caste.

He was a "betrayer" to the Greeks and "nothing but a dog" to the Jews.

But Paul thought Timothy's background was wonderful! Why? Because Timothy knew he was of the least and the least he had nothing of himself to boast in. God could easily use him to bring all the glory to Himself.

Cow Dung Qualifications

In Philippians 3, Paul sums it up for Timothy saying, "All that I was, all that I knew, everything that I once held as important, it all meant nothing. It didn't work or make me a more useful servant of God. So I decided to take all my degrees, all my wonderful background, all my abilities, all my skills, talents and temperament, and call them cow dung."

Have you ever seen people hang their university or college degrees on their wall? Would someone ever do the same with cow dung? Dry it, frame it and write his name under it? No, but that's exactly what Paul did.

The high priest and other leaders and theologians had their degrees hanging on their walls, but if you had walked into Paul's office, you would have found him sitting there scribbling away, his degree of cow dung hanging above him on the wall. Who would honor him with that as his qualification?

Paul recognized that in him dwelled "nothing good" (Romans 7:18). He knew Timothy was blessed because he did not have to go through the same mess of having much and then having to throw it all away. Paul knew how important it is to be careful about living life dependent on nothing and no one but the Lord.

We All Start at Zero

You see, in Christ we are all the same. If you started out with nothing, like Timothy, or were considered something like Saint Paul, either way it has no bearing. We must all start from zero to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). We must live in the awareness of this truth and recognize that God is our source, depending on Him alone and not on anything of ourselves.

Every time I sit before the studio microphone to record a radio broadcast, I remind myself that I represent my Lord and

hat He is the One using me to speak on His behalf. It is not me doing it. I must keep in mind that my hand is His hand and my tongue is His tongue and that His resources allow me to represent Him.

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