

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse? - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 8:48

Re: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse? - posted by dohzman (), on: 2006/3/3 9:09

The Word says not to receive an accusation against an elder. I suppose in offenses the best model is the cross carrying Christ and a strong prayer life. Ask God for wisdom, it might just be a character building experience.

As to your illustration on rape. I want to caution you on doing as the world does. They take a cause, place a spin on it like some kind of remote 1 in a million setting, an example would be the lawsuit placed by an AIDS victim who was fired by an employer because of the discovery of a gay lifestyle, and they build their argument from there. They get sympathy from the general public for their underlying cause by making the hero the one and the bad guy the other. Don't do that.

I would probably seek out mature Christian believers who you can pray with and possibly a Christian (I hate to use the term) counselor.

Re:, on: 2006/3/3 9:41

Paul commended the Bereans because they study the scriptures everyday to see if what they were being taught was true. We have that responsibility in our lives as well. We should not just accept everything we hear in the pulpit. But today most Christians hardly read their Bibles, not mention study them. So most believers wouldn't know error if they heard it, much less challenge the pastor intelligently.

I have been in churches where spiritual abuse has happened. But it didn't happen to me (though they tried) because I was able to discern what was happening, and we just simply left. I hate to put it like this, but I think most who are spiritually abused allow themselves to be because they do not know the scriptures. They are not students of the Word.

That's not to be taken as a blanket statement, as I am sure there are exceptions. But if your personal walk with God is as it should be... you should be able to avoid these pitfalls.

As for making public statements... I think warnings are fair, BUT you better be sure of what you're talking about. And be sure that you have taken the Biblical approach to dealing with those who have sinned against you in the church.

Krispy

Re: Dealing with Spiritual Abuse - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/3 9:58

Quote:

-----Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

The answer to this question is "yes", and "no". Not only that, there are many different ways that we can address it - good ways and bad ways. There are a lot of considerations.

Control, manipulation, and domination are always wrong, and we need to learn to recognize it.

God has never called any of us to defend a sick, abusive system, or protect the unrepentant spiritual leader. Doing so only enables this sin to continue and harm many others. We must learn to recognize our own part of this problem and take appropriate measures. Also, we need to be aware of our own tendencies to assert ourselves over others - try to control them. It is a very subtle thing that most of us are not even aware of.

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

The prophets, Jesus, and also the apostles spoke against spiritual abuse. However, as you know, there were serious repercussions for them all.

Before addressing it, I'd suggest that you gain a good understanding of it.
Here are some websites:

(<http://www.spiritualabuse.org/introduction.html>) Spiritual Abuse: An Introduction
(<http://www.spiritualabuse.com/>) Spiritual Abuse: Recovery Resources

I recommend you read Jeff VanVonderen's book, "The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse"

There is a cost to healing, as Scripture reveals - the old system wants to "spit" you out. However, the rewards are eternal, and well worth it - it is the path to Christ's FREEDOM. And God will use you to help many others be set free.
May God bless you as you seek him for guidance and strength in the days ahead.
Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/3 11:08

The last post addressed spiritual (church) abuse in general. Here are some more specific answers to your specific questions

Quote:
----- you, your family and many others you know were seriously hurt by an abusive church is it a sin to say anything publicly because that would damage their reputation?

The reason for this "law" is sinful in itself - a cover-up attempt. However, that doesn't mean that speaking out is totally to be condoned. The Bible gives procedures: one at a time, then with two, then publicly... many other factors to consider.

Quote:
----- If you were to hear someone speaking about these issues, do you believe it is healthy to force the person expressing themselves to separate the pain of the experience from the experience?

Actually, quite the opposite: it is unhealthy!

Quote:
----- what would you think of the person who criticized a rape victim for crying while they testified against the person who did it?

A calloused person

Quote:
----- Would they be right for asking the person to be more objective?

The assumption in this request is that crying implies the lack of objectivity. That is a false judgment. If there were no feelings, that could be a lack of "objectivity" - think of sociopaths. They have no feeling.

Quote:
----- If not why do we offer people who are suffering from spiritual rape less compassion? It's like the first thing you're told is "get over it. and don't say anything until you do." Why is that?

Again, a very calloused answer. I think fear may be an issue here - fear of having to empathize with such depth of pain ... Fear of experiencing one's own hidden pain via the "victim". Also, through years of exposure, something doesn't feel wrong anymore. So, being violated spiritually is no big deal. The conscience gets dead to these things after a while,

and feelings go away. The bible calls this "seering" of the conscience. Empathy is gone. The hardened heart can no longer can "weep with those who are weeping, and rejoice with those who rejoice" Rom. 12:

Quote:

----- Also, do you believe that truth outweighs position?

Always, but that doesn't give a subordinate the freedom to say what they think. There are many factors. Consider the importance of EARNING the right to speak, building trust.

Quote:

----- ...a brand new member has the authority to rebuke a pastor if the pastor is clearly in Scriptural error?

Rebuke can mean a lot of things. It may mean simply setting a good example. Have you ever felt rebuked by someone else's good example. (ex: you think, wow!, I'm sure not that loving, and I should be) Consider the need for applying truth in love.

Quote:

----- What Scriptures would you use to support your point of view on any of these topics.

There are many scriptures that speak of our relationships with others, and authorities our patience, etc

Consider 1 Corinthians 13: The Love Chapter.

A good study: Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

In other words, give to any leader what is rightfully theirs (our respect, service, etc) but NOT our hearts, our trust – that belongs to God.

Knowing the difference is a challenge.

Diane

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/3/3 11:14

My pastor once told me a story about an evangelist that was visiting a particular church for a long series revival (roughly a month long). One of the older ladies in that church discerned quickly the man wasn't much when it came to prayer, and she asked him to join the women praying at midnight in the sanctuary, and there he would truly learn to pray. So, they got him nice and saturated in prayer, and he indeed drew closer to God than he had ever been in his entire life.

The next day when he stood up in the pulpit, God had him start talking about the story of Nathan and David after David had killed Uriah and taken his wife. He was telling the story of how Nathan came and told David a parable which moved David to anger. And when David was moved to anger, Nathan blurted out "Thou art that man!"

Then the evangelist through a word of knowledge went walking down the aisle and said, "God has shown me that there is somebody in this church that is running the place like he is a CEO and this is his business. God says that this is his church and you will no longer manipulate his people any longer." He came to place in the aisle, stopped, and pointed to one of the elders and said, "thou art that man!" The elder got angry and went to attack the preacher, and immediately the Spirit of God came on that man and flattened him to the ground. The man tried to get up, but was unable to. God really convicted him, and the man crawled all the way from his seat up to the altar and cried out, "OH GOD, have mercy on me a sinner!"

And it is reported at that time a powerful move of God broke out right there in the congregation.

Nobody is above rebuke and correction. There is a biblical way of doing things, and we must follow that. However, not even leaders are above rebuke from the "laity." There are times when this process however, is not heeded by the congregation out of a sense of timidity, or where secret sins are done. In such times, God sends his Nathan's into the church to expose those in error. E.g. Peter with Ananias and Sapphira.

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/3 11:17

Quote:
-----I have been in churches where spiritual abuse has happened. But it didnt happen to me (tho they tried) because I was able to discern what was happening, and we just simply left. I hate to put it like this, but I think most who are spiritually abused allow themselves to be because they do not know the scriptures. They are not students of the Word

I like what Krispy is saying here.

It is my experience that most "spiritual abuse" is passive aggressive...that is they don't conquer you by physical force. Instead, spiritual authority can often create a cult-like atmosphere of control through flattery at first, and then bargains of extra power for extra loyalty and obedience, or conversely...effective condemnation for disloyalty. (I realize am grossly generalizing...)

More often than not, it is our celebrity worship of pastors and prophets that gets us, and them, into trouble.

When I realized I had allowed myself to be subjugated in an unhealthy manner, I had to admit that I became snared through some character fault of my own...these experiences can be painful learning lessons about my own immaturity, spiritual ambition, and idolatry. The bottom line is that, in a society that offers many choices for church, the only way a pastor can have abusive power over his people is if they want him to.

Note that I am commenting about subtle emotional (and financial) control specifically. I do realize that emotional control can sometimes be a prelude to physical or sexual seduction. If there is physical force or sexual activity involved, the matter becomes much more black and white in my perspective. There is simply too much sexual wickedness being protected in church boardrooms at the expense of little sheep that need a safe place to graze.

When I think about these issues, I realize how difficult it is to be a really good elder or pastor, or teacher. Church leadership requires mature men and women who are examples to the flock... an inspiration who does not inspire cult-worship. I am so very thankful to God for good men and women who fill leadership roles, yet I realize that they are also fragile vessels that need my faithful prayer!

MC

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 11:45

.

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 11:46

.

Re:, on: 2006/3/3 12:54

Not that spiritual abuse can't happen in House Churches, but one of the main contributing factors in spiritual abuse is that what we are used to seeing as the "church" is hardly the way the real church in the 1st century looked.

We **don't** share all things, we **don't** sacrifice for each other, we **don't** have true times of fellowship. We **don't** sit down at the table together...

We give the bare minimum... there are rich folks in the same church with people who can barely afford the gas to get to church. When was the last time you truly sacrificed for someone in your church?

Fellowship? Ha! Looking at the back of someone's head for an hour is not fellowship.

Sitting down at the table? What? Once a month over pot-luck? That's a start! The 1st century Christians practically lived together... they broke bread together every day!

They didnt sit and listen to the preacher and call that fellowship. They had preaching, sure... but they lived and breathed together! It was intimate.

If we had more of that today, and less of the corporate chain of command that we do have (which is hardly Biblical), then I think spiritual abuse would be less of a problem.

Krispy

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 13:15

.

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 13:18

.

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 13:38

.

Re:, on: 2006/3/3 15:03

sj, to coin the term of the week ... I have much to say on this ... but I have to weigh my words so as not to cause any more hurt to anyone.

First may I say, that I pray we can disagree on a point and yet still receive from each other !?

ALL things, work together for good, for the purpose of 'us' being conformed to the Image of Christ.

So even this, that you've been through, is for that purpose and that purpose only. See ?

Took me upteen years to see how true this is and whenever I'm slashed to pieces and react back at it ... I have to remember this.

I don't believe the Bible shows us ANYWHERE that we're all to be always syrupy sweet.

Show me any Bible character ... Paul included, who is quoted the most often or Jesus and I'll show you Reaction to non-truths and injustices.

If we get droned out, like peaceful little zombies and are smacked whenever we become zealous for truth ... then something is dead wrong ... because that type "zeal" is what made one brother or sister, throw themselves in front of another brother or sister in the Coliseum with the lions, so that the lion would feed on them and get full and not attack anymore Brethren.

If we don't understand that type zeal for the protection of the Body or Jesus clearing the Temple or Paul's many upset actions or words or Peter's in the book of Acts, then we Won't have the bravery to stand, not only for ourselves but for the brethren set before lions or "ravenous wolves".

Sometimes, the Holy Spirit acts in a way that is not too nice, so to speak, and just a light reading of the book of Acts will prove that out.

Most of our reformers etc. suffered great persecution yet stood and most were burned at the stake. Ravenhill could yell some pretty words.

But here is where I have to switch gears though.

I don't agree with what has gone on down in Pensicola ... I'm sorry. So anything that comes out of there, is to be expected to have it's quirks. I don't want to turn this into a big debate on whether that all was from 'God' or not ... but that aside ... I'd like to say that I have friends who are 24/7 before the Lord.

They don't move without His leading etc.

Yet they've been hurt by a Church years ago and by some employees of theirs a few times now.

Is it because they are not in prayer or The Word ? ... Farrrr from it. But sometimes God allows our 'Discernment' to be blinded, so that we will go in amongst certain people to have "HIS" affect there or come out with wisdom we couldn't have gotten any other way.

We may not even know in this lifetime what 'He' is doing by having us with certain people, but we must know that not a s

parrow falls without it being HIS will.

These friends I told you about, even though they are the holiest people I've ever met and the most Christ-like as I've ever met, were cut to the bone by this Church and the pain was immeasurable. She confided all of that hurt to me and I was surprised that it lasted so long, that she would ever hurt that badly, to still be talking about it.

But that 'talk' was just between her and I.

She had a prayer/bible study group at her house all along anyway, so she just prayed and didn't tell anyone else how torn up she was.

Slowly, one by one, the others left that Church and now without anyone trying to backstab the Church, there's now few left there from the original group.

I think, like I said earlier ... it's the Doctrine we are to Scripturally expose, not any personal hurts.

I think like Krispy mentioned ... God wants to get 'our' Studies right and we sometimes wind up in non-Scriptural movements because we have strayed from truth to please man somehow or are looking for the out of the ordinary too much.

I see this as The Lord protecting you and your wife and asking you to re-check your beliefs.

After which ... you will come out stronger from all of this and not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine or movements and will be able to say "I see" of why God has separated you from this.

You being the Priest of your home, must seek out what is sound pure doctrinal truth for your wife and children's protection.

That should keep you busy enough, so that your wounds can heal.

I'll close by saying, Yes, I've seen really devoted sincere doctrinally sound folks get torn to shreds in Churches and in most cases, it was because the Church's Doctrines are off and God wanted to get His people OUT of there.

I don't want to discuss FL or NC ... O.K. ? but I will say, I understand "hurt" ... been there, done that, and it cost me my health.

Let's just pray for you, O.K. ?

His Love to you and your dear family.

Shalom, Agape, Truth and Peace.

Annie

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 15:50

Re: Recommended - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/3 15:50

Here is a past discussion with accompanying links that may be of some help and counsel. Could not recommend more highly the messages mentioned there from Stephen Kaung on spiritual authority.

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id6072&forum35#45127) What isn't "Speaking against God's anointed"

Re: abust in large crowds - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/3 16:09

Quote:
-----Jesus rebuked people that he had never "earned" a right to speak too. So did John the Baptist. In fact that's what got them killed wasn't it?

I'm totally with you on this one! There are times when we simply will never "earn" the right in the eyes of the abusers (or their colaborators). We will be silenced - told to keep our mouth shut. (My how handy a lot of verses are for justifying this kind of ungodly rebuke.) However, I do believe that God can lead the way when we must speak out. He can open the door. He can also close the door and instead remove us from the situation.

I did mention the need to take our own responsibility if we are the victim. But I also caution: It is all too easy to say to someone who has been devastated by abuse, "You should know better. Just don't put up with it. Get over it..." These kind of comments express a gross inability to understand the suffering of the victim and their 'role' in the abuse.

I find that spiritual abuse is virtually NEVER discussed in church - or even the concepts. If churches would only listen to the therapists of those who have been damaged by the church, they could learn so much, and prevent a lot of damage. It's been said that the church keeps psychiatrists in business.

Some churches are healthier than others and I think it has to do with a lot of hidden relational/spiritual dynamics going on - maybe even for generations. Also, as Krispy implied, GOOD DOCTRINE IS HEALTHY FOR EVERYONE. Sadly people take their dysfunctions into the church and spread it like a disease. Then they make the bible say whatever they want to justify and hide their faulty behaviors.

Almost no one believes that they have bad doctrine. And almost no one believes that they are a perpetrator of abuse.

I don't see mentioned yet the reality of power structure. Sorry to say, but the ground is not level. There are people who simply cannot stand against the abuse of those who hold power and authority - like a child and parent. Indeed, the child may be part of the problem, but they are dependants. They can't just leave or even challenge the problem because that would be too threatening. It is like that in any institution.

You mentioned large groups being a safer environment because that avoids the enmeshment that can foster abuse. But I would like to challenge that. People in the pulpit can use their power, authority, and charisma to heap very subtle abuse on everyone - and lay guilt trips - ex: to get people to tithe, join, trust in THEIR teachings, and far worse. (example.... oh, I better not mention a name) Of course some adherents are more vulnerable than others - depending on their own spiritual/emotional state. Sadly, countless people are very willingly submitting themselves to the manipulation of a very charismatic type of leader. Imagine all the pain that they will encounter when they realize that they were deceived.

We need to learn how to be instruments of healing. You can tell that I have experienced some spiritual abuse in my past, and that is why I am passionate about addressing this topic. Let's keep it going.

I believe that the "beast" in Revelation will be an abuser - seducing the masses to follow him.

Another reason to keep the topic going.
Diane

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 16:40

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/3 17:09

Quote:

-----About "not naming names" i know you said that in jest, but in all seriousness what's the problem with doing that?

If I understand the original purpose for this thread it was to seek helpful suggestions for victims of abuse. Now I'm wondering if you asked because you are giving us a test - to see if we have the "right" answers.

Yes, I left off any name (like one that popped into my mind) for a definite reason: because of the tendency of the reader to focus on that person rather than the problem we are discussing here.

We would do far better to learn about the nature of spiritual abuse (ie damaging misuse of power) than merely name names. That way we can see it for what it is and avoid the lure.

Even better than that: we need to understand human nature, ourselves.. see our bent to be part of this problem in religion.

Better yet: Read Mike's attachments and learn about Godly authority so that we can discern ungodly authority. I got stated in them - delicious stuff!

Even better yet: we need to learn how to make Christ our ultimate authority in our lives. That is the best way to avoid the lure of abusers.

Oh, how could I forget: We need to learn how to effectively minister to those who have been damaged by authority figures of any kind.

Diane

PS: just curious.... how do you feel about the links I suggested... helpful???

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2006/3/3 18:02

Quote:

-----About "not naming names" i know you said that in jest, but in all seriousness what's the problem with doing that?

There is no problem with that, in fact I think it is a necessity. It helps to warn other to be extra leery of those whose names have been named. If names are named other might not be drawn in so far as to be spiritually raped as you put it. Wouldn't you want to know if a sex offender just released from prison moved in next door or down the street. Well the same thing goes for those spiritual rapists who are running churches and ministries in the name of Jesus. And also, I have seen people wake up to the deception they were under when names have been mentioned. A while back I saw that happen to a guy on another forum who said "T.D. Jakes! - Oh my! I would have never thought you were talking about him! I love that guy me and him are hommies! I will definitely check out and research what you say!"

a couple of posts later -

"I checked it out and you are right - that's it I'm done with TBN forever - I'm never going to watch that station again!!!"

Praise the Lord!!!! Now what if the person making the original post was too cowardly to name names? This guy would still be thinking him and Jakes are hommies and watching TBN every night.

No friend, to name names is imperative and necessary. Names are always mentioned in the Scriptures unless everyone knows who is being spoken of (like the guy who was sleeping with his father's wife in the Corinthian Church - everyone knew who was being spoken of - or I can assure you there would have been a name) In order to follow the Biblical pattern

we must name names so that everyone know who we are talking about.

Quote:

-----If any of you read my last post (the one that was pulled) I'm sure you realize my name is mud right now, because of some of the stuff I said, but I'd rather have it no other way because if I'm wrong then bless God at least I'm not a coward.

I sure hope your post wasn't pulled because of names you mentioned. I have seen numerous names mentioned here on sermonindex (Olsen, Katz, Warren, Reidhead, Bickle, Joyner, Comfort, Robertson, Graham, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.) if there is some new rule against speaking about specific people or ministries, I lost the memo. Now most of these discussions were concerning the Scriptural validity of doctrinal issues and the such. But if one was to have first hand knowledge of any ministry or teacher/preacher, I can't imagine the moderators of this site pulling the post. Did you receive any explanation of why your post was pulled? If it was how you said it that was at issue, I would encourage to repost the names and ministry in a format that is more acceptable to the site's moderators. The moderators (in my experience) have always been willing to discuss such issues.

Re: - posted by Abide, on: 2006/3/3 18:39

Quote:

if there is some new rule against speaking about specific people or ministries, I lost the memo. Now most of these discussions were concerning the Scriptural validity of doctrinal issues and the such. But if one was to have first hand knowledge of any ministry or teacher/preacher, I can't imagine the moderators of this site pulling the post. Did you receive any explanation of why your post was pulled? If it was how you said it that was at issue, I would encourage to repost the names and ministry in a format that is more acceptable to the site's moderators. The moderators (in my experience) have always been willing to discuss such issues.

I don't know what this is about, but I perceive/discern that the reason why I am still at work is for this particular post.

If I offended you in any way please forgive me, and if by my signature I stirred up something, the Lord knows why I signed my previous post the way that I did. I may sign on under several different names, but I am still the same person, and I love everyone and you very much.

God is not interested in our past as much as he is interested in our present and especially in our FUTURE, AMEN AND AMEN...

God Bless You,
-Angie

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2006/3/3 18:50

Quote:

-----If I offended you in any way please forgive me, and if by my signature I stirred up something, the Lord knows why I signed my previous post the way that I did.

You have not offended me in any way at all. I can't find your previous post (maybe your post was deleted too) and don't know what post you are talking about. I was specifically talking about SJ's reference to naming names when it comes to harmful or deceptive ministries or teachers. And SJ's reference to one of his posts being deleted. That he may find out why to avoid any confusion or problems in the future and still live up to his responsibilities to bring to light what he has experienced by name.

Sorry for any confusion ;-)

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/3 19:37

Re: a wave - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/3 20:28

Quote:
-----I may feel some aggression against what I now perceive to be a false pressure to be silent about abusive situations but I'm NOT mad at you. I'm not even mad AT these people.

Whew! Has a bit wave has hit me? I'm not sure where we are going.
Earlier I loosely added in a parenthesis about not naming a name and it seems that by trying to avoid a distraction, I inadvertently created a distraction. I'm a bit confused why you asked your original question when it seems that you are already have strong convictions about this.
Perhaps we are thinking of different situations. This is a vast topic after all.
EDIT: I suspect that there are better alternatives to "speaking out against sinners" And that is to deal with ourselves, give ourselves to God and grow in our own faith. A strong offense is a good defence.

Quote:
----- seriously, they are bound.

Do you mean us? If you feel this way about us, then, we may not be the best ones to help you out. Perhaps there is another forum that would better meet your needs.

Also, if you feel we are "bound" then I'm afraid there are barriers to developing trust. We won't be able to help you. Perhaps if you get to know us, you might find that some here have been gloriously set free by our precious Savior!!!!

Quote:
-----So please keep giving your advice, and don't be thrown off by my questioning

I will address this in prayer, but at the moment, have no more words or links to offer. I know that the Spirit will guide you as you seek him for guidance.
God bless you.
Diane

Re: spotlight on structure - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/4 4:20

Quote:
-----I don't see mentioned yet the reality of power structure. Sorry to say, but the ground is not level. There are people who simply cannot stand against the abuse of those who hold power and authority - like a child and parent. Indeed, the child may be part of the problem, but they are dependants. They can't just leave or even challenge the problem because that would be too threatening. It is like that in any institution.

Diane,

I would like to add to your important comment about structure. The larger problem as I see it is certainly more systemic than personality driven. In my anecdotal experience with church abuse, abusive personalities are attracted, indeed even shaped, by unbiblical government structures.

For a manual on how to build an abusive church power structure see Peter Wagner's book "Churchquake". (I have brought this book up before, but I think it warrants a mention in this thread.) Sadly, the book is helpful only as a "via negative" of good church polity, a how-to manual for building a horrible church governing structure. In its pages you will probably recognize familiar and hurtful concepts being advocated as biblical and "apostolic." Wagner, and his "apostolic reformers" advocate giving unilateral control of doctrine, finances, and mission to a single "charismatic" leader. The book recommends that these pastors create printouts of top financial donors and reward them with perquisites like s

pecial banquets and trips, as well as inviting them into the "inner courts" of influence with the "elders and prophets." ("A good pastor knows his sheep!" pg.261...sigh)

Now I mention this book not to point a finger at Wagner...but as he is a professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary and a popular author, I think his ideas embody a very disturbing trend among professional Christians who pastor our independent churches. Independent and charismatic churches are too often designed with a radical lack of accountability to reliable spiritual peers, such as qualified elders within the local body. In my experience spiritual abusers never endorse transparency...they build opacity into their lonely office. They may claim they have accountability but it is never within the local body...instead it is from another "apostle" outside and beyond the reach of the church. The idea of a plurality of elders is strictly prohibited in this all too popular model for church governance.

Even though I seem to be complaining about the "man" in charge, I would like to restate that it is the system that fosters this. Let me give an illustration from my own household. A few years ago we took in two cats. Recently some visitors pointed out that our two cats have grown as fat as beavers! My wife and I noticed their growth but we never seemed to be as shocked at the sight of their girth like visitors are. Last week, my mother in law observed the root of the problem...she noticed that all of us, from my wife to the kids were feeding the cats randomly without any agreed upon plan or structure. A cat would simply have to brush up against my leg and I would pop open a can of tuna! (Add to their diet the occasional mouse or bird...)

Now that I understand this problem I feel badly, for in another house these same cats would be much healthier.

I think my two full-figured felines demonstrate how even good-intentioned pastors can grow sleek and fat over time without boundaries. Many Christians are all too happy to "serve" stronger leaders who prophesy without accountability structures, raise money without accountability structures, create doctrine without accountability structures, counsel privately without accountability structures, and create missions without accountability structures.

In the end I like to talk about systems more than people...critiquing impersonal systems is easier on the conscience of those who are too cautious to critique a leader. We can more readily talk about systemic issues without feeling judgmental towards a pastor...who may very well be unaware how easy it is to become fat living off of the sheep.

MC

Re: more on structure - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/4 9:19

Quote:
-----In the end I like to talk about systems more than people...critiquing impersonal systems is easier on the conscience of those who are too cautious to critique a leader. We can more readily talk about systemic issues without feeling judgmental towards a pastor...who may very well be unaware how easy it is to become fat living off of the sheep

Talking about systems also helps one see their own role in it. It defrays the hostility towards perpetrators, as they too are victims of a force far bigger. This facilitates mercy and forgiveness rather than tarring and feathering.

I am grieved about the direction PW et al have taken, yet not surprised. As you say, it is not the one person who is leading it, it is a far bigger system that is sweeping away so many of our fine leaders. Absolutely NO ONE is immune.

Some years ago (around 1996) I found this whole movement very refreshing - truly a move of the Spirit, I believe - freeing many from old moldy religious traditions - opening up the reality of the Spirit - promises of New Covenant. I suspect we saw the preliminaries of revival back then. But then the movement became an idolatrous object in itself, with the leaders being put in places far above where they should have been. I could list all kinds of names, authors, and heroes. I have several of their books on my shelves right now. I believe that many of their writings back then were truly inspired of God. I am not prepared to throw out those books. However, for one reason or another so much of the good stuff got hijacked - for various reasons. Now I find myself going back to the oldie-goldies. And that may be what attracted me to SI in the first place.

You know, one would think that the tragedies of the Shepherding Movement was the needed lesson - but it seems not.

General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?

It is being repeated, and blessed by our highest religious authorities! Yikes! We don't learn well, do we, from other people's failures. We just repeat them.

You paralleled you fat cats to "fat" pastors. I think that there is another analogy there - and that is fat sheep (though starved nutritionally). They are feeding from TV Christian celebrities and many others, not seeing that they are being set up for manipulation and painful abuse down the road. The pastor in their church is only one of many influences, but may very well be a cog in the bigger system, enabled by all those who have an appetite for religious stuffing.

So no one really knows where the sheep are getting all their food, or what is steering their minds - which are crammed full of religious stuffing. But if you offer them a carrot, they have no appetite for such a thing.

People know that our modern churches are in trouble. And that is a temptation for this "feeding frenzy". People are "trying" out all kinds of new methods that promise the pot of gold: revival.

About accountability of pastors: I have seen this all the time: They claim that they are accountable to someone "above them" in the hierarchal ranks - like someone at head office several hundred miles away, someone who only sees them in their suits at convention. I've been to such events and know first hand that it is all too easy to ignore the crying, dying, crippled sheep huddled in the corners of their churches, and instead use them as pawns to build their own kingdoms.

So where is this accountability going to come from? Our religious community is in danger of building another Roman Church in an attempt to restore the rapidly falling structures. As much as people speak against the RCC, many are all too eager to replace it with another: big buildings, where we all speak one language, reaching to the heavens... sound familiar?

But then, is that not what Scripture prophesies will happen in the end times? It hits all too close to home, doesn't it?

Diane

Re: abuse begets abuse - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/4 9:49

One point that I believe needs to be taken into consideration here is the fact that abuse likely does not have its beginnings in the church but in family/cultural systems - even in relational patterns that go back several generations.

For example: In prewar Germany the view of authority was this: the Father is the HEAD of this house. Kids, do as he says, do not question authority. stern, lack of feelings... tenderness.. empathy, blind obedience at all times...

Years later during the post-war trials the accused defended their actions by saying, "We were just obeying orders".

So abuse begets abuse.... victims become abusers...

Diane

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/4 10:32

Re: systems v.s. people - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/4 11:00

Re: spotlight on elders - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/4 13:03

Quote:
-----I've almost totally changed my mind from the concept that the "one man show pastor is the problem if we had plurality of elders things like this wouldn't happen!" Because this church DOES have plurality of elders "in fact they are on the cutting edge of that whole movement...

Indeed brother...I think we are actually seeing the same dynamic. Like I commented earlier, this kind of pastor claim local

I accountability...such as through the elders they have selected. More often than not these elders have been chosen through the sole discretion of the pastor, and instead of acting like a loving accountability structure, they function as a "hedg e of protection" against the sheep. (Local "prophets and prophetesses" are elevated in much the same manner...)

edit: Elders need to be recognized as functioning leaders before they are given the titles.

Let's discuss modern elders for a second. I've recognized a pattern that many elders are not selected for their spiritual seasoning, but often they are businessmen or professional administrators selected for their loyalty to the pastor. So rather than demonstrating a desire to "be an example to the flock" or matured in scriptural areas of serving others, they prize eldership as a personal commendation.

The problem with all of this is that these elders are not able to lead the flock during times of pastoral incapacity. Indeed, their presence in a meeting is regarded as superfluous, and people seeking strong ministry from a leader often prefer the pastor to all others. In a recent church I attended, when the pastor ran off with one of the prophetesses, the elders were helpless to run the church...primarily because they were not properly related to the body in the first place. Being tolerated as yes men in easier times had rendered them objects of mistrust during a crisis.

Yet because of their "apostolic training" they too rejected accountability from leaders selected from the body and ultimately the entire church fell apart. The living stones became the rolling stones, as our church family was scattered. Now the building is completely remineralized with a new pastor and new people.

All of this stands in contrast, I believe, to the tantalizing peek at first century leadership we see in Acts 6. In that chapter we see apostolic peers conferring with one another on how to handle financial resources within the local body. In order to protect their spiritual lives with the Lord, they ask the local body to select men who have established themselves trustworthy to handle the temporal affairs of the community. SJ, I sincerely doubt the dubious pastors we once served under would have even understood this passage of scripture.

MC

Re: some more on structure... - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/4 13:12

Quote:

-----Talking about systems also helps one see their own role in it. It defrays the hostility towards perpetrators, as they too are victims of a force far bigger. This facilitates mercy and forgiveness rather than tarring and feathering.

Very well stated Diane. This really is a healthy outlook on the issue. My uncle teaches at a seminary and I notice none of the students I've met there express ambitions to be a "super-pastor". They start out idealistic and sincere...but once out of school learn that most churches want their pastors to be all-powerful spiritual giants. I still wince when I hear the mistaken maxim, "A church can only go as far as its pastor." As I mentioned earlier, when I realized I had been laboring in a cult-like environment, I had to admit I was blind to its excesses because I was blind to my own need for those excesses.

How many husbands who are abuse "victims" loved to be at church clapping hands and shouting amen to the pastors message, more than spending time with their families, being available to their children or wives? How many wives who are abuse victims secretly coveted the "spiritual vitality" of the pastor while holding their own husbands weary souls in disdain? And how many parents pridefully allow their children to be taught to desire the gifts of the spirit before they have learned to exhibit the fruits of the spirit?

And once I started opening my eyes a bit I was absolutely at odds with leadership who wanted to simply "repair" the damage, or "restore" the office of the pastor.... I felt like the proper word was "reform" because the real culprit was the structure set up in the first place.

Quote:

-----About accountability of pastors: I have seen this all the time: They claim that they are accountable to someone "above them" in the hierarchal ranks -- like someone at head office several hundred miles away, someone who only sees them in their suits at convention.

Sounds like you and I were in the same church....

Quote:
-----abuse likely does not have its beginnings in the church but in family/cultural systems - even in relational patterns that go back several generations.

For example: In prewar Germany the view of authority was this: the Father is the HEAD of this house. Kids, do as he says, do not question authority. stern, lack of feelings... tenderness.. empathy, blind obedience at all times...

This statement is helpful for two reasons. One, it correctly observes the problem is not a "church" condition, but a human condition. Secondly, it suggests that once we discover idol worship in our own hearts towards church leadership, we would do well to ask what type of idol worship might we be giving to our political and business leaders?

Diane since you are an accomplished musician let me share a more personal note along this line of thought. During the worst days of my former church family crisis, I found the best expression for my sadness not in the sugary praise pop of Christian music, but in the lament of the Soviet composer Dimitri Shostakovich. (I admit it's melodramatic, but such broken mirrors are cheaper than therapy for me :knockedout:) Governments, such as the former Soviet Union, can build systems where idol worship of men replace religious faith and family ties on a mass scale, leading to crimes of historic proportions! I mention this to reinforce what you have observed...religious excess seems so common in my own country that perhaps the problem is not religious but one of national character. Christians in America imagine themselves descended from a pilgrim heritage of spiritual independence, but in reality we want to see John Wayne in the pulpit before we'll commit to a church.

In the end, Diane I think you have summed up the most crucial point in looking for improvement in this area.

Quote:
-----Absolutely NO ONE is immune.

Many of us Christians, from apostles to newborn Christians could benefit from this understanding as we labor to build the body.

Blessings,

Re: Russian music - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/4 15:00

Compton wrote:

Quote:
-----During the worst days of my former church family crisis, I found the best expression for my sadness not in the sugary praise pop of Christian music, but in the lament of the Soviet composer Dimitri Shostakovich. (I admit it's melodramatic, but such broken mirrors are cheaper than therapy for me

I think I just had a lightening flash from heaven - a big answer to prayer!!!

A colleague of mine, a Russian organist experienced horrifying abuse of the brutalist kind in Russia. He is damaged deeply. He is also a gifted musician (genius) and has "commissioned" me to be his pianist for Shostakovich's "Lady of Macbeth from the Mtsensk." I find this work very dark, and melodramatic, as you say, and I really don't want to do it. Yet he has spent months writing out a part suited for me on his computer. I don't yet have the heart to tell him it's not really going to draw a big audience around here. This is not Russia. Sadly, everyone views him as a bit cracked. People mock him ruthlessly. No one tries to understand him.

I've been sharing my faith with this man for some time now, often by email, and he is like a sponge, soaking it in. But he

can't get over his anger. It is a residual from past abuse. His music is his therapy - that heavy, dark, Russian sound.

I think that your own experience is the answer I've been seeking in prayer. I realize now that I need to accept this "calling" and play for him. It is a way of walking through the pain with him, only holding on to Christ, and encouraging him to do so. Even if our audience is only one (God), just maybe it will be worth it - for eternity.

Diane

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/3/4 15:41

Oh to God that today's apostles, prophets, and pastors would get a hold of this verse and make it their life!

2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

To get a hold of it would kill all aspirations of super-stardom, and would destroy all spiritual abuse. But so long as false apostles like C. Peter Wagner exist, they will continue to elevate individuals to be super-stars, where entire churches rotate around one man.

There are many preachers who would amen this. However, in their hearts lies the desire to be the last of those superstar preachers. You know, the type where thousands flock to hear and hang upon every word they say, as if their words dropped down like dew from heaven. My dear preachers, don't let yourselves be that man!

Re:, on: 2006/3/4 16:33

Quote:

roadsign wrote:

A colleague of mine, a Russian organist experienced horrifying abuse of the brutalist kind in Russia. He is damaged deeply. He is also a gifted musician (genius) and has "commissioned" me to be his pianist for Shostakovich's "Lady of Macbeth Mtsensk." I find this work very dark, and melodramatic, as you say, and I really don't want to do it. Yet he has spent months writing out a part suited for me on his computer. I don't yet have the heart to tell him it's not really going to draw a big audience around here. This is not Russia. Sadly, everyone views him as a bit cracked. People mock him ruthlessly. No one tries to understand him.

I've been sharing my faith with this man for some time now, often by email, and he is like a sponge, soaking it in. But he can't get over his anger. It is a residual from past abuse. His music is his therapy - that heavy, dark, Russian sound.

I think that your own experience is the answer I've been seeking in prayer. I realize now that I need to accept this "calling" and play for him. It is a way of walking through the pain with him, only holding on to Christ, and encouraging him to do so. Even if our audience is only one (God), just maybe it will be worth it - for eternity.

Diane

Wow Diane, this is so Wonderful.

At first my "legalistic side" rose up and said, no maybe this music isn't good for her ... but then the Lord reminded me of how I have to put on my unsaved cap and almost be a totally different person on the Sick Folks Forum to reach them and "become all things" in this sense ... and then as I continued to read ... this BIIIIIGGGG SMILE came across my face and I saw the Witness alllll over it.

Praise God for this Diane ... I sure will be praying for you in this venture and relationship the Lord has opened to you 'for' this man.

: -D

Re:, on: 2006/3/4 16:53

sj, may I tell you of one of the best places to grow and to heal and to find the direction for yourself from the Lord ?

Here.

I've been hurt before. Never thrown out of a Church but torn to shreds in my heart because I've had to leave a Church or ten and leave Forums in the past, because of the junk in them ... by junk I mean doctrinal or "other spirit" type junk and it made me hyper-sensitive because I thought when I first got saved and after Bible college, that Christians Fellowshiping together would always be "in one accord" All "in one mind, one spirit and one doctrine".

WOW WEE was I ever the most naive person on earth or what ?

I've been around Cyberspace, quite a few orbits now and I can tell you ... you will grow more here than any I've found and I've only looked at about all there are out there ... typing everything I could into Google to find every "type" of Christian Forum too.

Even here, I get my old wounds & Fears re-opened and I'm not perfected in my replies at those times ... and I need to either repent or cry it off, when I don't react the way I should have ... BUT THAT IS HOW WE GROW and I've been saved for 30 years and in Discernment ministries for 26 ... so if any of us think we can't grow Here ... well ... Tell me where you think we can grow better please. :-? :-D ;-)

Re: get on level ground. - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/4 19:19

Quote:

-----WOW WEE was I ever the most naive person on earth or what ?

Annie, don't you find that once we can let go of all our lofty illusions about Christians we are so much freer to just accept them, and even enjoy them and struggle together. Life is a lot easier when we are free from these unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others.

And as long as we think we are worse or better than someone else we put up barriers. Theological superiority or inferiority are both devilish temptations. ... predisposing partnership in the abusive system.

The ground at the foot of the cross is level.
Diane

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/4 20:49

.

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/4 20:57

.

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2006/3/4 21:50

Quote:

-----Religion produces this:

The passive husband Ahab with his bullish domineering Jezebel wife who "callest herself a prophetess", their overly handsome vain son Absalom who is making concubines of all the church girls while their daughter dances like Herod's daughter danced, the sword of lust in her hand decapitating those God called to be Elijahs to this sin soaked idolatrous generation!

Amen!

Quote:

-----And to me that's the only condition of fellowship. Not maturity but honesty.

Me too! :-)

Re:, on: 2006/3/4 22:21

Quote:

roadsign wrote:

Quote:

-----WOW WEE was I ever the most naive person on earth or what ?

Annie, don't you find that once we can let go of all our lofty illusions about Christians we are so much freer to just accept them, and even enjoy them and struggle together. Life is a lot easier when we are free from these unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others.

And as long as we think we are worse or better than someone else we put up barriers. Theological superiority or inferiority are both devilish temptations. ... predisposing partnership in the abusive system.

The ground at the foot of the cross is level.

Diane

Hia Diane,

The "wow wee" statement, separated from the whole of my post and my history could be misleading in the sense, that maybe more detail should have been given here.

What I had hit (or was hit 'with') was 'gross' heresies, not just trivial doctrinal opinions ... such as the Deity of Christ, etc., but in the lighter things, that we encounter on a site like this ... definitely agree with you.

Where the brother against brother thing comes in is Spiritual pride; which is the most deceitful of all. Not consciously and that 'is' what makes it that much more deceitful, because our hearts are deceitfully wicked, who can know their own heart ? ... so it is the Last Sin we'd see in ourselves. I've heard the "dying to self" teaching since the git go, but have not yet personally met anyone who has "attained".

We should be aware of that within ourselves, though if we truly grasped the teaching, we should know, that it will and must continue until we are Before Him.

To hold that knowledge, is to not discard other human beings, except for constant sinning against the Body in an immoral way or unrepentant gross misleading of younger sheep by serious error in teachings.

The last resort is to ever disfellowship a Christian.

Rarely if ever would I even think to do such a thing ... making myself their judge ... I will be judged. We don't know where they stand in The Father's eyes and if their place in Heaven will not be higher than our own, because of the inner nature of their heart was more broken before God than ours ... though our outward display may appear more refined.

Happy to agree with you there sister.

Love !

Annie

Re: sj ~, on: 2006/3/4 22:45

We won't have "honesty" in the Body until we have HIS Love for each other - bottomline.

Truth in the inwards parts can only come from God ... as your story of David shows. And God is waiting for us to be willing to take on His Nature first, not to dress up the nature we've chosen for ourselves.

You've quoted my favorite Scripture in regards to what I see is the worst sin on the planet ... "dishonesty".

"Lord you have desired Truth in the inward parts"

Again, we are dealing with a deceitful heart, that like this truth or not ... all of our hearts are.

We cannot be "honest" until we see that.

We will 'judge' others as this or that, as we see that we have "attained" this or that. Pride is the root of all sin.

We don't have Nathans on our heels at every turn.

Would that it would be so easy. But even Nathan being sent had to pull it out of David --- David should have went to Nathan first.

Nathan's Parable alone couldn't pull it from him or tweek his own conscience against himself. That deceitful heart (though precious to God) needed that slap in the face from Nathan/God.

That story speaks well of how our hearts operate, because see how quickly David was to pronounce judgment on the sheep thief ... yet it was the biggest case of "motes and beams" that's recorded.

We're basically left to the Holy Spirit in the solitude of our own hearts to determine when or where, we are "the man". And we are no different than David. The Lord must send that slap in the face to stop us from getting into the "spotting-others" ministry and realise, we are all guilty.

I've prayed and asked the Lord to send me a Nathan, because I believe I was rightly taught that we cannot trust our own hearts, to take ourselves into account or to see constantly what our motives are for every move we make or every thought we have.

We can only pray as David prayed ... show me my hidden faults and my presumptuous sins.

"That" is a prayer that should stay on our lips until we see Him. Until we die or are resurrected.

He was Perfect Love Incarnate ... and they killed Him. What can we expect, being so unlike Him in our Love. We love who we chose to love, whether we want to see that or not and again, we can have no Honesty without that love.

Lord Bless you sj and I pray you continue to be blessed and bless us here.

All His Best.

Annie

Re: the need of Love - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 10:56

.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/5 12:10

Quote:

-----I know that under the Old Covenant we could not know our hearts, but the NT promise is that by the Holy Spirit, we can!

That is a peculiar reasoning and quite off the intention of both passages you cited by way of comparison.

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

Taken in it's context,

Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Jer 17:6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Jer 17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Jer 17:8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

There is a contrast there for one. Here is a better rendering of intent of Jer 17:9;

Jer 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things,.... This is the source of the idolatry and creature confidence of the Jews, sins which were the cause of their ruin; and though what is here said is particularly applicable to their hearts, yet is in general true of the heart of every man; which is "deceitful", and deceiving; and puts a cheat upon the man himself who se it is: it deceives him with respect to sin; it proposes it to him under the notion of pleasure; it promises him a great deal in it, but does not yield a real pleasure to him; it is all fancy and imagination; a mere illusion and a dream; and what it gives is very short lived; it is but for a season, and ends in bitterness and death: or it proposes it under the notion of profit; it promises him riches, by such and such sinful ways it suggests; but, when he has got them, he is the loser by them; these deceitful riches choke the word, cause him to err from the faith, pierce him through with many sorrows, and endanger the loss of his soul: it promises honour and preferment in the world, but promotes him to shame; it promises him liberty, but brings him into bondage; it promises him impunity, peace, and security, when sudden destruction comes: it deceives him in point of knowledge; it persuades him that he is a very knowing person, when he is blind and ignorant, and knows nothing as he ought to know; and only deceives himself; for there is no true knowledge but of God in Christ, and of a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; see 1Co_3:18 it deceives in the business of religion; it makes a man believe that he is a very holy and righteous man, and in a fair way for heaven, when he is far from that, and the character it gives him; in order to this, it suggests to him that concupiscence or lust, or the inward workings of the mind, are not sin; and it is only on this principle that it can be accounted for, that Saul, before conversion, or any other man, should be led into such a mistake, as to conclude that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless: it represents other sins as mere peccadillos, as little sins, and not to be regarded; and even puts the name of virtue on vices; profuseness and prodigality it calls liberality, and doing public good; and covetousness has the name of frugality and good economy: it directs men to compare themselves and their outward conduct with others, that are very profane and dissolute; and from thence to form a good character of themselves, as better than others; and as it buoys up with the purity of human nature, so with the power of man's freewill to do that which is good, and particularly to repent at pleasure; and it puts the profane sinner upon trusting to the absolute mercy of God, and hides from him his justice and holiness; and it puts others upon depending upon the outward acts of religion, or upon speculative notions, to the neglect of real godliness; see Jam_1:22. The man of a deceitful heart, the hypocrite, tries to deceive God himself, but he cannot; he oftentimes deceives men, and always himself; so do the profane sinner, the self-righteous man, and the false teacher; who attempts to deceive the very elect, but cannot; yea, a good man may be deceived by his own heart, of which Peter is a sad instance, Mat_26:33. The heart is deceitful to a very great degree, it is superlatively so; "above all", above all creatures; the serpent and the fox are noted for their subtlety, and wicked men are compared to them for it; but these comparisons fall short of expressing the wicked subtlety and deceit in men's hearts; yea, it is more deceitful to a man than the devil, the great deceiver himself; because it is nearer to a man, and can come at him, and work upon him, when Satan cannot: or "about", or "concerning all things" (q); it is so in everything in which it is concerned, natural, civil, or religious, and especially the latter. The Septuagint version renders it "deep"; it is an abyss, a bottomless one; there is no fathoming of it; the depths of sin are in it; see Psa_64:6 and, seeing it is so deceitful, it should not be trusted in; a man should neither trust in his own heart, nor in another's, Pro_28:26, "and desperately wicked": everything in it is wicked; the thoughts of it are evil; the imaginations of the thoughts are so; even every imagination, and that only, and always, Gen_6:5 the affections are inordinate; the mind and conscience are defiled; the understanding darkened, so dark as to call evil good, and good evil; and the will obstinate and perverse: all manner of sin and wickedness is in it; it is the cage of every unclean bird, and the hold of every foul spirit; all sin is forged and framed in it; and all manner of evil comes out of it, Rev_18:1 yea, it is wickedness itself, Psa_5:9, it is so even to desperation; it is "incurably wicked" (r), as it may be rendered; it is so without the grace of God, and blood of Christ:

who can know it? angels do not, Satan cannot; only the spirit of a man can know the things of a man within him; though the natural man does not know the plague of his own heart; the Pharisee and perfectionist do not, or they would not sa

y they were without sin; such rant arises from the ignorance of their own hearts; only a spiritual man knows his own heart, the plague of it, the deceitfulness and wickedness in it; **and he does not know it all; God only knows it fully**, as is expressed in the next words, which are an answer to the question; see 1Co_2:11.

John Gill

~~~~~  
Not to forget;

1Co 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/5 13:16**

Sj,

Quote:  
------(So a man a mans spirit knows what's going on inside him. )  
-----

Perhaps, given enough time and maturity through the teaching of the Holy Spirit...but certainly not according to our time frame!

You rightfully seem exasperated by the lack of standards in your local fellowship, but I think Mike's perspective below is a helpful caution for you. Obviously you have witnessed some wrongdoing. Perhaps you have heard the saying "Wrong doing invites over-reaction."

Consider taking the time to see yourself as clearly as you see others...do you know what is in your own heart brother? From my experience, our emotions can be like gunpowder smoke on a civil war battlefield...it's easy to lose your bearing and lose sight of the enemy.

It has been over 2 years since my own leadership fiasco I mentioned earlier, and I can testify that I continue discovering new insights as to why such things happen...and it embarrasses me to admit that most of my new insight includes my own role in that mess.

Bro, when speaking of such an important word as "TRUTH" I have learned that my "truth" can usually fit into two categories...some of my truth builds others other up in our most holy faith, and regrettably some of my truth tears them down.

One truth I have learned through my sad experience is that all of our hearts are fragile clay things. If we were honest with one another, even the strongest of us experiences uncertainty in our relationship to God from time to time. Now if we are gentler with our own weakness than that of others, we are demonstrating that we do not know our hearts after all. By saying there is no excuse for a leader to become influenced by unbiblical doctrine or that it's "one strike and you're out", the message to even the lowest member of the body might be that it is best to hide from each other.

I think, before we act, we should consider if our own expectations of the "spiritual giants" in our midst were too lofty and perhaps naïve. Even the warrior king David prayed this pitiful prayer to the Lord: SAY TO MY SOUL, "I AM YOUR SALVATION!" And Jesus asked Peter 3 times... "Do you love me?" Only on the third time did Peter cease from any claims and simply say "Lord you know." So if David the king and Peter the rock look for affirmations in their own hearts, then how is it we think our pastors and elders are to be such pillars?

I'm not saying you haven't been wronged. But if the leadership is firmly entrenched in their error, there are other options besides blowing the place wide open. (I exclude physical or sexual abuse from this perspective...safety first.) Another option might be to simply realize that, without a supportive structure for the leadership to operate within the church was never a healthy fellowship in the first place. In that case, your option might be to write them a well thought out letter confronting their error as you see it through scripture. You might let them know that you are copying this letter to some of their "outside peers" if they have any...and then remove your family from that place to consider what you have learned

ed as you seek a new healthier church.

Of course I am removed from the particulars of your situation...but perhaps my single piece of counsel is to keep your own heart free of the smell of smoke as you pass through this fire. Don't let this bitter experience define you brother...having your eyes opened to the abuse you are not a victim anymore. Be free!

MC

**Re: Mercy Triumphs over judgment - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/5 14:51**

Quote:  
----- This Scripture goes so far as to say that if you don't know your own heart it's because you are reprobate! In other words it's because you have wilfully stubbornly refused to see what was in yourself ....  
-----

Yes, one who has a calloused heart doesn't know himself, or the depth of his sin.

Yet I don't recall Jesus implying that Peter was a reprobate when he said that he falsely promised to never deny Christ. Yet Peter did not know his own heart. Jesus allowed him to fail in order that he would learn about himself. And it is no different for any of us. When we think we know ourselves, we likely don't. But it doesn't mean we're reprobate: (ie A morally unprincipled person, or one who is predestined to damnation)

Quote:  
----- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1Co 10:12  
-----

God has not been revealing all my hidden sin at once. If he did, it would be unbearable. He does it over time - his time. Often I pray, "Please show me what wicked ways are in me", and then he answers, through his Spirit or his "Nathan's" and it always hurts at first - until I accept God's glorious mercy in Christ.

We need to be careful about judging the motives behind observable sin. It may not necessarily be the product of wilful, stubborn resistance. There may be other reasons - like deeply engrained ways of living and thinking appropriated from family or cultural, or religious background, response to past rejection etc. Sinners aren't aware of it. Or it feels right and justifiable to their conscience. "There is a way that seems right to man but in the end it leads to death... "prov.

We need to be careful that we do not apply Scripture in a spiritually abusive manner lest we be guilty of the very same charges that we lay against spiritual abusers. Applying truth without love is like hitting someone on the head with a hammer. We inflict more wounds than we heal.

Quote:  
----- We won't have "honesty" in the Body until we have HIS Love for each other -  
-----

Indeed a loving environment fosters honesty.

If the sentiment of our thoughts and words towards sinners seem harsh and unmerciful, it may very well be that we have yet to experience a deeper level of God's mercy towards ourselves. For to the extent that we know God's mercy for us, to that extent we can be merciful towards others, including ourselves. And that is love - God's love.

Dear Lord, may I know more and more of your mercy so that I can extend his mercy towards others.

Jeol 2: 13 says: "Return to the Lord your God, for he is angry, vengeful, and sick and tired of you, ....

no no no... it says: for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love..."

I ask myself and all of us: Does this compassion radiate from our being? If not, then we just might not know ourselves as well as we thought.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Eph. 3:16

Diane

**Re: i cant believe you would say something like that. - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 15:20**

.

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 15:28**

.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/3/5 16:41**

Quote:  
-----And quite frankly no one here is God enough to judge my motives for speaking out against this. You who say not to judge others do you judge?  
-----

Friend, you aren't able to hear what's being said here very well. No one here thinks they are your judge...you brought your case before this very human "court" yourself. Certainly you expected a response, and we should trust each others intentions to sincerely discuss this volatile issue.

Quote:  
-----it's no reason to keep quiet when spiritual genocide is being committed.  
-----

Genocide? Is this Stalinist Russia or Maoist China? Even in those absolutely hostile environments the Church could not be crushed.

Yet here in America we do not have genocide of the faithful...we have carnal leaders who are turning themselves into idols. But brother, please consider this; the men you are angry at could not achieve their super-apostle status unless men like you needed super-apostles at some point in time. Until you face that unpleasant reality, you can hardly analyze the situation and speak health into it.

I am cautious to say more because this requires much reflection. It is perhaps the salient point in this discussion. Why are these men so popular? The answer my friend is closer to home than we want to admit.

And if you are angry at my "judgement"...just imagine how hard it will be for these prideful men to hear your words.

My heart is sincere to you SJ,

MC

Re:, on: 2006/3/5 18:44

sj, you saw that I replied to your post about these people that you posted on "Welcome & Intro".

Well, than afterwards you thanked me on another thread for my post there ... but I don't think you really read my post there neither.

I wanted to reply in full to your post above here at 2006/3/5 10:56 ... but then this next one came that I feel needs addressing first.

It goes hand in hand with my response to you on your "Welcome & Intro" post.

That post that I agreed needed to be deleted was very long and very telling.

Here, in this quote, more of the same is being shown....

Quote:

-----Such hypocrisy!!!!

Are you telling me that spiritual destruction of the dozens of people I have witnessed is less important than rape? That is such a humanistic perspective. That is not an eternal perspective. Perhaps you don't realize that it's not like I came up with all this stuff to say after this happened. In fact my saying what I saw is what got me kicked out. I've been seeing person after person after person die spiritually under this abuse and I'm sick of it. And quite frankly no one here is God enough to judge my motives for speaking out against this. You who say not to judge others do you judge? It seems like people show no restraint in making judgments about people who make judgments. What if God told me to blow the place wide open to save some people who are massively deceived?

I still ask once again .... would you have publically alerted us to these things if you yourself were not kicked out ?

This is what bothers me.

If you saw "person after person etc. being destroyed" WHY didn't you blow the trumpet in public sooner than after you were kicked out.

I have been in midst of two false ministries in my 30 years with God ... and I went to the Pastor & Site Owner first and then left of my own accord and if it were warranted, I would warn others of what these heretics were teaching that was wrong ..... I did not wait until they had to kick me out before I would warn others.

That is basically what I presented to you in the form of a question on your Intro post.

I still have that thread, as I told you I copied it before it left here, because I knew it would leave where you had placed it and I felt in agreement (which is rare for me) that it was removed.

We do not stay in a place that is Doctrinally unsound and wait to be thrown out head-long before we start our campaign against them publically. Brother KingJimmy showed you things in that post that were not presented properly also.

Having been in these Discernment and Apologetics ministries for these 26 years now, I of course believe in complete disclosure of heresies and even naming names .... but maybe because I've sat under folks older than me, who have been at that type ministry longer than I, that I see fault in your timing and spirit.

I still ask that you stay here and speak with these brothers who are more than likely older than you and have been around a lot of blocks.

I don't particularly care to debate with men, but if pushed against a wall I will.

I found many things in both these posts that I would love to talk out with you but you are still somewhat hot headed over this issue to the point that you cannot see what is being said to you and I'd rather the men have the floor until we can speak peaceably and respectfully to each other and maybe you could hear out and consider where others ... like myself, have come through also.

I highly endorse and am involved with Ministries which expose false Ministries and teachings and by name, etc., so I wanted to make that very clear to you First. But by the same token, because I do endorse and follow them, I've seen which spirit and delivery etc. works best and how to tell the difference between revenge and protecting others solely.

Thank you and please know you have our love and prayers for you and especially for your dear wife's healing and health

Annie

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 19:53**

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 20:01**

**Re: discernment ministries - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/5 20:13**

**Re: more thoughts on abuse - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/5 20:50**

I just finished chatting with my musician friend whom I mentioned earlier – the one who has asked me to perform some very heavy morose Russian music. I asked him a bit about his life in Russia. Wow! What horrendous abuse! We in our society cannot comprehend just how abusive a massive religious and political power can be. We cannot comprehend the reality of having no freedoms. Russia's long history is filled with horrible suffering at the hands of one evil power after another.

My friend said, "My soul is calling for this sad music. It can't end happy." He is living out his loss and grief for his childhood and his homeland through the music. Interestingly, he has a history of rejection, ex: losing church jobs, in spite of his musical expertise. He tends to get too "hot under the collar", and knows that his anger has cost him a lot. He has a tendency to tell it like it is, and tells people where they are wrong. Ministers don't like that, he is learning.

Now, comments from my view point of life: From personal experience I can say that we tend to expect more of our moral and spiritual models. And it is a huge shock when those we trusted and respected stab us in the back. It wouldn't have been so hard if it was Joe the Drunkard down the street. We don't expect much from those on the bottom of society's heap. However, those whom we trust to do something important for us – like political leaders, health professionals, educators, pastors can instill a lot of anger in us when they don't fulfill our expectations.

Really we shouldn't be surprised at anyone's sins. You know, the Bible clearly warns us not to put our trust in man or any institutions. It warns us that man will fail and gives countless examples. The Bible even makes it very clear that spiritual leaders or church associates mess up very badly. So why do we think that we have evolved to a higher level of goodness? That has been an illusion that pervades our entire society and spills into the church.

My dad remembers two men who sat next to each other in church every Sunday. One day one of them murdered the other. He joined the collaborators during the war. In the same way, we cannot predict where people will drift to down the road and how they will respond to hard times. They may hurt us, or we may hurt them. The reality is that people change – ideally for the better; but life is not ideal.

Sj, I highly suspect that underneath those angry vibes I sense, there is a grieving heart, a heart that deeply feels the loss of what should have been – better people. I believe that God calls us to allow the grief to rise to the surface. "Blessed are those who mourn..." That includes grief over our self – looking on our own naked shame. This is the path to God. ... "for they shall be comforted"

I don't know why he doesn't step in sooner and rescue oppressed and abused people, like he promised. I guess, in a way, I have some anger towards God. I expect more from him – as far as fixing up this sinful world. I get tempted to fill in the gap – and try to fix people up myself, to tell people where they are wrong, and to rescue people.

While this may all be good, I think a lot of our efforts are not Spirit empowered, but efforts of the flesh. And it just doesn't

't work. God has something far better. And trying to discover that would be the best way we could spend our time and mental energy.  
Diane

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/5 21:28**

sj,

There is only one thing you can do now.

Forgive them.

**Re: discernment ministries, on: 2006/3/5 21:40**

Hia Brother sj,

I think we're talking now and I really am grateful you are willing.

I've been as upset as you are so I fully 100% understand where you are coming from, and as I said, have had friends to call me week after week, Still upset at how they were hurt by a Church that they had to finally leave, and if they called for a year, I would still understand their hurt.

First off, let me tell you what I think about the hurts within the Body in contrast to hurts from outside the Body.

Hurts by outsiders only hurt us outwardly as far as, just up to our soul .... but with The Body, your spirit is exposed and open to them, so the hurt from the other Body members is a much worse and deeper hurt. It "is" spiritual and a wounded spirit is the worst pain I've ever personally felt.

If my unsaved neighbor comes over to my yard, screaming insults and pops me one in the nose ... I would probably laugh afterwards, once my nose quit hurting.

But when it's a hurt from the Body ... it's as if your own body turned against you ... because we 'are' that connected. The after affects don't go away the same as with ol' neighbor Joe there.

Saying all'a that ... I hope you understand that my empathy level is way up on this one with you and your wife.

About "Discernment Ministries" ... don't throw them all out because of the few rotten apples, some of which I also am very aware of. Been hit by one or two of those rotten ones myself.

In fact, my ministry turned into fighting discernment ministries that were full of bologna. Ha. And I'm the one who has always hated debate and used to be so shy at my home Church. God knows what on earth He's doing here.

What you are doing by exposing this ministry that is hurting folks, is the same thing as what many discernment ministries do.

See ? You are in the discernment ministry when you put your finger on or at another ministry.

You have grudges with discernment ministers because they come against Pensacola ... but it's mostly the evangelist that came there, that I've read about.

But I don't want to get off onto him now. I'm only concerned with you and you with me or us.

I'm pentecostal too, so don't worry about that I am one who doesn't believe in the gifts.

Mostly, all I wanted to reply back with is, I'm glad you're here .... because like I've said a few times already this week, :-? , this is one of the more 'mature' groups out there in cyberspace. We ain't perfect ... there's no such thing ... but we're not a bunch of teeny boppers with anime junk and all ... the folks here are mature and serious to serve God and some of the brothers here are older and great to learn from.

Your complaint is not wrong, it's just that we need others to help us "refine" our delivery.

I'm 53 and saved a while and all that other blah, blah that I don't feel needs saying, but my delivery still needs perfecting. Probably will until the Lord comes back, because I put no confidence in my own flesh and know that God uses some in it

he Body here to be the iron that sharpens iron.

I just had to apologise to a brother on here for not seeing eye to eye with him in spirit last year. Didn't disagree doctrinally, just in delivery at times.

It felt good to say I'm sorry to him and I hope you'll see, that he's older than I am, and God used him to show me something, even though we've both been through some "stuff" in the ministry and in our hardships in life.

I believe as Watchman Nee said, that someone saved yesterday can show me more stuff than one saved 30 years. I know that's truer than true ... so don't think you're being come against here ... but just let it all perfect you and what God would have you to do.

God Bless and now I want to read Diane's post :-).

The Body can work very nicely here. All differing gifts working as one, under One Head.

Praise God !

**Re:, on: 2006/3/5 21:54**

I don't like pulling quotes in part only ... because it of the chance that it takes away from the whole, but if Diane doesn't mind, I really like a paragraph that my heart connected to most (besides the part about the Russian musician) ....

Quote:Sj, I highly suspect that underneath those angry vibes I sense, there is a grieving heart, a heart that deeply feels the loss of what should have been – better people. I believe that God calls us to allow the grief to rise to the surface. –“Blessed are those who mourn...” That includes grief over our self – looking on our own naked shame. This is the path to God. .. –“for they shall be comforted”

I wrote mine and then read Diane's and once again the One Head and One Body was working ... even with using "Jo". Ha, Jo the drunk ... is that the same Joe that popped me in the nose ? Ha.

Anyhow, very good post.

God Bless All.

**Re: my conclusion. - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/6 9:35**

.

**Re: Small point about "naming names" - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/6 10:00**

.

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/6 10:48**

.

**Re: God will have the victory - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/6 11:24**

Quote:  
-----God showed me in a dream two nights ago that though He called me to sound the alarm, my attempts to help them wouldn't prosper, why?  
Because they love their sin. They even defend it. Therefore His judgment on these people is that He will allow them to believe the lie....  
I've been weeping over them crying out for them for the past 7 months that God wouldn't give them over but you know what? I'm hearing God saying to me "Stop crying for Saul for I have rejected him as King over Israel, arise and go.."  
-----

This is the grieving process I earlier wrote about.

Clearly, God has released you from the burden of sounding alarms. Now, be careful not to go around nailing "Iccabod" signs on doors. Remember that God's New Covenant Promises still hold. And it is a covenant of Mercy. We participate in

n that by being instruments of mercy, not judgment.

Quote:

-----I simply cant make them repent, and if God is saying they wont...well..what can i do?  
-----

No you can't make anyone repent. That is the job of the Spirit. And he can certainly do it.

I believe that much of revival is God prying our hands off of HIS project. "When Abraham's body was as good as dead... " Rom. 4... When all looks hopeless God will do his work.

For now consider these words from Habakkuk 3

16 I heard and my heart pounded,  
my lips quivered at the sound;  
decay crept into my bones,  
and my legs trembled.  
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity  
to come on the nation invading us.

17 Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,

18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will be joyful in God my Savior.

19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength;  
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
he enables me to go on the heights.

I hope that you can someday revisit through this thread with different eyes. I believe that there is a lot of treasure that you have not yet grasped for yourself because of your focus on the sinners.

I look forward to reading your posts - posts no longer drift to "all those sinners out there" but instead point us towards our wonderful Lord who is far greater than all the sinners put together.

He will indeed have the victory!!!  
Diane

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/6 13:15**

I've read this whole thread and am aware some of you have read the posts that were pulled, and maybe I'm not quite getting the full picture, but, I do want to say this, before this thread finally closes.

We can't have it both ways. Either it is right to speak out in certain circumstances, or, at the bidding of the Holy Spirit (according to one of His gifts, even if we don't have 'evidence', or 'eye witness' reports - Acts 5 ) or, it is never ok.

My own experience of speaking out is two fold. The first time, I needed help for myself and largely lost control of what happened next. The second time, I reckoned I needed witnesses to my interaction with the elders from the start. This turned into quite a picnic, with four witnesses. Shocked you may be, but I felt completely vindicated when the FIRST thing those elders wanted from me, was a promise to keep SECRET everything that passed within the room. Since the whole point of the meeting was to bring things into the open, I was never going to agree to their request and warned them not to say anything they would be unhappy to have repeated. Even after several years, I don't regret the stand I

made - which preceded my leaving that church :- ( and I still believe that if the basic requirement for an elder includes their being irreproachable, that when things reach such a situation that an ordinary flock member believes they are not irreproachable, the onus is not on the flock member but on the previously elected elder.... otherwise, the power conferred by status, is always going to win. That's WHY it should ALWAYS be ok for a flock member to raise concerns, WITHOUT FEAR of being ostracised. Said flock member may be mistaken, but should not be forced into silence at any cost.

My experience, therefore, tells me, that each of us walk a very individual path with the Lord, and the circumstances (even in 'church') which He allows us to encounter, as uniquely for us to embrace, that we may grow. The process He has arranged for us is to enable us to deal better the next time, with a similar situation.

That's why I've quoted you, Diane,

Quote:

-----I believe that there is a lot of treasure that you have not yet grasped for yourself because of your focus on the sinners.

because I believe sj has had no choice but to think deeply about everything he knows about the people whose ministry created this distress.

I remember when it dawned on me that the 'wolf' in my 'cult' situation (past), might not be really 'born again'. The thought took a split second to cross my mind, but, it was such an important thought, that I can remember exactly where I was when I had it (on a bus) and also, that it took a further **fortnight** for me to process every possible angle, to make sure I was not misjudging the guy. I was virtually unable to converse, I was so distressed by the process which overtook me, and I was out of my body most of the time, with the sheer shock of what it might mean if I had been so deceived.

In the end I was left with no alternative but to conclude the 'thought' had been from the Lord; it was like the keystone which made everything I already knew, begin to make sense (which is a very important part of recovering from abuse, because abusers are mad in their own way.... they are inconsistent, liars, negligent of their formal responsibilities, and may be many other things beside. In fact, I've been concerned at the suggestion that just because sj doesn't know about any sexual immorality within this situation that means there IS none. When Jesus talked of the Pharisees making the outside of the cup clean only, Young translates 'unclean' (for the inside of the cup), as 'rapine and concupiscence'. And I would say too, that the public life of a person always betrays an overflow of their private life... in the same way as it is said, 'If you want to know what a man is like, look at his wife' or, as Jesus said: 'of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks'. )

Lastly, apart from the way God allows us to be transformed by these circumstances, as we work out what they are for, a part from the time they take to live through, the anger is a very real issue..... and I'm concerned yet again at the suggestion that it is not ok for sj to be SOOOO angry. I do accept that vengeance is the Lord's but, we are made in His image, and for myself (apart from my previously posted testimony of giving my backlog of anger from my childhood, to the Lord), I have definitely experienced profound anger which is much more of a reflection of God's own anger at abusive shepherds, than I can account for purely on my own strength. No way could I keep it up by myself, but, within the context of the topic of the abuse which I experienced, it was effortless. And I'm not sure we can safely condemn it. God has been angry throughout scripture, but, He tries to deal with it constructively, so that it brings about the changes He desires in people, and does not simply destroy them.

However, there is one verse which is most interesting, and which I think we ignore at our peril, because we *should* understand that anger, like other emotions, has a natural course which we are programmed to experience and recognise... and when this course is suppressed, it leads to other difficulties for the person upon whom strictures are laid, who is being prevented from 'being angry'.

(KJV) Ezekiel 5:13

Thus shall mine anger be **accomplished**, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, **and I will be comforted**: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

This verse tells us that there is a certain comfort in anger. When God is angry, He makes it work for Him.

We too can allow anger to work for us, but, it must be within the limits set within scripture for MAN. I'm not saying we ca

n take over God's role; simply, I'm saying it is God-like, to feel anger in certain situations, and **THAT's OK!**

**Re: "Objective" - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/6 13:41**

**Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2006/3/6 14:23**

One time I was deeply hurt by the actions of a person who was in the middle of leadership within a group of Christians. The actions hurt me personally but didn't really hurt this church group or others directly. By bringing this out in the open, it would have reflected on the whole group and unsaved people would have identified the whole group with this sin. Many in this group were in a genuine walk with the Lord and had been a big help to my growth. This was offence had to do with secret sins and not a false teaching. It is now years later and I am very glad that I did not reveal this as I know the enemy would have used it against that whole group and against Christ.

In this case, it was a very short time that this person was removed from this group. No one ever knew what had happened yet God saw to it that the offender was removed.

Mike said, "There is only one thing you can do now. Forgive them." SJ, make sure you deal with this issue of forgiveness.

**Re:, on: 2006/3/6 16:19**

Dorcas, it is good to see you back and your post produced emotion in me. sj had said, I feel it's God but what's the use? as in the horse to water scenario.

My emotions are on my sleeve right now and though this isn't about any particular group, like that which sj has been affected by ... but it came on me pretty heavy as I read his saying that and then Dorcas' post, that there were Forums linked to the best Discernment/Apologetic Sites out there and I was lining up to start one and was in contact with the bigger names out there, for them to be a part .... because one by one they all folded, because the contention ran so high, with the "HOW DARE YOU BRING THIS UP?"

I moderated one of those former Forums and though the site was run by a Missionary/Apologetist who was out on the field while I watched over his Forum ... I could see why some of these others closed their Forums and last to go was my missionary friends.

The other Apologetic brother who had a Forum before said, they have their Website up ... if people are caring for their souls, they'll come and read ... otherwise, Forum days are over for them also.

Paul battled almost constantly and it is extremely draining and I for one had to take 2 years off of the web for the repercussions incurred and took the URL that was to be a Forum for all of us in that ministry and dumped it.

But should we throw out the Sites themselves that expose things FOR the sheep? NO and if I could say that in a big red font, I Would.

They are Watchman on the wall, just as Paul was.

Throw down our watchman, and the body will get what they deserve from the Lord who posted the watchman there. Or do we question their calling?

So the moral of the story, that I've gotten from this Page 7 is .... speak the truth ... get the word out ... but if the horses want to drink tainted waters or none at all .... that is in God's Hands.

Re: - posted by ANewInHim, on: 2006/3/6 17:21

SJ,

Quote: I tremble for them if it is the case that God would have me say nothing. After all it's not when the prophets scream judgment that we are in most trouble it is when they are silent, because then judgment is at the door.

(SJ), I thank God for your obedience and for every word that God has spoken through You, Dorcas, MeAgain, and Road sign – Not to offend the others that have spoken but God spoke directly to me through them not all but in much of what they have said.

Dorcas,

Quote: We too can allow anger to work for us, but, it must be within the limits set within scripture for MAN. I'm not saying we can take over God's role; simply, I'm saying it is God-like, to feel anger in certain situations, and THAT's OK!

(Dorcas), this really hit home. It's ok to be angry but we are not to sin in our anger. Question is when does it become SIN?

I DON'T LIKE the word Abuse and especially not but together or along the side of the word "Church".

We need to understand when not to allow a certain situation to turn into abuse, Spiritual Abuse for that matter, it is down right wrong and totally disrespectful. If we are going to be a BODY and allow the spirit of God to work through US, then we are going to have to respect one another. There is a scripture that says do unto others as you would like them to do unto you.

I believe its in the book of Matthew when speaking of the Sermon on the Mount.

THE GOLDEN RULE: Matt 7:12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Dorcas,

Just reading my own writing of this scripture has convicted me, because in my anger (When I get very angry) I shut everybody out, and build walls very thick walls. And it is at that time, that I need to be left alone, alone with God and his word. I am not saying that it is RIGHT to do this, it's not because I tend to hurt more people, people that love me and care about me.

In the (Past) I would come back and apologize and give an explanation of what happen, but I have discovered that this has become a pattern one that I must deal with and overcome, because it does effect many others.

"Spiritual Abuse" when did we allow this to come into the Church, his word says that You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

His word says that You – It says You, so if I am reading the word and I see the word You, then God is talking about me. You are the light of the world. A CITY that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt 5:13-16)

His word says that we are to love our enemies, we as brothers and sister in the Lord should not look at one another as enemies, despite how much we have hurt one another. You have heard that it was said, You shall love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Where did we get off track?

What happen to being each other's keeper, am I my brothers keeper? I don't believe that in any way is keeping an eye on each other's sin, but being a brother's keeper.

-ANewInHim

**Re: The risks of exposing - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/6 19:08**

Quote:  
----- By bringing this out in the open, it would have reflected on the whole group and unsaved people would have identified the whole group with this sin.  
-----

Yes, there is the issue of damage control, and when we're reeling from the shock and hurt, it's extremely hard to see clearly, or think about long term consequences when we disclose sin. Disclosing can be damaging even for ourselves. I know a lady who exposed adultery to the elders, and as a result they muddled her name. The men did a remarkable job of protecting each other, and counselled her to be more forgiving, and remain silent (the woman's place). She ended up losing her marriage, including her fellowship in the church. And to this day, the sin has been well covered up. It was a unspeakable tragedy in this Brethren church. She certainly was not wrong in what she did, but the end result certainly has made me much more cautious about sounding alarms. In the end it is the innocent parties who may become the most damaged, including yourself. And the sinners just get more smug.

Our government has laws that protect one from sexual and physical abuse, but nothing from spiritual abuse. The church itself should be a guard, and protect its own sheep, but that doesn't always happen, and when the local body won't deal with it, there is no higher governing body to defend the sheep at the bottom. People in the higher ups can be very protective of each other in order to protect reputation.

Dorcas, Welcome back! And again, thank you for your words of insight. I'm glad you followed my post, because it reminded me of my own tendency to want to tie up "loose ends", put away the past and move on. I have to remember my own experiences. Feelings just don't go away right away, and as you say, nor should they. It can take quite a while. But I don't like the messiness of it all.

I'd like to add here that it is not only anger which we must work through. It is also other feelings that linger long after the bad experiences. For example, in my case, being told I was an instigator, a trouble-maker, and the cause the problems "around here", and hearing through the grapevine that people were warned to stay away from me because I was a bad influence... You just can't ignore all the hurt and rejection, thinking that it doesn't matter. You really question yourself. You feel a lot of shame. Trust has been seriously violated, and your reputation marred.

I feel that I have been harmed far worse by something quite different than all that - it is the slow eroding effects of long-term spiritual abuse - laying guilt trips, legalistic pressure to conform, shame for not doing so, threats of rejection for noncompliance etc - all those effects that over time causes one to carry a lingering feeling of shame.

Heresies have a way of ending up that way, including hypocrisy.

Only in recent years did I realize that it was not MY shame that I was carrying, but THEIR shame - those who were unwilling to admit their own wrongs, those who never once apologized, those who thought they were several notches higher than me. This typical pharisaic form of religion feels good for a long time and you can squelch the pain, until one day it turns around and hits you in the face and you feel the full effects of it all. Then you realize that you have been following the wrong shepherd.

And then you start looking for the Chief Shepherd. . At least that's what happened for me. It took a very rude shake-up wake-up call. And now, I'm eternally grateful for it.

But there are a lot of spiritual leaders who don't want to hear any of this, maybe because they fear that it reflects badly on them.

Diane

Re: speaking out against spiritual abuse, on: 2006/3/7 6:54

Quote:

-----Only in recent years did I realize that it was not MY shame that I was carrying, but THEIR shame -- those who were unwilling to admit their own wrongs, those who never once apologized, those who thought they were several notches higher than me. This typical pharisaic form of religion feels good for a long time and you can squelch the pain, until one day it turns around and hits you in the face and you feel the full effects of it all. Then you realize that you have been following the wrong shepherd.

And then you start looking for the Chief Shepherd. . At least that's what happened for me. It took a very rude shake-up wake-up call. And now, I'm eternally grateful for it.

**But there are a lot of spiritual leaders who don't want to hear any of this, maybe because they fear that it reflects badly on them.**

-----  
Diane,

Thanks. I appreciate all that you shared here, especially about how situations can force you into looking for the Chief Shepherd with a fresh determination to have one's soul shepherded only by Him.

On the matter of church leaders being concerned for their reputation, I think this is a very real problem which interferes again and again with the potential work of the Lord to go much further in healing and transforming us, as we expose ourselves to a deeper knowledge of our need - and then as we commit ourselves to receiving the answer to that need from HIM (The Lord). If church leaders are not at the cutting edge in their own spiritual lives, with allowing the Lord to face them up with their own needs, then they are often uncomfortable when a flock member is crying out to go deeper with Him.

This all hangs, imho, on the basic mistaken premise that a church leader has 'arrived' at some sort of spiritual maturity beyond which they now don't need to travel - and flock members forget that we all came (or should have come) the same way to Christ, and we are all called to live in John 3:21 and 1 John 1:7.... for then, even if we are sinning, we are showing willing to the Lord that we are ready to be corrected - convicted, repentant and washed in His blood. This attitude can never harm a saint, even if there are cringe moments of horror as we begin to see our failure through the Lord's eyes. Elders should be leading the way as examples of how to grow. At the very least, they should not be *hampering* (a church member's) growth.

Quote:

-----Disclosing can be damaging even for ourselves.  
-----

This is very true, and is part of the cost involved; but, I'd say that when a heart is right with God because He has cleansed it from sin, it should be possible to bring aspects of a situation to public attention, if the eldership is appropriately supportive, and does not undermine the flock member's reputation but rather endorses the correctness of their chosen stance.

It would be wrong to imply that church leaders have *no* wisdom though, or that when they suggest waiting, or praying longer, or complete silence that they are automatically demonstrating self-interest; but, I do believe there is sometimes a failure to understand the process an individual may have to experience under the hand of God Himself, and rather than facilitating a safe space for the flock member to grow, or giving permission for him to follow hard after what he believes God has given, they favour restraint. In such cases, I think they have to give a meaningful explanation for their advice, rooted in scripture. It has to be more than 'because we say so'.... or they are making themselves look as if they do actually have something to fear.

Quote:

-----the end result certainly has made me much more cautious about sounding alarms  
-----

I think this is where it's important to obey the Spirit implicitly. There is no substitute for being led by Him, no matter how messy it gets and no matter how unused we are to virtually walking on water as we trust Him to bring us through the expanse of 'unknown' which lies ahead. God sees equally well in the darkness as the light, and we can trust Him to hold on to us.

EDIT:

Btw, thanks everyone for the welcome back. I had a *great* time. 8-)

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/7 6:58**

crsschk,

I don't think sj misused the New Testament scriptures which he brought to our attention with regard to his state of heart, or with regard to judging. And I think it is very hard to make Old Testament scripture overrule the New, for the very reason that the 'rules' were so dramatically changed by Penetecost, and the remarkable picture given by Jesus of the born again believer:

John 3:8 - 12

**"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."** Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? **Most assuredly**, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, **and you do not receive Our witness**. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how **will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/7 6:59**

GaryE,

Thank you for what you shared. I do understand that sometimes the Spirit will instruct us to be quiet, and then it is a matter of watching to see how the Lord is going to defend us, without *our* help. I'm sorry you were very hurt, and trust you are fully recovered through His healing.

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/7 7:11**

Quote:

-----Dorcas your comments about anger really helped.

-----  
That's good.

I would add this.... that if we have not understood our justifiable anger to past situations, or experienced it, the anger we feel in the present tense may be tangled up with that 'old' anger, and may feel or become unweildy. But, if the only source of our anger is an abusive situation, and the anger provokes us into appropriate actions which bring God's standards to public attention, then, expressed with some discretion, even protecting the 'sinners' in the situation from complete public defamation, is not intrinsically wrong.

I think the problem is always that there will be others who don't want the hassle (usually because they are not personally affected, they think), or who fear the consequences. This makes it a lonely road, and one which either makes one go on in God, or shows up one's own weaknesses. If one can receive the subsequences from God, then whatever.... it will be a blessing. Sometimes one has to act because another person is too weak to act for themselves.

Personally, I don't think this can ever be wrong. The world is full of upside-down logic which protects the strong and exploits the weak and God hates that. Some of His strongest condemnation in scripture is because of this very attitude.

**Re: roosters and humans - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/7 7:57**

Quote:

-----Sometimes one has to act because another person is too weak to act for themselves....

The world is full of upside-down logic which protects the strong and exploits the weak and God hates that. Some of His strongest condemnation in scripture is because of this very attitude.

-----  
I was just going to write these very thoughts and you beat me to it. So I'll add a few:

We need to broaden our outlook from licking our own wounds to becoming aware of others who are mistreated - pushed to the back, regarded as "lesser" because they have "broken families", are not refined socially, not as educated.... in other words.. the "losers" of the pack. They are easy victims in the religious system. We can easily neglect them because WE don't feel their pain. In fact, we can be perpetrators simply by neglect. Neglect is a very serious sin. (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

There will always be there who just don't have the inner resources and spiritual maturity to be able to handle it.

Some years ago our family helped take care of roosters for a nearby farmer. The barn was filled with several thousand young birds approaching puberty, raised for breeding purposes. When the hormones kicked in we watched the stronger roosters mercilessly attack the weaker ones till they were bleeding and dying. It was gruesome. Each morning we gathered up the dead. My 11 yo son said; "Mom, these roosters are just like human beings" They have only three desires: food, power, and sex."

Now back to humans: if in any way we view ourselves as better than the "lesser ones", we are not a lot different than these roosters. For whatsoever a man thinketh in his heart, so is he .." There is no end to how far this sin can carry us, and how much evil can be justified.

Jesus was abused horribly, yet, even on his journey to the cross, he still had a heart for the weeping women around him. He said, "Don't weep for me.. weep for yourself." He was aware of their coming pain and suffering.

May God decrease us and may Christ increase.  
Diane

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/7 9:05**

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/7 9:28**

Quote:

-----i guess you are making the points i feel like i've been wearing myself out trying to make

-----  
sj,

I'm glad it feels like that to you, because I do want to be supportive of your struggle to endorse righteousness in a very contrary situation. I'm only saying what comes to me, though, in the way that I usually do when I post. Possibly, I could back up my 'opinion' with a lot more historical detail, but if anyone wants it, they can ask.

Your testimony of being able to look in the eye, those who have cut you off from their fellowship, is powerful to me, because I'd say that's a work of God in your life, which I respect completely.

Quote:

-----Please show me where God cares one whit about protecting the the reputation of false shepherds and where He leaves the deceived to themselves?

-----  
Anyone else?

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/7 9:36

Re:, on: 2006/3/7 9:38

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.  
& Ezekiel Chapter 34

Re: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?, on: 2006/3/7 9:40

There is much I could say about personalities who seek to control others, but I won't. However, on the same theme, the references in this thread to backstabbing remind me of Joab, David's most senior soldier, who was known for killing people after he had either found them, or manipulated them into a vulnerable position. In other words, he made sure they were at a definite disadvantage before he finished them off.

Compare this with the picture of the Good Shepherd, who goes ahead of the sheep, exposing His back to them while He LEADS.... in other words, He is vulnerable to the sheep.... and this is normal for anyone who is truly going out in front to show them the safest way. This picture speaks of a certain amount of mutual trust between the Shepherd and the sheep; and it has to be said that the sheep don't have to follow. No-one is forcing them to follow. They do so because they believe they are being led to pasture... this Voice has led them to food in the past, and they learned to trust it. Perhaps, only if they find they are being given a stone when they asked for bread, will they stop following.

sj, I know that's a mixed metaphor in the paragraph above, but, I think you get my meaning....

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/7 10:01

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/7 10:20

Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/7 10:41

Re:, on: 2006/3/7 11:15

Quote:

-----  
dorcass wrote:

There is much I could say about personalities who seek to control others, but I won't. However, on the same theme, the references in this thread to backstabbing remind me of Joab, David's most senior soldier, who was known for killing people after he had either found them, or manipulated them into a vulnerable position. In other words, he made sure they were at a definite disadvantage before he finished them off.

Compare this with the picture of the Good Shepherd, who goes ahead of the sheep, exposing His back to them while He LEADS.... in other words, He is vulnerable to the sheep.... and this is normal for anyone who is truly going out in front to show them the safest way. This picture speaks of a certain amount of mutual trust between the Shepherd and the sheep; and it has to be said that the sheep don't have to follow. No-one is forcing them to follow. They do so because they believe they are being led to pasture... this Voice has led them to food in the past, and they learned to trust it. Perhaps, only if they find they are being given a stone when they asked for bread, will they stop following.

sj, I know that's a mixed metaphor in the paragraph above, but, I think you get my meaning....

-----  
Shepherd is Pastor in our language.

Also in Ezekiel 34.

Can you show the difference in that book {Ezekiel} and others of the 'difference' between Pastor and Prophet ?

**General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?**

Jesus was both. Just to throw that in. The Risen Christ leads in two ways also.

I personally see a difference between Pastor and Prophets and how they work to save sheep.

**Re:, on: 2006/3/7 11:35**

The rod and staff.

The way to weigh whether to come against a Ministry or not, may possibly be within these verses ....

Phi 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

Phi 1:16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

Phi 1:17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

Phi 1:18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

If souls are 'not' being saved or being converted only to the complete ruin of their souls by damnable or deceptive heresy, it appears.

Edited to change to "converted".

**Re: Comparing the prophetic and the pastoral role - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/7 20:28**

Quote:

-----Can you show the difference in that book {Ezekiel} and others of the 'difference' between Pastor and Prophet?  
-----

To gain an understanding of the different callings - the prophetic and pastoral role you may want to check these out:  
([http://www.benisrael.org/OnlineBooks/prophetic\\_call/the\\_prophetic\\_call.htm](http://www.benisrael.org/OnlineBooks/prophetic_call/the_prophetic_call.htm)) The Prophetic Call by Art Katz  
(Philologos)

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic\\_id=9289&forum=35&start=60&viewmode=flat&order=1](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic_id=9289&forum=35&start=60&viewmode=flat&order=1)) What is a pastor and what does he do?

Now, I realize that you probably want a much simpler answer. I've read various explanations, but would be reluctant to pigeonhole these roles. We have a tendency to attach labels too quickly, and also restrain definitions.

I heard this once: Prophets rock the boat and pastors try to steady it. ... .. well, just a thought, but not a wise one at that.  
Diane

**Re: - posted by sj, on: 2006/3/8 9:18**

.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/8 10:06**

Quote:

-----This forum has helped me in many ways, and one of them is that I see that if I am to speak of these things I guarantee that I will be misjudged by my peers and slandered by my enemies.

I will be "regarded as an imposter though genuine."

So the Scripture is true then:

"The Spiritual man judges all things but himself is rightly judged by no one."

call it pride if you want, but it's Bible to me.

**General Topics :: Is it wrong to speak out against church abuse?**

NOTE: i DO NOT consider anyone here an enemy but rather friends.

Quote:

-----call it pride if you want, but It's Bible to me.  
-----

It's pride.

The failure here is in that to offer up ones opinion and to make statements and have no expectation of having your feet held to the fire... To be challenged is not to assume that this therefore makes you right, nor to assume you are being either misjudged or slandered.

Re-read that first paragraph again and think about it. You have been given much freedom to express yourself here. Tell us, what is it that we owe you? A pulpit? That is a haughty statement.

**Re: speaking about abuse in church, on: 2006/3/8 10:49**

Quote:

-----The failure here is in that to offer up ones opinion and to make statements and have no expectation of having your feet held to the fire...  
-----

Mike,

You are a moderator here. I know you feel tried and tested by the squabbling that goes on, and are concerned no-one should be led astray from the real truth about Jesus, but as I've said before, 'debate' is a scriptural word, and I would say now, that formal debate, such as I used to observe at school, was completely polite the whole time. It had its own ground rules, like judo, and it was 'played' fairly. Yes, people could get heated, and people could strive *vainly* to carry the 'motion' they were defending.... when it was obvious they were losing... but that was part of the 'game' - the 'exercise' in presentation, logic, persuasion, and so on.

As a moderator, all the 'power' is on your side. No-one expects you to apologise for using it when necessary, but, I honestly don't see how this

Quote:

-----Tell us, what is it that we owe you? A pulpit? That is a haughty statement.  
-----

helps the learner under your care?

He clearly stated right at the start of the thread, that he feels spiritually attacked in 3D for standing up for **truth**.

Can't we affirm him *against* his anxieties? In these circumstances do **we** (also) *need* to hold his feet to the fire? Can't we trust *God* to amplify the *gentlest* entreaties, as they are borne on the wings of the Spirit to him?

I realise I'm sticking my neck out here, but, I'd say what you quoted was as much a truth as was establishing to his own understanding, as it was in any way intended as an attack against us here... He is coming to terms with certain of the growing pains which arise from walking the path God has set for him.

We all have these times to live through, and I suppose I just feel privileged to be in a resting position *for the moment*, from which, primarily, to encourage.

**Re: - posted by Abide, on: 2006/3/8 12:56**

We don't owe each other anything, for the scriptures does say owe no man nothing but Love.

I know when the Spirit of God the Anointing of God is speaking directly to me, because I begin to experience palpitations, and I feel like my heart wants to come out of my chest.

I had an EKG done and it was normal so I discern that this is how God lets me know he wants to speak through me.

Yes we have the freedom to speak, but you used the word pulpit. When speaking, sharing, whether it may be led by the

Spirit of God, or just down right FLESH are we not all standing before a Pulpit/Platform/Stage?

If we consider the amount of people that are actually on line viewing every post, every subtitle, and anonymous name, then yes we are all in front of a pulpit.

One of the things that I do, before I am led by the Spirit of God as to where he wants me to go, and what he wants me to read is that I look to see how many people are ON.

When flying to Buenos Aires this morning, I was sat in a seat with no one next to me. Shortly after a man sat on my right hand side, I hesitated to turn my head and greet him. I continued to look forward at the movie that was being viewed on the monitor, but I could discern that his eyes were on me. He was a tall man, and so he was looking down at me, and I knew he was. He was waiting to see when I was going to look up; I couldn't hesitate any longer so I turned my head and looked at him. When I looked into his eyes I could see that his heart was smiling at me, yet there was no smile on his face, and his eyes were still looking straight at me. I discerned the smile that was coming from his innermost being so much so, that the fact that his face did not reflect a smile and I could not see the crowfeet next to his eyes, I knew that he knew that I knew what he was saying to me. It was at that moment at that instant that we all began to feel the tribulation that was taking place when we crossed from one city to the next. I looked at him again to let him know with my eyes that I was concerned and again, he just looked at me and I knew what he was saying to me. He said Judgment, but what he did not know or maybe he did is that before he sat down I was already being led by the Spirit of God to the word Judgment.

Rev 20:12 and I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Here is the Seven Summary of Judgment;

Among the many judgments mentioned in Scripture, seven are invested with special significance. These are:

- (1) the judgment of the believer's sins in the cross of Christ ( John 12:31) – Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.
- (2) the believer's self-judgment (1 cor 11:31) – For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.
- (3) the judgment of the believer's works (2 cor. 5:10) – For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- (4) the judgment of the individual Gentiles at the return of Christ to the earth (Matt. 25:32) All the nations will be gathered before Him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.
- (5) the judgment of Israel at the return of Christ to the earth (Ezek 20:37)- I will make you pass under the rod,, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant
- (6) the judgment of angels after the 1000 years (Jude 6) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day.
- (7) Here, the judgment of the wicked dead with which the history of the present earth ends.

It is not what we say, we can all quote scriptures, and we all love God's Word. It is the spirit behind what we say, that God is most concerned with.

**Re:, on: 2006/3/8 13:55**

We are commanded to use "sound" and righteous judgment.

Not to judge "the hearts" of others, as we barely can we see through to another's heart because of our own and should not even attempt to or claim the ability to.

In "growing" atmospheres such as this, "growth" can be immediately stunted by hearts being judged.

I've been called "proud" here more than once and that has cut me to the quick, because only my closest friends, husband and my family know how horrified I am of my self and how much it takes to get me to even speak in public, nonetheless post.

No one knows that but those I've lived with.

But the little that I've learned on the Internet, is that when judging the insides of another begins to happen, all "growth" ceases, those who could have grown leave and we as the judge of their inner heart are guilty of the sin that we see in others.

To come against and judge a Doctrine or teaching or the words themselves is one thing, but when others are called "proud" ... as I tried my best to say how I see that, some pages back ... what is really being shown is the pride of the accuser, because in order to accuse another of pride, one MUST feel they are without it.

sj, judge the words, actions and teachings of others, by His Word, but do not risk judgment by God on yourself, for judging another's heart and "love" them enough to Not do that, and you should be alright.

Always 'pray' for those you are forced to accuse of wrong doing or teaching, all the time, because they may have a higher place in Heaven than we do .... one never knows, because GOD "is" judging hearts that we don't see.

**Re:, on: 2006/3/8 14:12**

Unfortunately, I didn't download this thread :cry: .

You judged us all now sj ... you had friends here and I thought you saw us trying to defend you and help the hurt and get up behind you.

Couldn't you see how many of us posted for you here ?

You had true and living friends here and now, whatever good you tried to accomplish is Wiped Out with this action.

Maybe Dorcas or someone else can say it better than me, because now I have tears.

**Re: - posted by ANewInHim, on: 2006/3/8 15:54**

sj,

I will not question God why you did this. I've done it before and it hurts, it hurts very much when you know that God is speaking through you and you feel rejected, not loved and not accepted.

The Devil is a liar. I want to thank you for every example you gave me when answering my question on Anger, and the difference between a Godly anger vs an anger that would lead to revenge.

You also taught me what real love is all about, and telling each other the truth, God also used you to bring mine or our sins to the light, and you did it in a way that was Holy.

If I sinned I repent.

-ANewInHim

**Re: speaking out against church abuse, on: 2006/3/8 17:26**

Quote:

-----Maybe Dorcas or someone else can say it better than me, because now I have tears.

sj,

I don't feel the way Annie does, possibly because I had to abandon everything I knew, to go on with God, and I realise it is a very particular work which God does under those circumstances. The Lord is with you, and that's the main thing. He is confirming truth to your heart day by day, and you are being fed from on High. That is wonderful, and not something to be ashamed of, or to allow to slip from your grip.

I would have dropped you a pm, but, SI's pop-up blocker seems to interfere with calling it up. Please feel free to email me at the address in my profile, if you'd like further correspondence; any time, not necessarily today or this week... just if you ever want to touch base, you'd be very welcome.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/3/8 23:08**

This thread has been locked and unfortunately lost. SJ has gone through and edited all of his posts which now leaves this completely unintelligible and makes it also impossible to make any clarifications or resolve any misunderstandings.

Please do not abuse the edit function.