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A Spirit of Humility

When we began the "Every Night At Nine" prayer team months ago, we listed eight items for which we were committing to pray each evening. One of those (and perhaps the most important one) was for "a spirit of humility to characterize God's people." Last evening, the necessity of this attribute was, once again, underscored to me.

Last night, along with several other men, I was able to attend the second pre-release screening of "Fireproof", the latest production of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, GA. This outstanding film will open nationwide on September 26. While I was more than impressed by the compelling nature of the story (within the first 15 seconds you're hooked), the quality of the acting, and professionalism of the technical aspects of the film, what moved me most was the TOTAL humility of everyone involved in this project.

In II Chronicles 7:14, God states that the first prerequisite for revival is for His people to humble themselves. It seems, however, that this is an all but forgotten quality in most of today's fundamental Christians, in spite of the fact that God says, emphatically, in Micah 6:8, *"He hath shown thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord REQUIRE of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk HUMBLY with thy God."* Notice that "humility" is not a suggested item, but a required one!

In Matthew 11: 23, Jesus denounces the city of Capernaum for its lack of repentance, stating, "if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." It was in the region of Capernaum that Jesus had miraculously fed the five thousand. Yet, in the face of God's miraculous goodness to them and provision for them, they'd failed to repent. On the heels of this condemnation, two verses later in Matthew 11: 25, Jesus says, "I thank Thee, O Father...because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." It was the people of Capernaum who believed themselves to be "wise and prudent" (literally the word prudent means "to be able to put together"). That is, they

were able to "put together" a human explanation not only for Jesus miracles, but for everything. They relied on their human reasoning in every situation and were quite proud of themselves. Jesus says, that the one to whom the Father reveals Himself is NOT the one who is worldly wise, but rather is a "babe." The word "babe" carries the idea of being "willing to listen" (i.e. "receptive" not resistant) and learn. It is PRIDE, alone, that causes a man to try to put it all together according to his own reasoning and refuse to listen to, and learn from a gracious God.

What, you may ask, does all this have to do with item number eight on our "Every Night At Nine" prayer list? Well, I am deeply concerned about the pride that is so prevalent in our fundamental churches, a pride that manifests itself in two ways. Some seem to be proud of their IGNORANCE. They don't know, and know that they don't know, and are proud of it. It's the idea that equates somehow ignorance with spirituality. They never want to delve into the depths of the Scriptures and wrestle with difficult topics. In the last week, I have been reading a book that deals with one of the most controversial topics that is, unnecessarily, dividing believers today. The absolute ignorance on the part of some of their statements is astounding! Yet, they are not only willing to remain uninformed in this area, but are incredibly proud of the fact they've chosen to remain so. To be honest, I'll never understand that kind of thinking and reasoning, and it is an overwhelming heaviness to my heart.

Equally destructive, if not more so, is a group of believers who've become proud of their INTELLIGENCE. They've been trained well in the tools necessary to expound the Scriptures. They know how to exegete the text of Scripture and do so with precision. Believe me, I am for this kind of sound exposition! However, the arrogant attitude that sometimes accompanies this ability frightens me. They tend to look down their well trained theological noses at those who've never had their theological training and view them as second class citizens. As I've observed this in recent years, I've often thought it was only me who saw it. However, it is not only me. One of the greatest expository preachers the world has ever known, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan (long time pastor of Westminster Chapel in London), made the following statement in 1927. "What a blessed thing it is that God has always revealed spiritual things to the simple-hearted and simple-minded. There is a new priestism abroad today which says that we cannot interpret this Book unless we know original languages in all their ramifications. It is not true. The man who can put two and two together as to Semitic languages, and as to Greek dialect, may never see the flame of glory that any little child can see, who takes up this Book and studies it with the simple heart of a babe." Please understand, as one who spent eight years in college and seminary, I am in no way speaking against education. I am, however, speaking to the arrogance that education can breed. It was Evangelist Gypsy Smith, who never had any formal education, and yet preached powerfully

on two continents winning untold thousands to Christ. It was A. W. Tozer, who barely had a sixth grade education, to whom the Lord opened the Scriptures in profundity.

Brethren, may we "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God," knowing that He "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." If we will do this, we will have met, not only the first requirement for revival, but will open up the flood gates of God's grace in our lives.

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