

## The Cult of Personality

Acts 5:35-40

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

My precious wife hates when I tell “back in the day” stories, however, there was one that recently came to my mind that I haven’t been able to let go of. I remember a long time ago that I was in Venice Beach working out at World Gym at 265 pounds on leg day; people would stop what they were doing to watch. I was generally used to an audience, so it didn’t bother me very much. The audience was short-lived that morning because Arnold Schwarzenegger came into the gym. Though well past his prime and at the height of his celebrity as an action hero, everyone was enthralled by the seven-time Mr. Olympia, myself included. I found myself looking over several times just to see what he was doing. It wasn’t that much longer that we were in the same area and started a conversation; from then on, whenever I was in CA, and we were in the gym together, the conversation would ensue, but always around a crowd of onlookers.

Although we do not participate in social media, that “following” mindset is in our fellowship. Young people will drive several hours to go to a meeting to hear the “flavor of the month” preacher who is headlining the meeting. I am thankful that modern-day Apostolic Pentecost has some of the greatest preachers who have ever put on shoe leather; that being said, we better not ever forget that Jesus Christ is the one our churches are built on. He is the chief cornerstone. This isn’t about increasing our following; it is about increasing His church. This isn’t about extending our influence; it is about extending His influence in the lives of others one soul at a time. Our saints should be looking at their pastors as the greatest man in their lives, with the exception of their Savior.

Hebrews 13:17

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

They are the ones doing the daily heavy lifting in the lives of their congregation.

Acts 20:29-30

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

I was looking at Thayer's Definition of "perverse things":

Thayer's Definition:

1) to distort, turn aside

1a) to oppose, plot against the saving purposes and plans of God

2) to turn aside from the right path, to pervert, corrupt

We are seeing churches "raiding" any Apostolic Church they can to grow their churches and calling it "revival" and trying to prove that "they have it going on" at their place. Where has the honest dialog among pastors gone when it comes to rebellious sheep who become disgruntled with the way their pastor is "using" them? How has this type of behavior become acceptable among us? Spiritual Darwinism goes against every biblical principle; it goes against the nature of God. How does this build the kingdom of God, and how does this type of behavior help the church on the "losing" end of the equation?

If there has ever been a time that we need to be encouraging one another and helping one another, it is now. We need one another; our churches are stronger together.

RPS