

October 2003: The Value of the Insignificant

by Aaron Greenway

How would you feel if someone thought of you as insignificant, as if what you did for the Lord didn't matter, at least in comparison with what Brother So-n-So is doing? We see God using folks like Billy Graham, Michael W. Smith or even someone in the church, like the pastor. In the same church, God is using a little old lady that makes and sells pies so that young people in the church can go on mission trips.

Secretly, there is a "nobody" that is counseling wounded people. In a hidden place there is someone that is doing something that no one else sees. And no one gives him/her any credit. Someone doesn't even know that they are there. This is the kind of ministry that Christ recognized. Do you remember the widow that gave all she had. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:3-4).

There are people in the church today that really put their heart into the ministry, with a lot of love. And because they do not call attention to themselves, because they are humble, because they do not boast, they themselves could believe that they are unimportant. Perhaps, they believe this because many do not give them the time of day. But even if people consider what you do to be unimportant, remember that the worth of what you do does not depend on them, but on God. God puts honor those whom He chooses. God chooses his own vessel of honor. God never honors a "show" before people with the purpose of it being seen.

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The problem is that we have made the church into a spiritual "Hollywood" or into a business. Principles that God Himself has set up are not the principles that the world operates on. In Hollywood, if you are smooth like Tom Cruise, if you have the beauty of Julia Roberts, if you can sing like Celine Dion, or if you have the money of Ross Perot, then you are considered important. But in the Kingdom of God, all those things mean nothing to God, because all of it comes from Him and He could just as easily take it all away. Instead, God values humility, not the shameless desire of someone to get noticed. God honors the pure in heart. He credits kindness. And He recognizes service even if others don't.

The Church of Christ Jesus is so significant to God, that He sent His only Son to die for that church. And serving the King is no small, insignificant job, no matter what it involves. Whether we sing or clean toilets, God has put us there to serve Him, not to win the approval of a brother who seems to be in a higher position. In the long run, the opposite could end up being true, that the highest position in the Kingdom of God is where you are and what you are doing.

But, also, we must consider that if we have a role in God's Kingdom that is large (in the world's eyes), then we should thank God and at the same time honor "the little guy" as if it weren't for them, we wouldn't be where we are. The head cannot survive without the fingernails nor the fingernails without the head. Could you imagine if your nails were ripped out? Even your head would hurt! What did the Apostle Paul say about Christ's body and its importance?

"For by the grace given me I say to everyone one of you; Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."
(Romans 12:3-6)

Remember that Christ Himself was a carpenter, the son of Mary and Joseph, a “nobody” hiding the secret of being the Son of God almost to the end of His life. He told the demons to be silent, that they not tell of His divinity. He told His disciples not to say anything about the Transfiguration until He had resurrected from the dead. Christ was no “showoff”. If we are looking for the attention of others, possibly then, we are not searching God’s will. Only if God wants to show us to others, then can we go out and be public. Perhaps the best way to be assured of our own attitudes is to recognize to the “insignificant brother” in the church, to honor him, maybe to do things for him. The attitude of any ministry is to serve, not to be served. The whole attitude of serving keeps in check any attitude of wanting to be served. The important people are right where God wants them, and the insignificant folks as well. Could both groups of people in the Body of Christ learn to love one another, so that the Kingdom could be built up to fight Satan who would love to divide the Body of Christ in all its pride? It is about love, about humility. If we do not humble ourselves, then we should not take part in serving the King of Kings, because it was He who served, after becoming a human being, and then giving his life on a cross. If anyone had the right to be exalted, He did. So, pleasing the Lord may not get the recognition, but that doesn’t matter, because God sees the humble heart. Really, it is not about the person serving but the God who has placed His chosen ones to serve. What an honor!