

**Shayla:** How can you say that God doesn't need us? I think that God loves me and that means He needs me!

**Meforshim:**

I want to thank you first of all for bringing your concerns in this area to my attention. You are not the only ones to struggle with this concept. It is difficult to accept and it is not something you often hear from the pulpit.

I also want to thank you for taking my request to challenge my thinking and theology seriously. I appreciate the fact that you don't just sit idly in your seats accepting as fact whatever I say simply because I am a pastor. It stretches me and it also shows me that you trust me to listen even when we disagree.

First, let me direct you to some passages that I feel support my theology.

- In **Genesis 3**, God desired a relationship with humanity. Adam and Eve messed it up and God had to kick them out of the garden but that didn't change his overall plan to have a relationship with humanity. *Here two individuals were kicked out but God's plan for mankind continued.*
- In **Genesis 6**, God still sought a relationship with Man but mankind was so evil that He had to reject them all except for Noah and his family. *Here all of mankind was killed except for eight people but God's plan continued.*
- In **Numbers 13 and 14**, the people of Israel were given the opportunity to enter the Promised Land and, out of a lack of faith, they rebelled. *That entire generation was rejected and had to die in the wilderness but God's plan was fulfilled with the next generation.*
- In **1 Samuel 13:14**, we see that Saul was to have been not just king over Israel during his lifetime but that his lineage was to have been messianic! His throne could have endured forever through Jesus Christ. However, because of his disobedience, the promise ("to establish your kingdom forever") was taken from him and given to David. *Again, the throne endured though the individual and his family was rejected.*
- **Matthew 21** shows that Israel was given the opportunity to have the messianic kingdom established but they rejected it in **Matthew 26**. *They were rejected because of that decision but God continued His plan of redemption by giving the Gentiles an opportunity to be "grafted" into God's vine.*
- In **Acts 5**, Ananias and Sapphira tried to elevate themselves in the church and were killed for their presumption. *Here we see a couple rejected but the church actually thriving after their demise!*
- In **1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 2:14-18**, Hymenaeus, who was apparently a leader in the church, elevated himself, taught principles that were not founded on scripture but his own thoughts and philosophies, and indulged in "worldly and empty chatter...leading to ungodliness...that spread like gangrene." He was "turned over to Satan." *Here we see a leader of the church rejected but the church of God marching on anyway.*

There are many more examples that I could show you but I think you get the picture. No one individual is necessary for God's plan to succeed. He is sovereign and omnipotent. He will succeed whether we go along with His plans or not. I believe that to forget that fact is to lose the humility that is prerequisite to a proper relationship with God.

Go back to 1 Samuel 13 and Saul again. Why was he rejected? Because he disobeyed. Why did he disobey? 1 Samuel 15:17 informs us that the problem did not begin until he quit being "little" in his own eyes. In verse 12, he was not building an altar to God but to himself!

Mankind's prevailing sin has never been an overabundance of humility but of pride.

- Lucifer became Satan when he decided to elevate himself to the throne of God.<sup>1</sup>
- He then tempted Adam and Eve with the same sin of pride (wanting to become gods and thinking they know better than God what's best for them).<sup>2</sup>
- Moses lost his opportunity to enter the Promised Land when he elevated himself and thus lost his temper saying "Listen now you rebels, shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?"<sup>3</sup>
- The Israelites pride blinded them into making the patently false statement "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone."<sup>4</sup> The truth was that they had been enslaved by the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Amalakites, the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks and were at that very time the conquered slaves of Rome.
- Pride blinds us. Look at the church of Laodicea. Their pride blinded them too! They said "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." Furthermore, they did not realize that they were wretched and poor and blind and naked.<sup>5</sup>

There are six things which the Lord hates, and seven that are an abomination to Him among which are haughty eyes and people who spread strife among the brothers.<sup>6</sup> We are to walk with all humility.<sup>7</sup> God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble.<sup>8</sup> We should humble ourselves in the presence of the Lord.<sup>9</sup> We are commanded to be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.<sup>10</sup> We must clothe ourselves with humility toward one another for again, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.<sup>11</sup>

I've been told many times that I don't emphasize human self-worth, or talk sufficiently about how to build positive self-esteem like many popular preachers do. I assure you it is not out of some misogynistic tendency but because I have never found people to struggle with too LITTLE self-esteem. The Bible unequivocally states that pride is the source of sin and that humility is the source of righteousness. With the amount of sin in this world I would have to say that pride rules!

So, why do I feel it's necessary to emphasize this point? We must be sure that we never feel that if we leave, God's work will collapse. We must not fall into the trap of thinking that we are irreplaceable. If we do, we may very well wake up one morning with the kingdom wrested from us and given to another.

Do I need you? Sure! Do you need me? Absolutely. However, we must not confuse our needs with God's. He is not human. He is God and He does not need us. The amazing thing is that in spite of that He WANTS us.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 14:12-19

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 20:10

<sup>4</sup> John 8:33

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 3:14-22

<sup>6</sup> **Proverbs 6:16-19**

<sup>7</sup> **Ephesians 4:2**

<sup>8</sup> **James 4:6**

<sup>9</sup> **James 4:10**

<sup>10</sup> **1 Peter 3:8**

<sup>11</sup> **1 Peter 5:5**