



The Word at Work

Growing Up Spiritually: Character and Charisma

Reading the Word

Key Scriptures: 1 Cor.1:1-18

Key Points:

We want to experience the true life and power of the Holy Spirit for this Kingdom is not a matter of words but of power (1 Cor.4:20)

We need to be aware of and avoid false and/or immature spirituality, which, as in Corinth, leads to distraction, deception and division.

But in our attempt to avoid the counterfeit we must not neglect the genuine – we want ‘more power.’

- We should be as equally bothered by the absence of power as by the abuse of power.

In this series on the first 4 chapters of 1 Corinthians we will consider true and mature life in the Spirit in contrast to distorted experiences of the Spirit which lead to:

1. intellectualism or anti-intellectualism (1:18-2:19)
2. immaturity (2: 14- 3:4)
3. instability (3)
4. independence (4)

Note how Paul begins this letter in which he will rebuke some of their practices and behaviour by encouraging them about who they are in Christ (1:2-9).

He knew that they had been *made holy* and were also *called to be holy* (v.2) – they were called to become who they were!

So many people think that they have to wait until they are perfect or mature (character) before God can use them by the power of his Spirit (charisma).

- That’s wrong (look at the Corinthians, the disciples and all the OT heroes!)
- And we actually need the power of God to be able to change!

Others make the mistake of thinking that if they are already made holy they can ignore their faults. Paul positively encouraged the Corinthians but also addressed their divisions and wrong attitudes.

3 keys to changing in character but also moving in charisma:

1. Learn to recognise the grace of God in your life – in character and in gifts of the Spirit (vv.4-7)
2. Learn to live in the light of a better world – seeing the Kingdom helps you live differently and move in its power (vv.7-8)
3. Learn to keep intimate friendship with Jesus at the core of your life – you will change and you will find there is plenty of power where he is! (v.9)

Doing the Word

To Discuss:

1. What do you think are some of the characteristics of distorted or immature spirituality that we see in the church at Corinth?
2. If God uses us in terms of charisma before we get perfect in character how can we avoid thinking that we are more spiritual than we really are?

To Do:

1. Determine to step out and be used by God’s power – pray for the sick, share your faith, etc. – and don’t be held back by not feeling good enough.

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