SUBMITTING TO A KNOW-IT-ALL by Andy Diestelkamp

Nobody likes a know-it-all. We’ve all had experiences with one. This is the person who drones on and on about things you’ve never considered and is always able to add more information than you knew existed on a host of topics. Sure, you want the nerd on your team if you are involved in some kind of trivia game, but otherwise he not only annoys but intimidates you and makes you feel generally uncomfortable.

Perhaps this is why people are not particularly fond of preachers. Sure, we want them to feed us something spiritual if we choose to go to church, but otherwise they’re not really cool to hang out with because they have a tendency to be wet blankets as they constantly turn ordinary, everyday things into teaching opportunities. Sure, there are preachers who attempt to ditch this stereotype and—in their efforts to become relevant to their culture—become spiritually irrelevant and useless to the kingdom of God. They conform rather than speak words which might actually challenge and transform a remnant of their perverse generation. Yeah, I know. There I go talking like a preacher, like somebody who thinks he’s got it all figured out, like a know-it-all who supposedly gets cheap thrills from looking down on people as being scripturally ignorant and/or morally inferior.

Without a doubt, Jesus had some of His sharpest criticisms for the religious leaders of His day who arrogantly acted like “know-it-alls” but were hypocrites. Indeed, there is plenty of this still going on among modern preachers from the televangelists to the mega-church types whose aroma is more akin to Starbucks than it is to Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17). Of course, you know that many of these leaders are also just trying to be relevant and failing miserably from the divine perspective. Humility is an essential part of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ; social relevance and acceptance are not essential.  
 However, let’s not pretend that animosity toward and discomfort with “know-it-alls” is entirely their fault. If we are ignorant or stubborn or apathetic or immoral, we may also bear some of the blame.

Scripture reveals to us a very consistent pattern of most people rejecting God and the men He sent to confront them in their sins. Note the kinds of things these people said to/about those who dared to challenge popular thought. “This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting as a judge,” (Genesis 19:9). “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” (Exodus 2:14). “I hate him because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1 Kings 22:8). Indeed, as one prophet observed, “They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly” (Amos 5:10). Indeed, to speak “uprightly” is often met with charges of being self-righteous and being judgmental.

Stephen, an early Christian, publicly called attention to this unholy pattern of rejection saying, “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you” (Acts 7:51). Then the religious leaders “stopped their ears … ran at him … cast him out of the city and stoned him” (vss. 57,58). The pattern of rejection continued, and it continues still.

The meekest, most humble, most compassionate Man to walk this earth knew it all and constantly turned ordinary, everyday things into teaching opportunities (aka parables).He spoke with great authority *and* challenged people to change their ways to conform to His, and they literally crucified Him for it. Jesus of Nazareth was *not* any part of the human problem. Indeed, He is the only solution to mankind’s problem. The problem is not with Jesus Who knows it all. The problem is with those who stubbornly refuse to submit to Him as Lord. Historically, most people reject Jesus as the solution, so we should not be surprised that our problem persists.

Nobody likes a know-it-all, and *that* is the problem. Our omniscient God has graciously invited us to get to know Him, and most people continue to reject His invitation. Why? Because *we* are the ones who are arrogant though ignorant. Because we are the ones who are stubborn though sinful. Because we are the ones who are apathetic though lost. Because we are the problem, behaving as if we know better than our Creator. Indeed, it is way past time for the know-it-alls of this world to humbly bow before the eternal Know-It-All Who patiently has given us time to repent. Don’t continue to be a part of the problem. Don’t conform to this world. Don’t assume that relevance has anything to do with current carnal trends or the traditions of men. Humbly submit to Jesus as *the* solution to our problem! Confess Him to know it all, and no longer allow your pride to ignore or resist His relevant teaching and direction for your life.

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