

## Truth and Spirit Ministries

### **Pastors and Manipulation**

*I have a question that may have been partially covered in your breaking free article. I am going to try and phrase this correctly. The question is how and when will some Pastors get away from the manipulation that is being taught over the Church? Growing up in the Church, I have noticed that it has become a normal way in the teaching, praying and worshiping. When some Pastors teach, they use manipulative phrasing, probably not knowing it because it has been a style that they grew up under and seems efficient to them. For instance as we know some pray different and some people praise different. Everyone's personalities are not the same so the result from praise and worship from people will not be the same. As you may well know that some Pastors point that out in an embarrassing way. Some want to be served rather than being fellow servants within the body of Christ. I am an analytical person or rather a discerning person who is concerned with what I see in the Universal Body. Thank You for your time and opinion. And thank you for your truth in the Rapture Article. It takes boldness to expose this area and teach the truth...*

Thank you for your question and comment. The Lord once told me this powerful truth: *godly leadership will not try to make or mold other people into their image but rather let God make and mold them into his.* Leaders and believers that use manipulation and control do so because they don't yet have a revelation of the freedom that has been given to us in Christ. As a result, they cannot give to others what they do not understand and walk in themselves. They will only get away from this practice when they have an understanding of the freedom that only God can give.

Deep down we all have an innate desire to live in freedom. True freedom only comes from God however. The Gospel teaches us that we have been given freedom through Christ because of what he has obtained for us through the Cross. What does this freedom consist of? We now have the freedom to live in righteousness, to praise and worship the Lord unhindered and free of the oppression of others. We have been set free from the deceptive philosophies, which depend on human traditions and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. We have been set free from the fettering chains of the rules and regulations of the Law of Moses, the unconverted opinions of men and anything else that has no real spiritual value. (*Romans 7:6, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2:6-23*)

Due to the oppression that comes with the religious traditions of men, legalism and deceptive philosophies of the world, many Christians today are not living the life of freedom that Christ has purchased for them through the Cross. The only way to be free from all of these things is by receiving the truth that the Lord came to bring. He said, "The truth will set you free." It is the truth that comes from God that sets us free to live an

abundant life in Christ. The Gospel declares that we have now been given freedom through Christ and his Spirit.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (*II Corinthians 3:17*) True freedom is only found in the presence of the Lord and his Spirit. This teaches us a very important key not only to living in the freedom of Christ but also how to overcome manipulation, control and all the rest of the works of the flesh. Repentance will start us on the path to freedom but following the Spirit will actually take us on the journey. When we yield to what the Spirit wants in our Church gatherings rather than to what the flesh wants, we will experience true freedom.

It's so sad that so many leaders today do not give the Spirit of the Lord full reign over the Church. Too often the flesh dominates rather than the Holy Spirit. The costly mistake that some Church leaders make is that they make themselves the central figure in the Church rather than the Lord Jesus Christ. They serve their own human agendas rather than follow the guidance and direction of the Spirit.

When those in the flesh seek to dominate, they often resort to manipulation and control to establish and maintain power. Leaders can avoid this however by dying to self and submitting to Christ and his Spirit. The Lord is the Head of the Church and he should have the preeminence, not man. Together, leaders and believers should follow the Spirit and he will lead us where the Lord wants us to go in each and every service. This is what believers really want deep down in their hearts anyway- they want to be in the presence of God and experience his touch and blessings.

The devil knows that the truth and freedom of Christ contains power because it sets us free to do and be all that God has called us to. This is why he seeks to oppress the saints and rob them of these precious gifts from God. The weapons that he tries to use against us are deception, manipulation and control. He will work through whoever he can to spread his tactics to try to bring believers into bondage so that they will not be free to serve Christ. However, he can only work through those that are ignorant of his devices and ignorant of God's Word. We do not have to receive what the devil is dishing out though.

Knowledge is power. When we as believers understand, receive and walk in the knowledge of God, we become effective and powerful for the Kingdom of God. When we have a true revelation of our freedom in Christ we will not allow others to bring us into bondage through deception and manipulation. When we have a divine revelation of the One who resides in us and the freedom that he has given us the devil will no longer be able to control us through deception, intimidation or manipulation either directly or through others.

The ultimate goals of manipulators are to control the thoughts and/or actions of others, alter situations to their satisfaction or to get others to comply with their wishes or demands. No one has the right to do that though. It's important to know that manipulation can also come in varying degrees. It can be so subtle that one cannot recognize it or it can also be blatant. Sometimes it's hard to know when we are being manipulated because there is most often the element of deception at work as well. This is why we as believers need discernment from God. Should we discern that someone is indeed trying to rob us of our freedom in Christ through manipulation or control, we should not allow this to happen. We must take

personal responsibility and not allow anyone to bring us into bondage, leaders included. In truth, we should only be following leadership as they are following Christ. (*Galatians 5:1, 1 Corinthians 11:1*)

Unlike fleshly men, God is not into making cookie cutter Christians or Churches. He has created diversity in people for a reason. He appreciates and embraces our differences just as we do the same in our own children. Amazingly, He has the ability to mold and shape us into the image of his Son without stripping us of the uniqueness that he has created us to have personally.

All believers have been called to be free. Free to live in Christ and his Spirit. We now have the freedom to follow the Holy Spirit rather than following men or even our own sinful flesh. (*Acts 5:29, Romans 8:12-14, Galatians 5:16-18*) The Bible says that we are servants to whom we yield ourselves to obey. (*Romans 6:16*) God has given us a free will and he allows us to make the choice. He will not force us to follow or obey anyone, including himself. He wants us to voluntarily yield to him because it's the right thing to do and we love him. He wants us to protect and maintain the freedom that he's given us in Christ.

~ *answer by Denise Bostic*