

XSI 2011 – Spiritual Confidence

1. Introduction

Worldly wisdom vs. Biblical wisdom

2. Self-Confidence vs. “humble doormat” confusion

a. Self isn't worthy of confidence

i. 1 Cor. 4:7 “For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

ii. 1 Cor. 10:12+18 “For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding... For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.”

b. Self is an unstable foundation for confidence

c. Humility confusion

Is humility something different than we imagine?

C.S. Lewis described humility as having a “creaturely” outlook. When he was troubled by the doctrine of heavenly rewards, he describes the revelation that helped him understand it as follows: “When I had thought it over, I saw that this view was scriptural; nothing can

eliminate from the parable the divide accolade, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” With that, a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards. I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child – not in a conceited child, but in a good child – as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child, either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures – nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure of a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before its teacher, a creature before its Creator.” *“The Weight of Glory”* C.S. Lewis

d. Boasting in the Lord

e. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6:

“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Parrhesia is a Biblical word that is defined as:

- confidence
- boldness
- assurance
- freedom to speak, openness, honesty
- fearlessness, courage, daring
- freedom, liberty
- joyfulness, delight
- a special exercise of faith, unhesitating confidence of faith
- a removal of fear and anxiety due to a removal of guilt

Some of the biblical verses on confidence focus on our belief and faith, while other verses focus on our bravery and bold action.

Here are a few examples: “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). “[Christ] in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him” (Ephesians 3:12). “Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12). “[Pray]...that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:20b).

We can summarize these ideas by saying that spiritual confidence is an assured spiritual belief resulting in bold spiritual action.

3. Two extremes that rob us of spiritual confidence

a. Man-centeredness

- i. Viewing things in light of human resources and abilities
- ii. Worry + prayerlessness
- iii. Unbiblical expectations + responsibilities
- iv. Burn-out
- v. Magical view of religious acts
- vi. Provincialism
- vii. Not a branch

“It is possible for any of us at any time to assume the position, often unconsciously, of the vine. We start the day as if it were *our* day and we make *our* plans for *our* day and fully intend to do *our* best for the Lord...The very responsibility of trying to be the vine makes us tense, and this tenseness always predisposes us to further sin...[God] is the Vine to me only as I repent of trying to be the vine myself.”¹ (emphasis mine) - “*We Would See Jesus*” Roy and Revel Hession

b. Super-spirituality

- i. Using grace defensively
- ii. Spiritual gluttony
- iii. Uncomfortable doctrines

1. Spiritual Rewards
2. Human Agency
3. Organization of Church
- iv. Focused on Restrictions rather than action
- v. Worried about motives
- vi. Presumptuous

ⁱ Roy and Revel Hession pp.140-142