

“SPIRITUAL COVERING” BIBLE DOCTRINE OR ROMAN/PAGAN DOGMA?

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes the line between right and wrong in doctrine and practice does not run through the words or even the practice but through the hearts of those involved. People may blame leaders and leaders may blame people. However, foolishness is often driven from both sides! It was the people of Israel that demanded a king when that was not God's will for them. God wanted to be their king! Theocracy is not rule by one man. That is a dictatorship! Theocracy is rule by God. This is fulfilled in the New Covenant with the statement that “the head of every man is Christ”! That is the promise of Jesus, “I will build my church!”

Sometimes the line between truth and error is visible by the emphasis. Truth is in Jesus. It is living and dynamic. Jesus is God of God and man of very man. Logically those two things cannot be true in the same individual at the same time but our universe is not rationally determined. It is relationally structured. Truth is a person! Jesus is both Son of God and Son of Man. We must hold both at the same time to remain true to who He is. If we let go of either truth we end up in the ditch on the other side of the road. To remain in the way to God we must hold both to be equally, absolutely, totally true at the same time! Our minds must worship. They cannot understand, ie, control this! If my mind could do so, it would be God. My mind must worship the mystery of the Son of God who is the Son of Man! All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ (Colossians 2:3)!

Take the example of “spiritual fatherhood” or “ministry father”. There is truth in tension here! Let us see what happens if we emphasize one side over the other. If I mention Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha as well as Paul and Timothy, what do you think of? What would you teach? Most would teach the necessity of having a spiritual father or a spiritual mentor. And that would be half of the truth. However, neither Moses nor Elijah nor Paul had a spiritual father! Paul even uses that fact as part of the authentication of his message and apostleship! True! Read Galatians 1:15- 24! That is the other side of the truth.

Why would the necessity of a spiritual father be taught from these examples and not the other side? What would be the motivation of the heart? If I have a need to be in control and to have people submit to me, I would emphasize the need for a spiritual father. If I am a rebel and want to justify my independence I will teach that we do not need to submit to anyone other than God.

However, if I do not have an agenda, I will teach both sides. ‘The head of every man is Christ’, Paul declared to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 11:3. And yet in the same book (I Corinthians 4:14) Paul admonishes the Corinthians as his “beloved children”. Truth is living and always in tension! The “head of every man is Christ” and “submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God” are both true at the same time!

Our aim is to be direct. Some may say we are too direct. Being “nice” was never one of my goals in life and being past fifty years old, I am not about to adopt that as a new goal. “Nice” is not a fruit of the Spirit! And in being direct I have Paul as a mentor! In Galatians he asks those promoting circumcision to “go all the way and castrate themselves” (Galatians 5:12, The Message)! He is powerfully sarcastic when speaking to the Corinthians about their relationships with false apostles! Read II Corinthians 11 in the Message or the Amplified versions!

SCRIPTURES WHICH TEACH SPIRITUAL COVERING BY SUBMISSION TO DELGATED AUTHORITY?

SCRIPTURES WHICH TEACH SPIRITUAL COVERING TO BE JESUS ALONE?

I Timothy 2:5

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

The reformation was fought on that one! Do you need a “priest” between you and God to mediate God for you? Doctrinally most present day Christians would say a resounding “No!” to that question.

Why then do they allow themselves to be involved in a practice of that teaching? Why do they think they need to be submitted to a leader to be spiritually protected? Where does that come from? This comes from the Roman teaching that salvation is only possible if you are a part of the Roman institution and submitted to a priest.

The acceptance of this dogma by charismatic Christians is driven from both sides. The people do not want to take full responsibility for their relationship with Jesus and trust only Him for their spiritual security so they put another man in that place. The leaders find this dogma very useful for keeping people in their place, ie, in their ministry. In psycho babble this is called a codependent relationship!

If Jesus is your head what more spiritual protection do you need? Take your responsibility to be in Christ!

I John 2:24- 28,

“But the anointing which you have received from him abides in you and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”

John 16:13

“However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;”

In Christ, by the anointing, we are taught the truth. John says that this is the antidote to those who try to deceive. Yes, we have teachers but we have the Holy Spirit and the promise of Jesus that He will guide us into all truth.

Again codependent relationships are driven from both sides. One side needs to be needed and the other side does not want to take responsibility to hear God for themselves.

Your protection from spiritual deception is in the Christ and His anointing. Jesus declared that His sheep hear His voice (John 10:4)! That is your responsibility and your freedom!

I Peter 2:4- 10

“a holy priesthood”, “a royal priesthood”, “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”

Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ and not through any other

man! We are all “holy” and “royal” priests. There are no first or second class priests. Only one class!

Why would anyone diminish the doctrine of Christ to let anyone else on the planet take any of His function over your life?

Peter goes on through the rest of chapter two and then through to chapter five talking about how we are to relate to each other as royal priests. He talks about submission to civil authorities and to authorities in the work place, even if what they ask may be unjust. He talks about wives submitting to husbands and husbands to wives “so that their prayers would not be hindered”! His conclusion to this section is in verse 8 of chapter 3, “Finally, all of you be of one mind having compassion for one another, love as brothers...”

The rest of chapter 3 and 4 talk about submitting to circumstances where we may suffer due to the fact that we are a Christian. Chapter 5 talks of relationship to spiritual authority. The leaders are commanded to serve without being “lords over those entrusted” to them. The younger are exhorted to submit to the elders but all are commanded to “be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility.”

When someone asks, “Who are you submitted to?” it is often a loaded question! They have their “covering” and they think less of others who do not! My answer to such a person is, “I am submitted to you!” What an answer! What a reality! Thank you Robert Fitts for that insight! (From a book soon to be published, “Forty Trends...” www.robertfitts.com).

Hierarchical submission is not New Testament. There is one Master who is Jesus and we are all brothers. Hierarchical submission is an invention of the Roman/Pagan system. It came in when a pagan priesthood was imposed upon the people of God.

Religion is special people (priests), in a special place (temple), at a special time (religious times and days), doing special things (rituals) for the people which they are not allowed to do for themselves. This creates the power of the priesthood and saves the people from responsibility. That is the “bargain” of religion. You give me your freedom (and your money) and I will remove any sense of responsibility for your life or guilt for your sin. You will enjoy a life free of moral responsibility. Just belong to the institution. You will also go to hell since you do not know Jesus! But who said it was a good bargain!

This religious spirit is the same spirit which slaughtered multitudes who simply wanted to read the bible for themselves.

How much of this spiritual elitism has crept into the charismatic church?

Psalm 27

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Who shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalm 140:7

“Oh God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle.”

One should know that spiritual covering dogma is wrong simply because it is based in fear. This dogma says that your life is not spiritually protected, ie, that you are open for demonic influence and attack in your life if you are not submitted to someone over you in the religious pecking order.

The kingdom of God is energized by faith working through love. If I truly love people my responsibility as a leader is to press their face into Jesus. Or as Paul said in II Corinthians 11:2,

“present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”. That is our job! Apostles and prophets are to be foundational. Foundations are hidden. They hold up the rest of the building and push it into the sky. They are not the covering!

The kingdom of darkness is energized by fear working through hatred. If I have a motivation to control people, I fundamentally despise them. People were made for God. People were made for freedom. My motivation for sowing fear to control and to put myself in a place as a “covering” is really a fundamental hatred of people. I view them as something to be used to benefit my ministry, to run my programs, to serve my vision and generally, to be kept in their place for my benefit.

Psalm 105:39, Isaiah 4:5:

“For over all the glory will be there for a covering.”

This was the picture as God took the children of Israel out of Egypt. The cloud by day and the fire by night were their covering. His glory, His presence was their covering.

This is the picture as God creates over “every dwelling place of Mount Zion” the cloud by day and the fire by night of the covering of His glory.

Who is your covering? The glorious, eternal, almighty God Himself! His presence in cloud and fire. His glory manifested over my life. This is my Father's world! I dwell in His presence!

If you look to a man to do what God has reserved for himself to do, you will experience increasing fear. You will become more and more dependent upon that man and that ministry. You will more and more deny the doctrine of Christ! You will move more and more into a cult.

SCRIPTURES WHICH TEACH AGAINST SPIRITUAL COVERING?

Matthew 23:8- 12:

“Do not call anyone on earth your father for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.”

In Matthew 23 Jesus is speaking “Woe” after “Woe” over the religious leaders of His day. His instruction to His disciples is very simple- do not call yourselves “Rabbi”, “teacher” or “father” like they do for you have one Father, the Heavenly Father and you have one Teacher, the Christ. And besides, “You are all brethren.”

It does not get any simpler than that. However, we are so used to religious usage of these terms and we are so used to the denial of responsibility that we accept and use these terms for ourselves and our brothers. Jesus commanded us not to do this!

What about “do not call anyone on earth your father” do you not understand?

II Corinthians 1:24

“Not that we have dominion over your faith but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.”

Was Paul over the Corinthians in the Lord? Yes, he made an appeal to them as a father. But he is very clear that if he took a place of dominion, of covering, he would no longer be helping them to stand. He would be precipitating their fall.

SCRIPTURES WHICH ARE TWISTED TO TEACH SPIRITUAL COVERING?

Matthew 8:5:13, “I also am a man under authority”

The centurion recognized that Jesus was a man under authority, like himself, and therefore had authority. Correct observation. The centurion was under Caesar and Jesus was under God.

However, when many preach this they make a wrong application. They preach, that if you want to have authority, you must submit to a hierarchical structure, submit to me! Well, true enough, if you want to have authority from them in their structure.

But Jesus was not in any structure. He had authority because of His submission to God and that is the proper application of the scripture. That is the application used in Acts 4:19- they refused to submit to the Jewish council and remained faithful in their submission to God. The authority of God comes from submission to God. It does not come from submission to any man.

Psalm 91:1, “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

Some teach that the “shadow of the Almighty” is delegated authority and make the claim that the protection promised in the Psalm has to do with submission to such delegated authority.

However, Psalm 91 is one of the most powerful statements in all of the scripture of our protection because we are in God! Read it! Believe it! Enjoy it! Do not let anyone reduce the revelation of this Psalm!

WHAT ABOUT “PRAYER SHIELDS” AND “PRAYER COVERINGS”?

There are no scriptures that speak about this. None. No where. Not in the Old Testament and not in the New Testament. Not there!

What are the New Testament prayers about in the face of spiritual attack? They are prayers for boldness! See Acts 4:24- 31 and Ephesians 6:18- 20!

What are the New Testament prayers about in general? They are about revelation of who we are in Christ! That is the issue!

See Ephesians 1:15- 23! Why would you look to any man for protection and covering if you had any revelation at all of where you are in Christ above all principalities and powers?

What about Ephesians 3:14- 21? We do not need a man, we need revelation of the “power that works in us” that can do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”!

Check out Philippians 1:3- 11! The prayer is that our “love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment”. We need to know who we are and what we have in Christ!

Same story in Colossians 1:9- 11 and in I Thessalonians 3:11- 13 and in Philemon 1:4- 6.

Prayer does not get answered and prayer is not effective by a multiplier of people praying. Do you get those emails requesting you to send on the mail so that they will get one million people praying so that when they get the million praying the child will be healed from the cancer? That is not biblical faith or prayer! James tells us that “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” One righteous man is all that is required. One man in right relationship with God!

I am not more protected the more people that are praying for me. Where is that in the bible? The issue is whether or not I am in Christ and boldly obedient to Him no matter what my circumstances. The battle is a battle of faith- am I in Christ or do I believe my circumstances?

BALANCE PLEASE!

Yes, yes, yes, I know that many use the term “spiritual covering” and they do not mean any

Roman/Pagan Dogma. They mean right relationship with the body of Christ, with close friends that they love and are open to hear correction from. Yes and yes, again.

We need relationships which allow us to “speak the truth to one another in love” or we will not mature as Paul says in Ephesians 4:15. Submission is an attitude of the heart not a place in an hierarchical structure. In almost every place in scripture where submission to different authority structures is instructed you will also find the sweeping instruction to “submit to one another”. The brotherhood reality of the royal priesthood is never absent. We desperately need that reality!

However, the power hungry and ambitious will submit to the hierarchy simply because that is the way to power. They will submit to those over them but will not receive from anyone “beneath” them. They are experts in “proper order” but lack the heart of humility. They will do the hierarchy thing but will not do the “one another” thing! They depend heavily upon Old Testament example and terminology such as “the Man of God” complex (that is another story!) but lack insight into the New Testament reality of “all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28).

This gets even more foolish when one of these leaders “submits” themselves to another leader who lives thousands of kilometres away from them. And then uses that “submission” as part of his presentation to his people, “I am a submitted man. I am under authority.” Implication? “You must submit to me!”

Submission to someone across the world? What does that mean? Do they see how you live? And then no submission to the brothers close at hand because they are lower in the order! That is not a heart of humility. That is a heart of pride!

“Pride of life” or pride of position and place, is number one in the satanic trinity. Number two is “lust of the eyes” or materialism and wealth. Number three is the “lust of the flesh”. John Wimber called these three “the glory, the gold and the girls”!

Command and control structures are focused upon position, place, hierarchies and call that “proper order”. When loyalty to the structure, institution or a man takes a higher place than loyalty to the truth we have entered into the ethics of the mafia. Loyalty has a higher value than truth. This is the basic characteristic of a cult. All cults are ultimately concerned with power, money and sex.

Graham Cook says, “I have seen many eunuchs in the house of the Lord and very few fruitful sons” (A Divine Confrontation, page 99). Yes, amen! Men who are faithful to the meetings and to the programs! Men who are submitted. But men who have no faith to do anything for God! Some of the most faithful people have the least faith!

I have seen men who are totally loyal to a certain “spiritual house” to the point of disloyalty to the house which Jesus is building. The dogma of spiritual covering is part of the spiritual technology used to create such deception and to create eunuchs.

Jesus taught that we are all brothers.

Paul, Peter, John and James talked a lot about “one another” stuff. How do we do that?

Have you ever made a list of all the “one another” scriptures? That is a study!

Better yet- how do we do that?