

The Joy and Profit of Leading and Following God's Way

Hebrews 13:17b

In the first portion of Hebrews 13:17 we saw three principles of spiritual leading and following:

1. **Real leaders gently and lovingly persuade others toward a proper course of action.** Only Christ has authority, and any leader who "demands" based upon his or her "inherent" authority is not of Christ.
2. **Followers should "allow themselves to be persuaded."** The word *peitho* translated "obey" by many translations, is in the middle voice, present tense: (a) Don't close down; guard your heart so that no bitterness prevents listening to your guides. (b) Think; don't follow blindly. (c) Look to Christ.
3. **The goal of everyone is submission to Jesus Christ.** When conflict arises within churches, homes, and relationships, too many lose sight of this. Why should our focus be on submission (to Christ)?

"Let them do this with joy and not with grief (groaning), for this would be unprofitable for you."

I. It is important to *both* lead and follow properly.

The pronoun *them* could refer to either leaders or followers and really applies to both.

A. If the "them" in this text points to our spiritual guides or leaders ...

1. Then there is great joy when words from an encourager and instructor are heeded.
2. There is real agony in the soul when a guide sees his disciple refuse the Lordship of Christ.

B. If the "them" in this text points to those "who allow themselves to be persuaded" ...

1. Do it with joy, without groaning, for it is unprofitable to ignore Christ's Lordship in life.
2. A kingdom involves both a King and a domain; "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

II. It is *unprofitable* to live a life apart from Christ's Lordship.

If we don't lead with love and grace, and if we don't follow with spirit of submission to Christ, then it is unprofitable for both the leaders and followers. How is it unprofitable for Christ not to be Lord?

A. Your refusal to submit to Christ affects more than just you.

This is subtle, but worth noticing. When you refuse to submit to the call of Christ upon your life, you affect more people than just yourself. You affect your friends, your family, your leaders, and those you lead. There is a real sense that we will give an account for those we spiritually lead.

B. Your refusal to submit to Christ is described as "unprofitable."

This word literally means "without freedom" (*luo* - *loose*, is the root word). The freest, happiest person is the one who is in submission to Christ. Most people think it is just the opposite, but no.

1. Sin is by its very nature a "bondage maker." You become enslaved to it.
2. Sin is by its very nature an "oppressive agent." Because you were created to be a subject of Christ, when you live a life contrary to the will of your Maker, you find yourself worn down.
3. Sin is by its very nature a "death action." The wages of sin is death; death to relationships; death to reputation; death to real joy and happiness. Repent for the kingdom of God is here.

III. It is essential that everyone remember we are not another person's Holy Spirit.

Christ alone is our *archierus* (High Priest), or as we saw last time, "God's plenipotentiary." That means Christ alone is "invested with full power and authority." The High Priest is God's delegated authority. The high priest represents God to the people and the people to God. There is only ever one high priest and one true delegated authority and that is Christ and He lives forever (Heb. 7:24). **None of us may presume the role of Christ.** In your grieving over another, don't cross a boundary.