

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”

Acts 23:5

Paul, after having been falsely accused, was taken from the temple by a mob that wanted to kill him. Roman soldiers intervened and kept Paul bound until he could answer his accusers the following day. As the faithful man of God was allowed to give his defense before the religious counsel, the high priest took offense to Paul's words and ordered that Paul be smitten in the mouth. Without knowing the identity of the high priest, Paul reacted with strong words for the way he was being treated. When he was informed that the man was the high priest, Paul was quick to express his regret for his comment. He knew he had been wrong in his response and readily admitted it. Even though the high priest was wrong in the way he treated Paul, Paul did not feel free to treat the leader with a lack of respect.

This is a great lesson for us all. Because we are mistreated does not give us the right to retaliate. Paul was a very special servant of God. He, like few others, had been faithful

in obeying the Lord's will. If anyone deserved respect, it would have been him.

Perhaps no individual, with the exception of Christ Himself, would have such an impact on the human race. Through Paul's missionary work and the epistles that God wrote through him, multiplied millions would be influenced. Yet, he did not feel that

he had the right to show disrespect to Ananias. It may very well be that Paul was correct in his assessment of the high priest, but the manner in which he expressed it

was not what it should have been.

Sometimes people in places of responsibility or authority will make mistakes. When that happens, how should we respond? Does the fact that a leader has shown his humanity permit us to be disrespectful towards him? Paul did not think so. We certainly want leaders who are sincere and who seek to lead in the right direction, whether in the home, the church, on the job, or in the government. We must remember, however, that at their best, they are still human. It is unrealistic and unwise to expect perfection from any human, even the most sincere of them. When we see that we have overreacted or mistreated someone, like Paul, we must be willing to make it right.

Let's Pray

Dear heavenly father, thank you for your word today. I pray that this devotional has blessed the person reading this and that the Holy Spirit will continue to speak to his or her heart. I ask this in Jesus name. Amen