

Call to Obedience #229
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The fault-finding spirit is never satisfied.

"...they found fault."

By Reimar Schultze

"Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed, hands, they found fault" (Mark 7:1,2).

When the Pharisees saw that the disciples ate bread with unwashed hands, they found fault. In this article, we will consider some characteristics of the fault-finding spirit.

We find fault when we look for it. The Pharisees looked for faults in Jesus and his disciples. You generally only find what you are looking for. How often have you found something lost without looking for it? If you keep thinking about the things that are honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report (Ph. 4:8), how many faults will you see in people? This is why sanctified people will not find fault. They are not interested in faults. They live humble and broken lives at the foot of the cross.

The Pharisees took a three day journey by foot from Jerusalem to Galilee to find fault with Jesus and his disciples. What do you think they talked about those three days? Do you think the discussion was pleasing or grievous to the Lord?

What is the substance of our conversations? Is it about the faults of others? Are our words infected by the fault-finding spirit, or are they pleasing to the Lord: free of judgment, criticism, and complaints?

The fault-finding spirit is never satisfied. Solomon wrote, "...There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough" (Pr. 30:15b,16).

Could we also add a fifth line to this proverb: the fault-finding spirit is never satisfied?

When was the fault-finding spirit of the Pharisees satisfied? Was it when his disciples ate with unwashed hands, or did it continue until they had nailed him to the cross?

We can see why Jesus said to the Pharisees even before the crucifixion: "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Ma. 23:31,33).

The fault-finding spirit killed Jesus and the prophets; it has destroyed many pastors' ministries and driven others out of their churches. It has caused ministers' children to be lost or discouraged and pastors' wives to be crushed. It has broken up marriages and prevented revival for hundreds of years.

The fault-finding spirit is no respecter of persons. Once you hear a person find fault with another, be assured that the fault-finding spirit will not stop there. The fault-finding spirit has no brakes with which to stop itself. It has power but no brakes, nor constraints. It will jump from one person to another until it has judged and condemned them all.

If someone finds fault with another, they will eventually find fault with you. If someone finds fault with their pastor, they will find fault with the next pastor that comes along, with the next one, and the next. The fault-finding spirit knows nothing about stop signs.

The fault-finding spirit has an outward look. The fault-finding spirit lacks the capacity to look within at its own faults. The broken person looks within and, like the publican

who came to the temple to pray, says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Do you know what the Pharisee prayed at the same place? Do you really know what this man prayed who, along with others, likely put Jesus on the cross? "I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (see Lu. 18:9-14).

It was this spirit, such as was in this Pharisee, that killed Jesus and the prophets. It lacked the capacity to see its own weaknesses and faults; it could only see the faults of others, and it exalted itself above others. It says, "I thank God that I am not like other men," hence:

The fault-finding spirit is a judgmental spirit. The fault-finding spirit exalts itself above others, but the sanctified spirit esteems others better than itself (Ph. 2:3). The saint is far from the self-righteous spirit. Even though he knows that he is saved and many others are not, he also recognizes that for the light he has been given, he may be way below unconverted people because "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Lu. 12:48).

In contrast, the fault-finding spirit has put itself in the judgment seat. It has removed judgment out of the hands of God and has taken it unto itself.

The fault-finding spirit is a hypocritical spirit. Jesus said, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Ma. 7:3-5 NIV).

Every fault-finder is a hypocrite. Therefore, the hypocrites are unacceptable worshippers. Their worship is with their lips, but their hearts are far from God. Jesus responded to the accusations of the Pharisees against his disciples by saying, "Well hath [Isaiah] prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mk. 7:6,7).

So, how far is the heart of a fault-finder, of a hypocrite, from God? Is it a little ways or a long ways, or is it at a distance that is beyond measure?

With all the fault-finding in so many churches, how far are these churches from God? Is their worship, and are their tithes and sacrifices acceptable to God, or are they an abomination to the Lord? Have you ever considered these words of Isaiah?

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them" (Is. 1:13,14).

The fault-finding spirit blows everything out of proportion. The Pharisees could only see the "bad" of the disciples. They could not see that these men had forsaken all to follow Jesus, that they had a servant spirit, that they had a hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Moses, likewise, was accused because he had married an Ethiopian woman (Nu. 12:1ff). Aaron and Miriam could see nothing but black about Moses when he married this woman. They forgot how God had used Moses to courageously stand up against Pharaoh ten times over; they forgot that he had taken God's people out of Egypt; they forgot that God spoke to him as a man speaks to a man; they forgot that God gave the Law to him on Mt. Sinai; they forgot that it was Moses' intercession that had delivered Israel from being destroyed by God when they had made the golden calf. They forgot, they forgot, they forgot!

When a person with a fault-finding spirit sees a fault in someone else, that fault is greatly magnified, and all the good of that person is minimized or forgotten.

The fault-finding spirit has no capacity to hold to the good. In Mark 6, we read that when Jesus came back to his own country, his people, the Nazarenes, were astonished at

him. They were astonished at his wisdom and the mighty works done through him. Their first response was good, yet, they still said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him" (v. 3).

The hearts of these people were full of fault-finding, and so only for a moment could they see the good in Jesus. They lacked the capacity to keep the good, to hold onto the good in their hearts. They quickly were offended.

What is the capacity of the heart of a fault-finding person to hold, to treasure, to keep the good of other persons? Is it little? Is it great? Or is it zero?

Jesus said that "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Ma. 6:22,23).

What is the capacity of your heart to hold the good of your pastor, your husband, your wife, or your fellow Christian?

Because the people of Nazareth were offended, because they could not retain in their hearts the good that Jesus had done, the Scripture says that Jesus "did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Ma. 13:58).

How many sick ones could have been healed, how many discouraged ones could have been lifted in Nazareth had it not been for the fault-finding spirit? Because of the fault-finding spirit in our churches, what all are we missing in bodies being healed, souls being saved and sanctified, hearts being comforted, and prayers being answered? The demons in hell laugh every time someone in church finds fault.

The fault-finding spirit finds many faults that are "no-faults"! Jesus found no fault, nor did God find fault with the disciples' not following the tradition of the elders. All the faults the Pharisees ever found in Jesus and his apostles were "no-fault" faults--every one of them. God found no fault with Moses marrying the Ethiopian either. How much of what man considers faults are not faults in the eyes of God?

The fault-finding spirit must be slain out of us. If we have a fault-finding spirit, God cannot use us! We must be delivered from this awful spirit which is deeply embedded in the carnal nature. Here is the way of deliverance:

1. We must repent of our sins, ask Jesus to forgive us, and receive him as our Savior.
2. We must go on to sanctification. It is not only God's will that we be saved but that we be sanctified. For Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...."

The Corinthian Christians were carnal. Paul said to them "For ye are yet carnal..." (see 1 Co. 3:1-4). That means that they were not yet sanctified.

At conversion, all of our past sins are removed as far as the east is from the west. In sanctification, the carnal nature--the old man, original sin, the old Adam--is crucified and slain out of us. How can this be done, you ask? This is done by our denying Self second by second in order to obey every word and leading of the Holy Spirit as we follow the Lord Jesus (Lu. 9:23). It is through this process--denying Self, obeying and following Jesus, always doing the things pleasing in God's sight, with the help of Lord through his Holy Spirit and the blood--that we are cleansed of this old carnal nature and this dreadful, fault-finding spirit.

Dear friend, let us take the course of deliverance from this awful fault-finding spirit. With such a spirit, we cannot please God or be led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us be sanctified so that the fault-finding spirit will be replaced by a spirit of love and forgiveness, praise and thanksgiving. Amen!