

LOVE AND POWER

From the dawn of creation man has been obsessed with power. Cain killed his brother and build the world's first city. He was a man with power. Seven generations later Lamech, a descendant of Cain, married two wives and killed a man who wounded him. He said: **"If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold"** (Gen. 4:24) He obviously considered himself to be more powerful than Cain. Power became an integral part of all human government. Even David, the King of Israel, built and expanded his kingdom because he was more powerful than his enemies. His mighty men are listed in 2 Sam. 23. At the top of the list was Adino the Ezrite who had enough power to kill 800 men at one time.

The desire for power is also an integral part of our modern world. When an American spy plane was forced down by Communist China, it was a confrontation that involved power. Each side did everything possible to keep from being perceived as weak.

Sociologist Tony Campolo, tells the story of Willard Waller, one of the founders of modern sociology. Mr. Waller came from a broken home. His own marriage ended in divorce. He concluded that the struggle for power was an integral part of the family problems in his family. He analysed the situation and concluded that: "In any relationship, as power increases, love decreases, and as love increases power decreases". This inverse relationship between love and power is also known as the principle of least interest.

Almost everyone can relate to this truth. Let us suppose, for example, that a man falls madly in love with a young woman. He only cares for her and is willing to do anything to win her hand in marriage. The woman, on the other hand, has a number of boy friends and is not certain whom she wants to marry. Her lack of love for him places her in a position of power. She can dominate him because he loves her more than she loves him.

The theological implications of this principle are profound. Jesus came to earth to establish a kingdom, but His kingdom was not of this world. His kingdom would be built upon love, not earthly power. The greater our love, the less our power. Jesus emptied Himself of power and came to earth as a baby in the manger at Bethlehem. He was born to die. The shadow of the cross was over the manger of His birth. When His disciples sought for power He rebuked them and said: **"You know that the prices of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"** (Matt. 20:25-28).

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest. Jesus again admonished Peter not to use that kind of power. Jesus could have summoned twelve legions of angels to overpower His enemies, but He made a deliberate decision not to do so. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. His love for the world placed the world in a position of power. Jesus loved us so much that He permitted us to reject Him, abuse Him, and nail Him to a cross.

Napoleon Bonaparte was once the most powerful man on earth. He lost his power, however, and was exiled on the Island of St. Helena. He is supposed to have said: "Alexander the Great, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself all built kingdoms upon power and they have failed. Jesus Christ built His Kingdom upon love and is has never been destroyed". Touche! Power fails, but love never fails!

Scripture teaches that we are to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). He was God who emptied Himself of power. In His humility He found a different kind of power. He humbled Himself and God exalted Him. Like a tiny seed planted in the earth He discovered a new form of life that was more significant and beautiful. Paul referred to this as the "power of the resurrection" and mentioned it in association with His suffering (Phil. 3:10). Christians are to be known by love!

REMEMBER, POWER FAILS BUT LOVE NEVER FAILS!

