

'God Told Me' - Really?

RT Kendall warns us to beware of using God's name in vain



GOD'S NAME IS BROUGHT IN FOR SO MANY 'WORDS' THAT ARE NOT FROM HIM AT ALL

ONE OF THE HARDEST HABITS FOR SOME OF US TO BREAK IS SAYING, "THE LORD TOLD ME THIS" OR "HERE IS WHAT THE LORD SHOWED ME."

If you question whether this is truly a *bad* habit, I answer: yes. It is one of the worst claims being perpetrated in churches today and is almost certainly a violation of the third commandment: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exodus 20:7).

How do you misuse God's name? By making yourself look like God. That is at the bottom of our claims, "This is what the Lord told me." After all, we bring in him for one reason: to elevate our own credibility. It is not his name we are thinking of, it is our reputation. So if I can add the weight of God's name to what I say, it gives me authority and respectability.

I am not thinking of God's name and glory at all when I do this – I am thinking of my own.

Who makes this mistake? Probably, we all do, especially those who have a prophetic gift or aspire to intimacy with God. If they can say, "The Lord told me," we have no choice but to listen! After all, if it is God speaking, I must stand at attention. And if I tell you that God has revealed something to me, you had better give heed!

I am not thinking of the accuracy of such claims – at the moment. I am thinking of our *motives* in making the claims. I can tell you what *my* motive is if I tell you "God told me this." It is to make you respect what I say.

The thing is, if God *really* told me – since I am in a post-canonical age and not writing scripture, do I need to bring his name into it? In other words, if God himself has shown me something and I pass it along to you, would it not be just as true if I left his name out? My reason for claiming his authority is to elevate my own – in your eyes. Otherwise, I fear you would not listen to me.

There is no sign in north-west Arizona that says, "You are now looking at the Grand Canyon." When you see it, you know what it is. There are no substitutes or counterfeits when it comes to the Grand Canyon. It would be silly, not to mention that it would cheapen the entire aura, if there were signs reminding us

that we are actually looking at the Grand Canyon.

Therefore if I really have a word from the Lord, I can say it without mentioning his holy name. It will speak for itself. And if people don't recognise my authenticity because I don't bring in God's name, that is not my problem.

As for the accuracy of claims when people say, "The Lord told me this," that is quite another story. When you ponder the thousands of times people have made this claim already today – and then get to the bottom of whether it really was the Lord, the angels must be saying, "Really?" God's name is brought in for so many 'words' that are not from him at all.

Why do we quote people when we speak? It is to give ourselves a bit more credibility. Certainly that is why I quote scripture. And if I quote St Augustine or John Wesley, it is to make you feel that I have a greater measure of reliability on my side. But when I say, "The Lord told me this about this verse of scripture," I have misused his name. I have a perfect right to say "in my opinion this is what the scripture means," but if I say, "The Holy Spirit has revealed this to me about this scripture," I am not thinking of the Holy Spirit but my own credibility. It is misusing the spirit – indeed it is abusing his name.

Most of us do not like name-droppers. Why do we drop names? If I told you I know Oral Roberts or Billy Graham, or the Pope – who would I be trying to make look good? Not them. But when I drop *God's* name in my conversation, writing or preaching, I have in that moment violated a trust which must make the angels blush.

I am disappointed when a respected prophetic person says, "The Lord told me." Because it cheapens his stature and puts him on the level of all of us who want so much to believe we are hearing from God. We are afraid nobody will believe us so we name-drop God.

By the way, how would you feel if I told you "God told me to write this article?" Did he? You tell me.

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