

No Place for Arrogance

We are called to live humble lives. And when we do so, it puts us in the best position to point others to Christ. Arrogance, on the other hand, is not very winsome. It turns people away. In the passage that we are looking at today, Paul's discussion of Gentiles and Jews serves as a kind of case study for us about the influence we should have in the lives of others. In Paul's application, he makes it clear that there is no place for arrogance in the body of Christ. He urges us to put away arrogance and to live humble lives that help others get a picture of what a relationship with God is really like.

Read Romans 11:11-24

1. What sticks out to you in this passage?
2. How would you summarize the perspective that Paul wants the Gentile believers to have regarding the Jews?
3. How does Paul use the metaphors of the dough and the tree to articulate truths about the Jews and the Gentiles relationship to the Jews?
4. Why might Gentile believers in Paul's day feel superior to Jews?
5. What is Paul's argument for why there is no room for arrogance on the part of the Gentiles towards unbelieving Jews?

Steve said

In light of the example we've seen in Romans 11, I want us to think about the impact of walking in humility. We are in a situation very much analogous to the Gentiles in Rome who had to put away all arrogance/pride toward unbelieving Jews. If we are going to be "the light of the world" there is no place for arrogance toward those who don't yet believe. There is no place for a sense of entitlement whereby we think, "I deserve the blessings of God. . . but others don't. . ."

6. Are there any groups of people that you can tend to feel arrogant towards in the sense that you think, "I doubt God is going to save them"? If so, whom and why?

7. How might arrogance show up in your thoughts/feelings/actions towards such people at times?

Steve said:

When it comes to our influence in the lives of others, humility is our greatest friend. If we are genuinely humble people, we represent Christ accurately. If we are humble people, we can simply be ourselves around people who need Christ. Instead of arrogance and superiority, we will show people the same graciousness that God has shown us.

8. Why is humility so important in being able to represent Christ accurately?

Steve said:

Paul had this attitude when he wrote, "I am what I am by the grace of God" (1 Corinthians 15). In 1 Timothy 1 Paul wrote, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving of full acceptance: Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am the foremost of all." Paul wasn't pretending to be someone worse than he was. No, in humility Paul understood that his sin was what compelled Jesus to go to the cross. From that stance of humility he shared Christ with others.

9. How can staying clear about our own need for a Savior help us walk in humility?