



Meddling is a Hindrance

There's no need to remind you we are in a spiritual battle and that we need to know how to fight. Interestingly, our foremost weapon is our *exousia* (spiritual authority), not “the sword of the Spirit” or “the word of God”. If we can't use our *exousia*, we are easy pickings for our enemy.

Like busybodies, meddlers can't operate properly in spiritual authority because their source of authority is themselves, not a higher spiritual authority.

Stop Telling Others What To Do

1 Peter 4:15 (NKJV) – *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.*

The word translated ‘busybody’ here is *allogriepiskopos* (Gk). It simply means: Being 'another person's overseer' without the authority to do so. Here's the information from Vine's dictionary of Greek words:

C — ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος (Strong's #244 — Noun Masculine — allogriepiskopos) From allogrios, "belonging to another person", and episkopos "an overseer", translated "busybody" in the AV¹ of 1 Peter 4:15, "meddler", RV², was a legal term for a charge brought against Christians as being hostile to civilized society, their purpose being to make Gentiles conform to Christian standards. Some explain it as a pryer into others' affairs. See MEDDLER.³

It is not our place to interest ourselves in controlling or impacting other people's lives UNLESS we have the authority to do so. For example: Parents have authority to oversee children, employers have authority to oversee employees, and teachers have authority to oversee students. However, we are not allowed to oversee others even if we are a teacher, an employer or parent, and the others are not under our approved supervision. Each of us is primarily responsible for ourselves, and we will stand before God on the day of Judgement with that firmly in place. **Other people are responsible for their lives, not us.**

Some oversight-like actions we can undertake which are inappropriate when we are not authorised are:

1. Correcting those we don't have authority to correct
2. Entering places we have no authority to access
3. Commenting on what others are doing because we consider our way is right and theirs wrong
4. Pushing a 'barrow' to bring change in areas outside of sound doctrine
5. Coaching/correcting teacher's doctrine without the courtesy to ask

The other side of *allogriepiskopos* is wanting to, or trying to, control society by demanding that it functions your way. Such is the activity of militant Christians, and their counterparts who whinge about society. This is not on. Remember: *allogriepiskopos* was “a legal term for a charge brought against Christians as being hostile to civilized society, their purpose being to make Gentiles conform to Christian standards.”

Recent Example

1 – AV = KJV

2 – RV = RSV

3 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words [public domain] (www.study-light.org/dictionaries/ved/b/busybody.html)



In march 2017 a group of Catholic Worker Movement activists from Ocean View in Queensland took down a sword from a cross⁴ at the Toowong war memorial.⁵ These Christian activists had no concern for the property of others when they beat the bronze sword into a hoe. Their concern was for the sacrilege the sword added to the sacred cross.



During their court case their leader made statements such as:⁶

1. “We had no desire to damage war memorials, it was just the sword on the cross that we felt strongly about.”
2. “We had higher permission than any of those to remove it. Hopefully, there was a higher power directing me.”
3. He said the Bible's book of Isaiah opposed war and asked Christians “to turn swords into ploughshares”.
4. “We are trying to get the message out to Christians that we should not be supporting war.”
5. He said he believed people were sick of “religion being used to justify violence”.

A Roman Catholic priest who testified in support of the vandals said about the sword and the cross that “Putting them together is like putting a swastika on a synagogue”. He disagreed with the police prosecutor who said that the democratically-elected majority see a sword as a symbol of strength. The priest stated, “People elected Hitler. The mob can be wrong”.

Conclusion

There’s a fine line between correcting a fellow believer where they are in unrighteous error⁷ and speaking to them as if you were their overseer. We must discern and think before we speak so that we don’t move into pseudo oversight which is very easy to do.

We so easily assume the role of overseer of others because we do it in authorised situations in our normal lives, and we fail to check ourselves before we start inappropriately doing it. This is part of what fits under what Paul calls ‘disorderly conduct’⁸.

The same is true of confessing sins to one another.⁹ Confession doesn’t give the hearer the right to counsel the confessor unless it is asked for. We have the propensity to always want to advise others – some more than others. We can quickly speak 'pearls of wisdom' to others that don't want to hear it, just because we are too self-centred to consider the wishes of others and our roles in the Kingdom.

IMPORTANT: If we can’t cease our pseudo overseeing, we can’t successfully move in spiritual authority because spiritual authority requires self-control.

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4 – The war memorial Cross looked something like this one

(PHOTO: By Calvin Teo - Own work., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1428081>)

5 – www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/christian-tells-court-he-had-higher-permission-to-remove-sword-from-toowong-memorial-20170719-gxe98s.html

6 – Taken from the newspaper article

7 – 1 John 5:16

8 – 2 Corinthians 12:20

9 – James 5:16