



False Oversight

Paul wrote, “Let none of you suffer as a busybody in other people’s matters”¹. Well, that’s the way most English translations have it. The Easy-to-Read Version has it more accurately translated:

1 Peter 4:15 (ERV) – *You may suffer, but don’t let it be because you murder, steal, make trouble, or try to control other people’s lives.*

The Greek word used in this verse does not really mean ‘busybody’ or ‘meddler’ – that’s a watered-down version of the word. The Greek word is *allotriepiskopos* and is derived from (i.e. its etymology): *allos* meaning ‘another person’ and *episkopos* meaning ‘overseer’.² Therefore, the true meaning of the word *allotriepiskopos* is ‘another person’s overseer’.

Historically the word was used to identify someone who was impinging on the personal life of another, so that they had unwarranted influence that bordered on control at some level or another.

Genuine oversight, however, is essential for life in society. For example:

1. Kings & governments oversee nations – This is necessary for the nation to have coherence and direction. In republics and under democracy, this only relates to the affairs of the nation as a whole.
2. Boards oversee companies – This is necessary to keep the company on track with its stated vision and goals. Without it there is a strong propensity for CEOs and managers to drift the organisation down a path of their own choosing.
3. Bosses oversee workers in business and industry – This is necessary to achieve the output of the organisation and to ensure that those being paid are fulfilling their employment contract. Without this, most employees would follow the easy way, or in their laziness, collect wages without full commitment to their own productivity.
4. Teachers oversee school children – This is necessary to ensure that children are educated to the level their government registration specifies. Without it, most children would play rather than commit themselves to high academic achievement.

In using this word *allotriepiskopos* in the quoted verse, Peter is not overriding the need for genuine oversight, he’s speaking against false oversight.

Genuine oversight occurs in, and is essential to, a number of situations among believers. For example:

1. Parents oversee their children – They have a God-given right to raise their children to be godly, decent, and productive citizens.
2. Husbands oversee their wives – The husband (*Adam*) has full responsibility over his wife (*Ezer*). See my series on ‘Men & Women in the Kingdom’³ for the full story here.
3. Elders oversee believers in a local *ekklesia* – This was initiated by Paul in the Gentile towns, so it can’t be a product of religion.
4. Apostles oversee local *ekklesia* – The Jerusalem council operated this way.
5. Spiritual fathers oversee spiritual sons – This is a voluntary arrangement and is only carried out to the level the ‘son’ permits the ‘father’ to conduct the oversight.

1 – 1 Peter 4:15

2 – Strong’s Greek Lexicon ([www.eliyah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex="+allotriepiskopos](http://www.eliyah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex=))

3 – canberraforerunners.org/?page_id=4904



So what does ‘another person’s overseer’ look like today, when viewed in the negative Greek sense? Here are some tell-tail signs of it in operation:

1. Telling others what to do all the time.
2. Giving advice everywhere, to everyone.
3. Wanting to solve everyone’s problems without being asked.
4. Church leaders interfering in member’s lives.
5. Christian’s habitually correcting the theology of others, wherever they find themselves.
6. Bible study leaders strongly correcting the theology of attendees.
7. School teachers telling adults what to do when they’re outside of school and when they aren’t their wards in any respect.
8. School board members volunteering to work at school, but operating like an executive while there.
9. Bosses domineering people outside of the workplace.
10. Grandparents interfering in the lives of their children and grandchildren without being asked.
11. Older people criticising younger people, to their face, when anything they do are not done to a particular standard.
12. Christians being hostile to secular society, wanting to make it conform to Christian standards, whether forcefully by demonstration or by their spoken word.⁴

Why do I raise this topic in a series on spiritual authority? Simple. Anyone who operates in *allotriepiskopos* or any of it’s more minor functions (like those listed above) are operating in their own authority and do not respect the authority of others. Therefore, they will not function properly in spiritual authority, or they will abuse it to the detriment of themselves and others.

Spiritual authority is powerful and so needs to be handled properly. Operating in any way, shape or form to usurp the authority of others is a recipe for disaster. Not only that, but the associated lack of humility of pseudo-overseers negates them from being given the full operational power of Heaven’s spiritual authority by our King. If they do use it at a high level, watch out!

If you operate as a false overseer at any level, stop it! If you don’t, there are spiritual consequences that you will not be able to avoid.

Laurence

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4 – This was the legal use of *allotriepiskopos* in NT times. (www.studylight.org/dictionaries/ved/b/busybody.html)