

Connect Together

What does "the best defense is a good offense" mean? How can this strategy backfire?

Lesson Verses - Matthew 21:23-27 (CSB)

23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did John’s baptism come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” They discussed it among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we’re afraid of the crowd, because everyone considers John to be a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Study & Apply

1. The chief priests and the elders are trying to discredit Jesus' authority so that the people are no longer compelled to follow Him.

    a. Why is it that Jesus does not simply answer the question directly? Why is their answer further confirmation of their distance from God? (Matthew 9:4; Matthew 22:18; Luke 11:17; Genesis 6:5;)

    b. Instead of directly answering them, how does Jesus' question to their question actually show patience and minister to them and how do we know he wants them to see the truth? (James 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; John 3:6, 16)

APPLY: How can we come under the influence of the Holy Spirit, our Counselor, today? What are some ways you are doing that in your faith?

2. Notice the problems of the chief priests and elders: they fear man over the power and authority of God. The last time we studied this, we learned that they were lacking humility in their life and therefore could not see Jesus for who He is.

    a. What are they basing their position on in order to reject Jesus? In what confidence are they able to reject Jesus? (John 5:39; John 7:52; Ecclesiastes 12:11-12)

APPLY: How can we be sure that we remain sensitive to Biblical truth and teaching without developing pride that clouds our minds? What is the approach to come to the Word and how does that help? (2 Peter 3:18; Ecclesiastes 7:25; Proverbs 1:7; Job 28:28)

Discuss & Share

Can you think of anyone that you would have a hard time saying "no" to? What about your relationship with them makes it difficult to refuse their requests? What are ways to deal with such people in Christlikeness?

Grow & Minister

Minister to one another through sharing specific prayer requests.