



May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Galatians 6:14

Swagger

In the early 1990's Saturday Night Live aired a series of skits called "Daily Affirmation with Stuart Smalley." Stuart Smalley, the lead character in the skit, would share daily catchphrases which would try to replace "stinkin' thinkin'" with self-help psychobabble. One of the most famous was "*I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and doggone it, people like me.*" In the skit, he was searching for a way to feel good about himself and to help others to do the same.

We walk into our day and almost immediately we feel judged. We walk into a classroom and classmates and friends judge our appearance—our clothes, our hair, our mannerisms—everything about us. We sit down to do our work, and we are judged based on our performance on that particular assignment or project. Our coaches judge us based on practice and game performance. Every move we make matters and counts in their book. Even our parents and family make judgment calls about us based on our success in school, on the field, in the workplace, and with our friends.

It is almost as if on a daily basis we walk into a courtroom of human opinion. And then we walk into God's courtroom and find that we're not walking in line with the Spirit as God's word has taught us to. We're not fighting that battle well at all. In our life, where are those "fruits of the Spirit" the Bible talks about? This is an oppressive and scary place to live.

But in view of this, notice the boast that the apostle Paul makes! He wasn't walking with swagger because of what other people said or thought about him. He wasn't walking with his head held high because of how well he performed on his missionary journeys. Paul had already left those human courtrooms. He had walked out of those courtrooms with a verdict from Jesus and his cross: NOT GUILTY! FORGIVEN! LOVED! PERFECT! In God's courtroom Paul was in the clear.

There is no goofy psychobabble that will help you escape from the courtrooms of human opinion and no amount of positive self-talk will justify you in God's courtroom. Only the cross of Jesus sets you free. Only the cross of Jesus declares you not guilty. And that court has already adjourned and the verdict is in: For Jesus' sake you are NOT GUILTY! You are FORGIVEN! You are LOVED!

Walk with some swagger because of his cross and your justification.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, your cross is everything for me. It means that my sins are forgiven. It means that my debt has been paid. It means that I am not guilty. It means that court is no longer in session. Help this be my confidence today as I walk with a swagger that comes from you. Amen.