



Ministerial Ethics

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A Global Association of Theological Studies Publication

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Foreword

This resource resulted from bringing together the writings of three individuals: K.A. Prempeh, Terry Baughman, and John E. Klemm. It has been a joy to work with these three men and see this project come together. It is our prayer that this book will bless many Bible school students and those who read these lessons. In an age where many focus on bigger and better at all cost, it is refreshing to read and be reminded of the value and benefits of spiritual leaders who practice ministerial ethics.

Serving with joy,

Nick Sisco
GATS Representative, Africa Region

A Brief Overview of the Authors...

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Lesson 1

An Overview

KEY VERSES

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13, NKJV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Value the importance of the Christian ministry
- Define *ethics* and *ministerial ethics*
- Recognize the differences in the gifts and ministry of God's ministers
- Know that unhealthy situations can occur between ministers because of the differences in their gifts and ministry
- Realize why ministerial ethics is needed

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

Webster's dictionary defines *ethics* as (1) the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment; (2) the system or code of morals of a particular person, religion, group, or profession.

The *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines *ethics* as a system of moral principles, rules of conduct.

Ministerial ethics, therefore, means a system of moral principles, rules of conduct, or standards of conduct and moral judgment for ministers. In other words, ministerial ethics deals with the things ministers should do and the things ministers should not do.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

The Christian ministry is ordained by God for a special purpose in His kingdom (Exodus 40:12-15; I Peter 2:5, 9; John 15:16). The ministry consists of a family of people called by God for special service to Christ and His flock.

The ministry as ordained by God is

1. The noblest work on earth. No profession can compare to it
2. Aimed at nurturing the flock and leading them to win other lost souls to Christ (Jeremiah 23:4; John 21:15-17)
3. Spiritual and holy (John 4:24; I Peter 1:16)
4. Leading in the warfare against the devil and his host of demons (Ephesians 6:12)

DIFFERENCES OF MINISTERS AND THEIR MINISTRIES

Although ministers must be spiritual, they should remember that they are also human. Every human grouping, including the ministry, is made up of individuals with different characteristics. Each of them thinks, feels, and responds to certain situations in different ways. Their understanding, needs, desires, likes, and dislikes differ from person to person.

Among ministers, God gives different ministries and spiritual gifts. Since they all function in different ways according to their natural temperaments, and ministries, and spiritual gifts, diversity is bound to be in the lives of ministers.

Evangelists do not function like pastors. Prophets exercise their ministries in a way that is different from teachers and apostles. Each individual conducts his or her ministry in a unique manner.

These differences are recognized by the Lord in Scripture (Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:12-26). But in some situations, this diversity tends to breed misunderstandings and even conflict, as it happened in the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 3:3-9). This unhealthy situation must be checked to preserve the unity of the ministry and the church. Some form of control must be put on ministers to enable them to become unified and effective.

ETHICS—THE TOOL TO CONTROL MINISTERIAL DIFFERENCES

To avoid conflict among individual patterns of ministry, some rules of conduct, a system of moral principles or standards of conduct and moral judgment that ministers agree upon and adhere to, must be in place. These rules must be seen as the standard pattern or style of the ministry that each one judges himself or herself by. Ministerial ethics serves as a guide and must be allowed to govern the conduct of everyone in the ministry.

In this textbook, ministerial ethics will be divided into two parts:

1. Personal/professional ethics: lessons 1-13
2. Pastoral ethics: lessons 14-17

BENEFITS OF MINISTERIAL ETHICS

Ministerial ethics is very important for many reasons. As a system:

1. It organizes the ministers into a team.
2. It unites the efforts of ministers into productive activities.
3. It helps to achieve the objectives and goals of the ministry.
4. It helps ministers to concentrate on achieving the purpose of the church.
5. The presence of the Holy Spirit manifests in the ministry and produces signs and wonders, as unity becomes the hallmark of the ministry.
6. The ministry and the church become strong and expanding.

7. Attention is focused on progress instead of conflicts.
8. Trust, openness, and love become the characteristics of the ministry.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the meaning of *ethics*?

2. In simple terms, define *ministerial ethics*.

3. Who ordained the Christian ministry? Give one Scripture reference to support your view.

4. Ministers are both _____ and _____.

5. What is the purpose of the Christian ministry?

6. Why does God give different gifts and ministries to His ministers?

7. What Scripture verses recognize the differences in the gifts and ministry of God's ministers?

8. What unhealthy situation occurs sometimes among ministers because of the differences in their gifts and ministry?

9. How can these unhealthy situations be avoided?

10. For our study, in what parts would ministerial ethics be divided?

11. List five reasons why ministerial ethics is important.

- A.

- B.

- C.

- D.

- E.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 2

Ministers' Character Traits

KEY VERSES

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23, NKJV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *character*
- Name the fruit of the Spirit
- Explain the meaning of the individual manifestation of the fruit
- Understand the role of a shepherd in relationship to ministry
- Recognize how character influences respect or lack thereof

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

A person's character is defined as the mental or moral qualities of a person that make him or her different from others.

As ministers, we are the shepherds and the light of the flock of Christ. We are also the examples of spiritual life for the flock we serve. In view of our position, ministers must exhibit positive character traits in our relationships with God, fellow ministers, and the people we deal with.

The character of ministers can either make or mar their ministry. For ministers to be trusted, respected, and accepted by other ministers and members, they need to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), which is naturally produced from a Spirit-filled life. In all areas of activities—spiritual, social, financial, and physical—they must demonstrate sincerity, honesty, faithfulness, and humility as they relate to God, other ministers, and people.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1. **LOVE:** Love is the greatest power in the world (I Corinthians 13:13). Ministers must possess it in great measure. Love unites and comforts. Take love away from the ministry, and you will find conflict, hopelessness, lack of interest, and disunity. Love is beautifully described in I Corinthians 13:4-8. God commands us to love Him, our neighbors, and even our enemies. Only love will unite ministers and give meaning to the ministry.
2. **JOY:** Joy follows love. Where there is love, there is joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Paul encouraged us to rejoice always (Philippians 4:4). As we rejoice in the Lord, let us also bring that same rejoicing into the lives of others.
3. **PEACE:** Paul exhorted that as much as we possibly can, we should live in peace with all men (Romans 12:18). Peace is one virtue all men are looking for in this world of troubles. As ministers, we must be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) rather than troublemakers.
4. **LONGSUFFERING:** God, the Chief Shepherd, is longsuffering, and we must be the same. Ministers who are longsuffering are patient and can endure the trials and temptations of ministry. Longsuffering ministers will be able to control themselves and win the respect and acceptance of people. Jesus exhorted all His disciples to be longsuffering (Luke 21:19).

5. **GENTLENESS:** Gentleness is a virtue all ministers must incorporate into their life. Without gentleness, ministers can get into problems with other ministers and bring the ministry into reproach.
6. **GOODNESS:** All ministers are expected to be good to other ministers and to all people. God Himself is good and His ministers must be no less. The goodness of ministers will enhance their relationship with fellow ministers.
7. **FAITH:** Faith is one virtue that is indispensable to ministers. Ministers full of faith cannot be swayed by the difficulties encountered in ministry. With faith, they will be able to inspire other ministers and the brethren.
8. **MEEKNESS:** Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). Ministers who are meek will be able to relate in harmony with other ministers. Meekness speaks of submissiveness. It is not weakness; meekness is controlled strength.
9. **TEMPERANCE:** Temperance means self-control. Ministers must be the best example of people who can control themselves. The ministry is full of possibilities of getting into the extremes, but the temperance of ministers will let them stay on course.

OTHER IMPORTANT VIRTUES

Other virtues that ministers must personally develop and exhibit in their ministry are:

- **SINCERITY:** Sincere ministers are appreciated by everyone under their ministry. In their relationships with other people, they will win their trust and faith. Their actions reflect their real thoughts and feelings.
- **HONESTY:** Ministers that are honest can be trusted with finances. In business and other activities, they can be expected to be faithful.
- **SEPARATION AND HOLINESS:** Ministers are people separated or set apart for ministry. Their lives ought to conform to a life of holiness. In

all respects, ministers must be holy and uphold the dignity of the ministry.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Define a person's character.

2. As shepherds, what two things do ministers represent to the flock of Christ?
A. _____
B. _____

3. What should ministers demonstrate as a result of their position as shepherds, and to whom should this virtue be exhibited?

4. In what two ways could a minister's character affect his or her ministry?
A. _____
B. _____

5. For ministers to be trusted and respected by their flock, what should they reveal in their lives?

6. How would the qualities described as the fruit of the Spirit together enhance the ministry of a man or woman of God?

7. List the nine gifts of the Spirit as mentioned in I Corinthians 12.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
 - F. _____
 - G. _____
 - H. _____
 - I. _____
8. List three manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit and explain how they can make a minister more effective in his or her ministry.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
9. Which quality of the nine fruit of the Spirit eventually becomes the embodiment of the rest?
- _____
10. What are other virtues that a minister should develop in addition to the fruit of the Spirit?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 3

Ministers and Clothing

KEY VERSES

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2, NIV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *fashion*
- Show biblical standards for dress
- Understand that how people dress influences other people's opinions about them
- Recognize the need for conservatism in one's dress
- Relate the role of modesty to dress

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION—THE CHANGING STANDARDS OF THE WORLD

The world is continually changing in all respects. Very few situations remain the same. No permanent standards for the world seem to exist. The rapid change in the manner things are done has been called “fashion.” People who do not move with the changing times are called “unfashionable.”

The question that must be asked is “Do ministers of God have to move with the world and be accepted as fashionable?” Paul answered the question this way: “And be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2) “for the fashion of this world passeth away” (I Corinthians 7:31). John also added to Paul’s answers in this manner: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (I John 2:15).

Ministers must be examples that do not move with the times of the world, regardless of the world calling them old fashioned and out of date. We should do our best to be current in our dress but must not compromise God’s Word and dress inappropriately just to receive approval from the world. We have standards, and these must be our landmarks.

OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE MINISTER

The outward appearance of ministers indicates their total personality. The kind of clothes they wear, the manner in which they keep their face, and the style of their hair all add to or detract from their dignity. By their general appearance, ministers can easily be identified with the church or institution they belong to.

Ministers, as representatives of the Lord Jesus and His church, must be identified by their dress and their general outward appearance. As people called unto holiness, ministers must be separated from the world by the manner they dress and appear to the public. Modesty is the mark of the minister and it should reflect in their attire. Each culture has an acceptable dress code within their church organization that is recognized as appropriate and, more important, is supported with Scripture.

Paul gave instructions to ladies in I Timothy 2:9–10 and likewise Peter in I Peter 3:3–4; nevertheless, the principles outlined here also apply to men.

Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” For example, ministers should avoid wearing shorts in public as

this could be considered immodest and affect how they are viewed as spiritual leaders.

The same idea of moderation and temperance has many other applications. For example, ministers may receive recognition from their brethren and the public because of the style or price tag of their shoes or suits. Why should ministers be ineffective in their leadership roles because they are considered worldly by the kind of shoes and suits they wear? Ministers must be moderate, not extravagant.

THE HAIR

The male minister can do no less than apply to his hair the instructions of Paul in I Corinthians 11:14. Men ought to trim their hair as befitting gentlemen. Women should never cut their hair since it is their covering and glory before the Lord and His angels (I Corinthians 11:15).

WHY DRESS AT ALL?

The purpose of clothing is first and foremost to cover our nakedness (Genesis 3:8-10, 21). For the sake of fashion, worldly people have downplayed the importance of covering their nakedness. Women expose their thighs and chests and men do the same with no reservation or concern with morality. Ministers must remember that modesty in dress is the biblical standard.

Adornment has become misunderstood and misused by modern generations. Makeup and jewelry have stood between them and spirituality. Ministers should refrain from makeup and jewelry because these could especially nullify their ministry.

CONCLUSION

The guiding principles for ministers in their dress are cleanliness and modesty with elegance and orderliness. The standards for ministers regarding their clothing should not be affected by the world's standards because they are people separated unto the Lord, and the Lord is unchangeable.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What term is given to the world's changing standards?

2. What term is applied to people who don't follow the world's standards?

3. The world is continually changing. Must ministers of God change with the world?

4. In what verse of Scripture in Romans did Paul admonish Christians not to conform to the world?

5. What becomes a pointer to a person's total personality?

6. What single word best describes the manner in which ministers should dress?

7. As a representative of Jesus Christ, what main thing in a minister's outward appearance can identify him or her as such?

8. What is the basic purpose of clothing?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 4

Ministers as Stewards

KEY VERSES

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (I Corinthians 4:1-2)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *steward* and *stewardship*
- Grasp the connection between tithing and stewardship
- Recognize the necessity of faithfulness in ministry
- Understand spiritual authority in the lives of ministers
- Realize the importance of accountability in stewardship

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

Stewardship is the management of another person's property. Ministers are God's stewards. They manage His spiritual and material estate, including the tithes, as they exercise the spiritual gifts and ministry God has entrusted to them. Managing God's property also carries with it the idea of responsibility, authority,

and accountability. It is important for ministers to realize that as stewards, they have responsibility toward the church with its finances and property. With this responsibility, they also have some authority delegated to them by God over the church and its functions. However, God has appointed a day when all stewards, including ministers, will give account of themselves regarding how they managed the church of God.

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITY

In his farewell address, Paul admonished the elders of Ephesus to nurture the church of God as stewards: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). In his exhortation, Peter also reminded elders of their general responsibility toward the church and the reward they would have if they discharged their duties well. He said:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (I Peter 5:2-4)

In delegating ministerial responsibility to ministers, God ensured that every responsibility had with it a specific ministry and spiritual gifts. Without a well-defined ministry and spiritual gifts, it would be difficult to assign a responsibility to ministers where they would be most effective in the church. For example, a minister who is a pastor would be assigned pastoral responsibilities to enable him to exercise his or her spiritual gifts toward the growth of the church. Teachers, evangelists, and prophets who exhibit clear traits of those ministries would be placed in responsibilities where they would be able to function effectively.

The most important factor in the ministry is not where ministers are placed, but how effectively they discharge their responsibilities.

It is unfortunate that these days we are witnessing an upsurge of ministers trying to be men-pleasers. Paul said, "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). Ministers who are conscious of their steward status lead the members with honesty, love, loyalty, and humility. They

allow the principles of the Word of God to guide their ministry. Their chief aim becomes pleasing the Lord by doing His will.

MINISTERS' AUTHORITY

Every Christian believer who has the Holy Ghost is vested with a measure of spiritual authority over the devil. In Luke 10:19, Jesus delegated spiritual authority to believers. In addition to this, ministers have some authority over the church that enables them to direct the finances and utilize the technical and material resources for growth and expansion. They also have vested authority to discipline wayward members and to ensure proper control of the flock of God.

Regarding the resources of the church, especially the tithes and offerings, many ministers have misused their authority to direct them toward their self-interests. In their dealings with the members, they tend to be authoritarian and manipulative, which is contrary to the Word of God. Peter warned the elders not to be "lords over God's heritage" (I Peter 5:3).

Ministers should use their delegated authority first to serve the interest of the church, with the understanding that they are stewards of God and God owns the church. Consider Jesus' instruction in the exercise of ministerial authority, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever shall be great among you, shall be your minister" (Mark 10:42-43).

MINISTERS' ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is almost becoming a neglected word in the responsibility and exercise of authority by ministers. Failure to account for the finances (tithes and offerings) and projects to the community of faith (the church) is a regular occurrence. No wonder fundraising programs are often met with lack of interest and cooperation.

Ministers' integrity, trust, and respect can be achieved if they allow openness to characterize their management of church finances. As stewards of God, it behooves every minister to do his or her best to keep the souls under his or her care so that none of them would be lost "except the son of perdition" (John

17:12). In the same vein, every property that belongs to the church must be well accounted for.

Apart from the accountability ministers have toward the church, they also must give account of themselves to God concerning their spiritual gifts and ministry. Matthew 25:14–30 gives a clear picture of how God will require ministers someday to give account of how they used the talents He gave to each of them. To the Romans Paul said, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

CONCLUSION

As stewards, it is important for ministers to examine the level to which their responsibility, authority, and accountability reaches in the church organization. As they perform their functions in various capacities, ministers should use their spiritual and material resources to promote the interest of the church. They should manage these resources as stewards whose one desire is to please their Lord. With this guiding principle, they will be able to lead the church in the power of the Holy Ghost. Paul was a shining example of a minister who ended his ministry with this assurance. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (II Timothy 4:7).

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the meaning of *stewardship*?

2. What do ministers manage as stewards of God?

3. What three ideas go with managing God's property?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

4. What advice did Paul give the Ephesian elders in his farewell address in Acts 20:28?

5. In delegating ministerial responsibility to ministers, what did God ensure that each responsibility should have in addition?

6. What is the most important factor in the ministry of ministers if it is not where they are placed?

7. What is the increasing problem of ministers in their motives as they minister to people?

8. What gives every believer spiritual authority over the devil?

9. In Mark 10:43, what did Jesus say the great ones shall be among believers?

10. What verse of Scripture in Romans mentions the accountability of believers before God someday?

11. How should ministers use their spiritual and material resources for the church?

12. According to II Timothy 4:7, what three things did Paul accomplish in his ministry before his death?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Lesson 5

Ministers and Money

KEY VERSE

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (I Timothy 6:10)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Explain financial accountability
- Know the guidelines for successful financial management
- Understand the role of integrity in financial management
- Comprehend the necessity of personal financial success
- Realize what two things are the result of demonstrating responsibility in areas of personal finance

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and

follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
(I Timothy 6:10-11)

Integrity in personal finance is vitally important for all Christians, but especially for ministers. A lack of integrity regarding financial responsibility holds the potential for a lasting reproach on an individual's character, the church, the ministry, and Christianity in general. Responsibility in areas of personal finance will engender respect and cultivate a positive reputation in the eyes of the community and with other business associates.

Because of financial mismanagement, some loan officers are warned against lending money to churches or preachers. While many members of the clergy are conscientious and honest, too many failures of Christian leaders warrant such a dismal reputation. A wise man warned: *The failure of one can bring a reproach on many.* People tend to remember negative behaviors much longer than positive ones. However, be challenged to live life with such integrity as to change the previous statement to this: *The responsible financial stewardship of one can bring respect to many.*

While we cannot speak or act for all ministers, we can embrace an ethical standard in our own financial conduct that will be a model for others to copy. Uphold such a high standard of financial integrity that others may be encouraged to follow the example.

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17)

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS IN FINANCES

The following guidelines are offered to provide direction for living with responsibility in Christian character regarding areas of financial conduct. While other suggestions could be added, these will serve as a foundation for success in money management.

1. Plan a Budget and Live by It

The ability to live within a budget and to balance your financial accounts are indispensable skills that must be developed and observed. While some people enjoy organizing and the minutia of details, others would do just about anything to avoid

bookkeeping and budgets. However, good financial stewardship requires that we all develop abilities in this important area. Planning a budget requires discipline.

Create a detailed list of income and expenses as much as possible. If your income is inconsistent from month to month, set yourself on a conservative budget in which you feel confident the funds received will be adequate to meet expenses. As surplus funds increase to a more adequate level, you can adjust your budget accordingly.

In the budget, you can plan for the known monthly (or quarterly, etc.) expenses. Also plan for unexpected emergencies by including an undesignated amount in the budget that you can allocate when a special need arises. Planning ahead will relieve financial stress and help you avoid unnecessary debt.

Utilize resources (books or the Internet) where sound Christian financial advice is given. Numerous resources provide good financial guidance in everything from planning a budget to leaving a will (instructions on the distribution of your assets when you die). Several incorporate biblical principles and God-honoring ethics in all matters of financial stewardship.

2. Guard against Debt

Accumulation of debt will prohibit you from being free to respond to some opportunities the Lord will open for you. Personal debt is taken into consideration when one applies for a missions appointment, as well as for those seeking assistance to start a new church plant. If you have demonstrated irresponsibility in areas of finance, no one wants to invest in your future financial failure.

Interest on debt is a robber of finance. Whatever benefits that may be gained by purchasing something on credit are quickly negated by accruing finance charges. Small minimum monthly payments on revolving credit accounts are designed to keep you in debt and on a payment cycle for the rest of your life. Slavery may be illegal but the trade is active in the credit card industry.

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Proverbs 22:7)

In the past, only those with proven credit responsibility and maturity were entrusted with a credit card. Now people at younger ages than ever before are carrying greater debt on credit cards. We now have many students going to college

with their own credit cards, with ever higher limits, and some already maxed out. Some students are often unable to go to college or have to leave prematurely because of high credit card payments. *We need some plastic surgery! Cut up the cards.*

Though it is not a sin to borrow, use care to borrow only for appreciable items and only when you have the means to repay the debt as promised. Much is said in Scripture about good stewardship and responsibility in the area of finance. Ministers must set a good example to the members in their congregation in financial stewardship—including tithing. Demonstrate your personal disciplines of Christian conduct by reducing and eliminating debt.

3. Resist Extravagant Lifestyles

Pastors and ministers should be able to live as well as those in their congregations. They should not be criticized for living in a nice home or driving a newer vehicle when financially blessed. However, attention should be given to avoid the appearance of opulence. Ministers are always in the public eye. They may be judged harshly if they seem to be living above everyone else. Conservatism is always fashionable for the minister.

A good guideline is to live approximately at the *average* level of the *upper half* of your congregation. The vehicle you drive should not embarrass people either by being a broken-down rattletrap or a luxury limo. The neighborhood you live in should be as safe as possible for your family and respectable enough that you could invite anyone from your congregation to visit without shame. Of course, a mansion surrounded by a vast estate with a private hunting range might give the impression of extravagance. The key here is balance. You should live according to your means, but not in excess. You should demonstrate integrity in wise investments for your future, without appearing to be selfishly hoarding the resources available to you.

If the people you serve are taking good care of you financially, they want to see you live within your means, neither above it nor below it. It is a delicate balance. Some will never begrudge you for having nice things, while others will always be critical of what you drive, where you live, or what you eat. As long as you know you are making conscientious decisions and living within your means, don't be discouraged by the negative comments of others.

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one

wife, vigilant, sober, *of good behaviour, given to hospitality*, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, *not greedy of filthy lucre*; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without*; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (I Timothy 3:1-7, emphasis added)

4. Be an Example in Giving

If we are responsible in our finances and seek to honor God with our income, others will be inspired to do the same. If we tithe, others will be encouraged to give God the tenth. When we give to special needs, our membership will desire to become financially secure so they too will have enough resources to give when special needs are presented to the church.

The minister, of all people, should be consistent in the giving of tithes and offerings. The blessings of the Lord are contingent upon your faithfulness to this biblical principle:

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38, emphasis added)

According to this verse, God will use the same measure to give back to us what we are using to give to others and to His kingdom. If you use a teaspoon when you give, God will use a teaspoon to pour out blessings in your life. If you use barrels to bless others, you can expect blessings by the barreland when God pours out your reward.

Cooperate freely and faithfully with your ministerial organization's financial plan. Each district (or state) in the organization has an established financial plan that has been approved by the ministers of that locale. It is the accepted method of financing the organization's operations. On the national level, a budget fee that may be paid annually or quarterly may be required. When you become a part of an organization, you agree to the financial plan in effect. Honor it and you will be blessed.

5. Keep Good Records

Accurate bookkeeping and responsible accounting are essential in the operation of the church. Keeping good records assures people under your care that you are trustworthy and honest in your business practices. If any question arises of your integrity, you will have evidence of your honesty.

It is imperative to keep good financial records, both personally and for the church. Being consistent with record keeping has its advantages. When you must pay taxes, you will have an accurate account of expenses and income. This will not only give you a clear conscience when declaring deductible expenses, but may also provide a tax savings by giving you evidence to claim allowable tax deductions.

Be informed of your government's tax revenue laws and current changes. Seek to abide by legal requirements and be aware of any helpful tax advantages provided for ministers or churches. If tax exemptions are available, they can result in a savings to the church or personal expenses. Good stewardship demands that we pay what we owe, but no more than is required. "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Jesus taught respect for authority and compliance with legal systems. The apostle Paul also taught respect for rulers and magistrates. He wrote to Titus, "Be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, "The powers that be are ordained of God," and "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (Romans 13:3).

As much as possible, ministers should seek to abide by laws and support the legal system. Recognize that God ordains structure, order, and authority. Though there may be corruption in individuals who hold positions, governments and laws are designed to protect and serve citizens. Paul instructed Timothy to pray for and give thanks "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:2). When we do our part to honor the authorities we are placed under, we can live more peaceful lives as we advance the cause of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

A pastor is the overseer of the church. This is a divine appointment. As the overseer of the spiritual well-being of the church, the pastor must also be responsible in areas of fiscal responsibility and other areas of church administration.

Good men and women can help share the administrative load in the church. It is not meant to be borne by the pastor alone. Spirit-filled people who have gifts in areas of administration and finance should be sought out to assist in these tasks. Loyal and responsible assistants are required for these important roles in the local church. It is vital that pastors not only be accountable, but that they also *require* accountability on the part of those over which they have supervision.

When you follow good accounting practices and financial responsibility, be assured of the blessing of the Lord and goodwill from the people in your care. It should be the desire of every Christian to live in such a way that we will hear these words:

Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (Matthew 25:23)

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is especially important for ministers regarding personal finance?

2. What two things result from demonstrating responsibility in areas of personal finance?
A. _____
B. _____
3. Complete the statement: *The responsible financial stewardship of one can bring*

4. According to Romans 12:17 we should *"recompense to no man evil for evil."*
But, what? _____.

5. What are five guidelines for success in finances?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

6. Planning a budget requires _____

7. Planning ahead with a budget will do what two things?

A. _____

B. _____

8. What is "interest on debt" called?

9. According to Proverbs 22:7, "The borrower is _____ to the lender."

10. Is it a sin to borrow? What should be the rule if one borrows money?

11. What is always fashionable for the minister?

12. What is a good guideline for how a minister should live?

13. What inspires others to give?

14. If you use a teaspoon when you give, what is the measure of your blessing?

15. What does keeping good records assure people of?

16. Good stewardship demands what two things?

A. _____

B. _____

17. In what verse of Scripture does Jesus endorse paying taxes?

18. Who did Paul instruct Timothy to pray for and give thanks for? Why?

19. Pastors are the overseer of the spiritual well-being of the church. What other areas are they responsible for?

20. How can one be assured of the blessing of the Lord and goodwill from people?

Lesson 6

Ministers and Etiquette

KEY VERSE

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. (I Timothy 3:15)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *etiquette*
- Know what two things people basically expect a minister to be to them
- Understand two qualities that should characterize a minister's communication
- Entertain guests in his or her home
- Be a proper guest in someone else's home.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

Etiquette is defined as the "rules of formal relations or behavior among people or in a class of society or a profession." Etiquette for ministers would, therefore, mean how ministers conduct themselves among people in accordance with accepted norms in the ministry and culture. "Ministers" in this context includes leaders and every person functioning in any of the roles of ministry in the

church such as deacons, youth leaders, and ladies' leaders. These are all affected as well as pastors and evangelists.

Paul exhorted Timothy, the young minister over the Ephesian church, to learn how to comport himself in the church. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God" (I Timothy 3:15). In the many facets of ministers' lives, they must exhibit cultured manners as they relate to people in their home, the church, and public places. This also includes all forms of communication.

IN THE MINISTER'S HOME

Many individuals, both in the church and outside the church, visit the minister's home frequently. The impression guests take with them as they leave the minister's home has a far-reaching effect on their ministry.

A guest that is welcomed and entertained according to the ability of the family will always give a good recommendation about the minister and his or her family. One minister said, "If you receive a visitor well in your house, your house will always be full." Giving guests something to drink and even meals to enjoy will always be met with appreciation. However, ministers ought not to turn their homes into a charity center. Visitors that deviate from family customs could be diplomatically corrected. For instance, this would include guests that visit too frequently, stay too long, misuse items in the home, or family members whose actions cause embarrassment. The visitors should feel at home by actions that are courteous, thoughtful, and considerate of their feelings and background. Yet if the need arises, the minister should correct inappropriate behavior if possible.

IN THE HOMES OF OTHER PEOPLE

Ministers must be the first to realize that the homes of their members and other acquaintances are not their recreational spots. Time spent with other families should be short under normal circumstances. They will enhance their prestige by being courteous and prudent in accepting offers of meals and gifts. While as gentlemen or ladies they should not offend people by refusing offers all the time, they would also do well not to create the impression that their visits are always motivated by the material gifts they receive from their hosts.

Unfortunately, some ministers have thrown overboard their ministerial integrity for “morsels of bread.” They have literally become beggars. Such ministers could uphold the ministry by relying on the Holy Spirit and their spiritual gifts for their life provisions instead of begging from men.

THE MINISTER’S COMMUNICATION

Many ministers would have been successful if they had known how and what to say at the right time and the right place. People basically expect ministers to be motivators and comforters. In the hustle and bustle of daily life, members come to church with many problems, needs, and aspirations. Their hope is that the preaching of the Word will encourage them and heal their spiritual and emotional sores. The minister’s communication should be positive, hopeful, cheerful, encouraging, full of faith, and not condemnatory or offensive.

Uplifting the spirits of troubled members with sound words is the minister’s job, and he or she must not be found wanting. Ministers who can pull the crowd, convince, and persuade them to make positive decisions for Christ will be those who have learned how to use words skillfully and profitably.

IN PUBLIC PLACES

One renowned evangelist said, “If preachers would not go to the streets and marketplaces as well as other public places where the sinners are, they should not expect the sinners to come to the church by themselves.” As preachers of the gospel, ministers cannot entirely avoid public places, yet they should be selective in the places they visit. Places like dance halls, public cinema theaters, and gambling spots are not appropriate resorts for ministers.

In their outings, ministers should consider what they wear as well as their general appearance. Remember the minister’s guiding words for appearance, manners, and all they do are “gentlemanly” and “ladylike.”

CONCLUSION

Paul admonished the Galatians about their liberty in charity (love) by saying, “only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Galatians 5:13).

Etiquette is important to ministers for the guidance it provides to stay on course. In their homes, in other people's homes, in the church, in public places, and in their communication, ministers should be courteous and thoughtful. They must uphold the dignity of the ministry by affecting the feelings and needs of other people in a more positive way.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. How would etiquette for ministers guide them to preach the gospel effectively?

2. What did Paul advise Timothy to do in the house of God in I Timothy 3:15?

3. Why should ministers treat visitors to their homes well?

4. Name one embarrassing thing a visitor may likely do in the minister's home.

5. The minister should not use other people's homes as

6. Why should ministers not look for meals and gifts while they visit in the home of their members?

7. For what reason have some ministers lowered their ministerial integrity?

8. What two things do people basically expect a minister to be to them?

A. _____

B. _____

9. What two qualities should characterize a minister's communication?

A. _____

B. _____

10. Since ministers cannot entirely avoid public places, what should they do when they must go to any of these places?

11. What guiding words should lead ministers as they move in public places?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 7

Ministers and Their Home

KEY VERSES

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (I Timothy 3:4-5, ESV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Name the qualifications of godly ministers
- Know the basic need every wife requires from her husband
- Manage his or her household
- Set an example for others to follow
- Realize the impact of the minister's family on his or her ministry.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

One of the qualifications Paul listed for Timothy in choosing bishops for the churches under his ministry was, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God" (I Timothy 3:4-5).

The homes of ministers are very important to their ministry in many respects. They themselves get encouragement and support largely from their home, where spouses and children contribute to their physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. Their responsibilities for giving training and direction to the family cannot be left to chance because the physical, social, and spiritual condition of their home and family follows their ministry in all directions.

MINISTERS AS HUSBANDS

When God set up the ministry, He instructed ministers to discharge their family responsibilities equally as well as they minister unto Him spiritually. Paul's instruction to all believers in relation to their families is, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). For ministers to be the example they must be, they should not forget to lead their household in the manner that is acceptable in biblical terms.

A MINISTER'S DUTY TO HIS SPOUSE

In Genesis 2:23-24, Adam admitted to Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." And thereafter Jesus quoted, "For this cause . . . shall a man . . . cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5).

The basic need of every wife is *love* from her husband, which should be expressed in patience, understanding, care, tenderness, cheerfulness, encouragement, and provision. This attitude of the husband toward his wife is scripturally supported. In the Old Testament, Moses commanded, "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

In his rich experience with women, Solomon advised a husband to "let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18). Peter added his voice by saying, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (I Peter 3:7). Paul concluded the point with a resounding note to husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3:19).

THE MINISTER'S DUTY TO HIS CHILDREN

As a husband, the minister is obligated to love and provide for the needs of his children (II Corinthians 12:14). Their physical needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and finances would have to be obtained from the home. If ministers fail to provide for their children's physical needs adequately, they create the opportunity for them to seek those needs outside the home. As they take this step, they soon become wayward and unruly, tarnishing the dignified image of the minister (I Timothy 3:4).

Socially and spiritually, the minister should be teaching and training his children in the proper molding of their moral character and behavior. In Proverbs 22:6, Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Children that are prayerful and knowledgeable in the Word of God are great assets to the minister. He should therefore teach them how to pray and study the Word of God. They should be led to repentance and water baptism and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

Just as the wife expects the husband to love her, so must she understand that marriage is a mutual bond between a man and a woman to support each other. The support of the wife to her minister husband is very important to the mental, emotional, and spiritual uplifting for effective ministry. The wife that intercedes for the minister and the entire family and who also teaches the children—like Lois and Eunice did to Timothy—would find love, peace, and joy in the family (II Timothy 1:1-5). A wife that is Spirit filled and who exercises some of the spiritual gifts of ministry complements the ministry of her husband. The life and ministry of the minister is so hectic that his wife will do them great service by being humble, obedient, encouraging, respectful, and serviceable toward him.

THE MINISTER'S CHILDREN

Children of the minister often become the yardstick of his effectiveness and ability to mold the character and behavior of his members. If the minister discharges his fatherly duties well, no reason should exist why the children should not reciprocate by being obedient, helpful, and disciples of their father in spiritual

things. They should understand that their home and public life is a written epistle for the public to measure their father's ministry by (II Corinthians 3:2).

CONCLUSION

The first point of arrival in this world is the home. It is the place all human beings receive the first stage of socialization of what they are supposed to do and be in their lifetime. The minister's home is the place where his family receives the foundation of their spiritual and social life.

Ministers must therefore set up their home in a manner that will make their spouse and children become a good reflection of their ministry. They do this by loving the spouse and children and providing for their physical needs. They should train and teach them in spiritual things in order that they would in turn give them the support they need in their ministry. Ministers should also be conscious of the fact that their life will be the greatest example for their family.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What does I Timothy 3:4-5 instruct ministers to do as a prerequisite for their ministry as shepherds?

2. What is the basic need every wife requires from her husband?

3. Give two scriptural references that mention that husbands should show care and concern for their wives.

A. _____

B. _____

4. What may happen if ministers fail to provide the needs of their children?

5. How should ministers mold their children's character to befit their ministry as a servant of God?

6. If the husband is commanded to love his wife, how should the wife reciprocate her husband's love?

7. What can the children do for their minister-father to make their home a good written epistle for the public?

8. What is the first point of arrival for every human being in this world?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 8

Ministers and Accountability

KEY VERSES

But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts. (Ephesians 6:21-22, NKJV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *accountability*
- Recognize the necessity of accountability in one's personal life and ministry
- Realize the importance of submission in accountability
- Know how to hold someone accountable
- Comprehend one's accountability to his or her community.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be accountable? Simply stated it is to give a reason to another for one's behavior, decisions, or conduct. To be accountable is to be answerable to another individual. We must allow someone to hold us responsible for our actions and give permission for him or her to ask tough questions when necessary concerning our personal conduct and professional ethics.

We are all connected. We need one another, and we need to be accountable for our actions. Our successes or failures will affect those around us, especially those we are connected with in the home, the church, or the community. A part of accountability is being willing to take responsibility, accepting the fact that when something goes wrong, we must answer to those in authority. We must submit to the one(s) to whom we are accountable.

In the area of finances or entrusted property, we are obligated to account for stewardship and disclose all business dealings with transparency. Being accountable is to accept responsibility for what has been entrusted to us and agree to the consequences for mismanagement. It is easy to shift blame when something unexpected happens. We look for someone else to be responsible whenever a failure is on our watch. It is a natural response to accuse someone else for the wrongs and try to vindicate our own actions.

In this lesson we will address four general areas of responsibility: accountability to myself, to my spouse, to my community (church or close associates), and to God. Through this study we will learn the importance of accountability in the life of a minister.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO MYSELF

On the most basic level, we should know ourselves better than any other. Our commitment to God and our desire to live for Him should cause us to examine our own heart and correct behaviors that are not in harmony with the Word of God.

Paul instructed the church in Corinth concerning observing the Lord's Supper. When approaching this grave memorial of the death of Jesus and understanding the purpose of His sacrifice, Paul said, "Let a man examine himself." This is an occasion to take an inventory of our own motives, attitudes, thoughts, and actions. To approach this communion with casual disrespect and to participate in an unworthy manner invites the judgment of God against us.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (I Corinthians 11:27-29, NKJV)

Look at your own life. What is your relationship to God? Is it honest or are you constantly hiding your true motives? Do you pretend to be a Christian while participating in sinful acts? Have you spoken words of forgiveness while harboring bitter resentment? Do you condemn others for the hidden sins in your own life?

These are tough questions, but they are necessary if we are to be accountable to ourselves. We must examine our motives and expose our inner thoughts in the process. No one else knows who we really are and the passions that drive our actions. Before we minister to others, we must first be sure to *know ourselves*.

Christians are often accused of hypocrisy. Sometimes it may be warranted. If we pretend to be something we are not, then we are hypocrites. An expression of warning says, "Don't just *talk the talk*, you must *walk the walk*." We must not adopt a lifestyle where we are just talking like Christians; we must sincerely be like Christ. We cannot merely use Christian words and quote Bible verses. The principles of Scripture must guide our conduct, and our words must come from a pure heart of integrity.

John said, "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18, NJKV). Words can be cheap toys, empty shells of meaningless babble, unless they are accompanied with sincere acts of love and reflect a consistent conduct that honors Christ.

Paul gave great advice in his letter to Christians in Galatia that applies to this topic. He stated in Galatians 6:4, "But let every man *prove his own work*" (KJV, emphasis added); "But let each one *examine his own work*" (NKJV, emphasis added); "Each one should *test their own actions*" (NIV, emphasis added). We are responsible for ourselves. We are accountable for our conduct, good or bad.

Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare

yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct. (Galatians 6:4-5, NLT)

Scripture teaches us to avoid comparisons among ourselves. When we look around at others, we are sure to find someone worse than we are, more hypocritical, more sinful, or even someone more righteous. All comparisons with others will cause us to either excuse our own sin or become prideful (and sin) because we feel that we are better than another.

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Matthew 7:1-2, NKJV)

Take a moment and look inward. Peer deeply into the recesses of your own heart. Examine your motives and search out your attitudes. Accountability begins here. It starts in the heart.

The wise man offered this proverb: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you” (Proverbs 4:23-24, NKJV, emphasis added).

Shakespeare wrote the following famously quoted statement in *Hamlet*. Polonius gave this advice to his departing son Laertes, before he took the boat for Paris: “This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

When we are accountable to ourselves, when our heart is true, the outflow will bring consolation in every other relationship. When the spring is clean, the fountain will be refreshing.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO MY SPOUSE

For those who are married, accountability to your spouse is a most vital responsibility. If you are unmarried, then you must be accountable to parents, to other family members, or to a peer. For those who have no spouse or family, this level of accountability can be fulfilled through a close associate, such as a pastor or other spiritual mentor. This person should be viewed as an accountability partner. Honesty and transparency must be with this partner so that any problem can be revealed and any issue resolved.

A spouse is the closest person to you outside of your own body. From the beginning when the first woman was taken from the side of the first man, she was recognized by Adam as being “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” The writer of Genesis went on to state, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:23–24, NIV). The first two Gospels quote Jesus referencing this passage in Genesis when He was questioned about marriage and divorce. Jesus said of the married couple, “So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6, NKJV).

Paul used the closeness of marriage between a man and woman to illustrate the connection between Christ and the church. Just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, the husband is to love and care for his wife.

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. (Ephesians 6:28–30, NIV)

The love between a husband and a wife provides an opportunity for transparency in the relationship. Shortcomings and failures can more easily be confessed with the one you love sincerely and trust to have your best interest at heart. Anything shared in the context of confidence is safe, and you know it will not be compromised.

Sins kept secret can have power over us and the fear of exposure causes one to live in bondage, only to repeat mistakes that tighten the grip of sin. However, when you share your area of temptation with that close partner in confidence, the fear of being found out is released. The united prayer of these two can break the cycle of sin and bring deliverance in personal shortcomings. One finds freedom when failures have been confessed with a close confidant.

The home is the testing ground for leadership. For bishops and for deacons, Paul used their effectiveness at home to be the criteria for qualification in ministry.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; *one who rules his own house*

well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?) (I Timothy 3:2-5, NKJV, emphasis added)

Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, *ruling their children and their own houses well*. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 3:12-13, NKJV, emphasis added)

If qualifications are based on relationships at home, then accountability must be sustained on the same proving grounds. When one goes on to more responsibility and authority, it does not eliminate the foundation that equipped and qualified the leader in the first place, rather authority rests on that strong foundation of proven faithfulness. If the foundation is destroyed, the ministry (and the minister) will crumble and any spiritual construction will fall.

Maintain integrity in all your relationships, especially with spouse and family. Submit to one another in accountability. Be ready to give an answer for any motive that is questioned, any behavior that causes division, and any activity that does not glorify Christ.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO MY COMMUNITY

If a minister is to be effective in leading the church, representing Jesus to the unsaved, and teaching people to be followers of Christ, then he or she must be accountable to those who are the closest in their relationships. One cannot lead without first learning to follow in submission to authority and accountability. The concentric circles of accountability broaden to embrace those who are in our community. This may be our close friends, our ministry leaders, and other respected elders in the church.

We should never be too insecure in our leadership position that we reject the care and concern of our community. Those who love us can also see when we struggle with personal issues, allow destructive habits to affect our behavior, and/or become distant in our relationships. Those in the close circle of our community are in the best position to assist when areas of weakness surface in our character. They can help if we will be accountable to them and give permission for them to speak into our lives.

Our community includes the body of believers. Even in positions of leadership, we are accountable to the church body. Safety is in responsibility and accountability. When we respect one another, consider other's thoughts and feelings, and give preference to someone else, we become more like Christ and our love and concern is witnessed. Our Christian character should be modeled in the church so that others will be drawn to the same attitudes and seek to model deference in their lives.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25, NKJV, emphasis added).

When we think of the apostle Paul, we may be tempted to think of him as a strong leader who didn't need to be held accountable to others. However, after his conversion and the persecution intensified in Jerusalem, Paul was sent back to his home in Tarsus by the disciples. (See Acts 9:26-30.) Barnabas later traveled to Tarsus to bring Paul to Antioch to assist him in the revival church birthed there. (See Acts 11:22-26.) It was from this missions-minded church that Barnabas and Paul set out on their first missionary journey.

Though Paul was a powerful leader and became the apostle to the Gentiles, he was also considerate of others and disclosed his conduct and welfare to them. Paul was apparently accountable to those like Tychicus, whom he sent to the Colossians to deliver a report with "all the news about me" (Colossians 4:7). He encouraged them to share their circumstances and receive comfort from him. Paul shared all things with Tychicus and Onesimus, and he expected the believers who received them to do the same.

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. (Colossians 4:5-9, NKJV)

Paul wanted to communicate with other believers “all things which are happening here.” He was being transparent and sent men that he trusted and had been accountable to so they might share the same with other churches. Tychicus was also sent to Ephesus for the same reason. (See II Timothy 4:12.)

Paul modeled accountability so that others might learn to also be accountable.

But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts. (Ephesians 6:21–22, NKJV)

While it could be argued that there was no formal organization in the beginning of the church, we can learn through several passages that the framework for organization was established first by Jesus as He called the Twelve, then in the early church on the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up with the Eleven. There was coordination of efforts, cooperation with others, and leadership roles were recognized. As the church grew, they saw the need for more organization in Acts 6. Seven men were set over particular areas of administration as they cared for the needs of widows.

Later a church conference was called in Jerusalem to deal with the issue of circumcision and what should be required of Gentiles in the church. In Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas met with the apostles and elders concerning this issue. Even when Paul and Barnabas were experiencing the greatest revival among Gentile believers, they were still accountable to the elders and leaders of this new movement that had started in Jerusalem. They came to the conference, gave testimony, defended their conduct in evangelizing among the Gentiles, and submitted to the decision of the assembly. The council came to an agreement that Gentiles were not obligated to be circumcised as the Jews had been required to do under the Law, but they were given four specific requirements.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. (Acts 15:28–29, NKJV)

This decision was drafted in a letter and Judas (also named Barsabas) and Silas were sent with them to deliver the statement to the church in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas were answerable to this council, they received a reasonable compromise to deal with a current issue, and they were blessed by God with continued growth in the church and increase among the Gentiles.

We have an organizational structure to assist us in greater efforts to evangelize our world. When we as leaders and ministers submit to the leadership of organization, a blessing accompanies our ministry. Cheerfully support the efforts of our organization and reap the benefits of working together with accountability.

Jesus was the greatest of all leaders and yet He came to serve. Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28, NKJV).

Jesus taught leadership with a towel and basin. Following the final supper in the upper room, Jesus took water in a basin and proceeded around the table washing the disciples' feet. He was teaching them how to serve, how to be a minister, and how to truly be a leader in the kingdom of God.

In following Christ's example, we will never be caught up in our own success, expecting everyone to serve us, and seeking honor and acclaim from others. Rather we must seek to serve. Be the best servant you can be and allow God to exalt you to greater authority and responsibility.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO MY GOD

The first area of accountability is to self. Yet it is impossible to truly be accountable to ourselves without divine assistance. We have come full circle as we come to the topic of accountability to God. We are again confronted with ourselves and our inability to live righteously in our own strength. In answering to God for our failures, we have no hope of change without Him. We depend completely on the grace of God and the power of the Spirit to live an overcoming life.

When we come to God to answer for our failures and our sin, we find He already knows everything we have come to confess. "For your ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all your paths" (Proverbs 5:21, NIV). We still need to confess our sins to God. Though He knows everything, we must answer to God for

our own actions. We can use the prayer of David in the time of self-examination and ask for His help to see the areas of our lives that need to be changed.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24, NKJV)

If we examine our hearts without God's aid, we will likely be deceived. We will justify our failures and defend our transgressions. We will be deceived by our heart. God is the only one who knows the heart.

We must submit to Him and let Him search our hearts and test our minds.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:9-10, NKJV).

Eventually, we come back to Psalm 139 in the early verses. God knows all about us. When we come to that realization, we wonder how God could not be disgusted with our sins and finished with our failures. However, God has quite different thoughts about us.

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. (Psalm 139:2-3, NKJV)

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You. (Psalm 139:17-18, NKJV)

Acknowledging that God knows all about us should not cause us to fear. He understands us and fills us with grace and deals with our sins covered in His mercy. We constantly need His grace. We will often fail in our efforts for accountability but will continually be offered grace to rise again and go forward in His mercy.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. (Psalm 103:10-11, NKJV)

CONCLUSION

Personal accountability is crucial to the success of a minister. No one is perfect and none is without sin. After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live an overcoming life, we will also need the support of accountability partners. Our spouse, our family, our mentors and pastors, and our elders and congregants all have a role to play in helping us be the ministers we were called to be.

God does not call failures. He calls us to arise to the challenge and live the victorious life of the Spirit. He has placed people in our lives who love us and want to see us succeed. Together we can become mighty in Spirit and overcomers in our walk with Christ Jesus. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31, NKJV).

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What does it mean to be accountable?

2. Who is affected by our successes (or failures) in ministry?

3. What are four areas of accountability addressed in this lesson?

- A.

- B.

- C.

- D.

4. What does our commitment to God and our desire to live for Him cause us to do?

5. What did Paul say we should do when we are approaching the memorial of the Last Supper and participating in communion?

6. What are some “tough questions” we may ask ourselves as we become accountable to ourselves?

7. John said we should not love in *word* or *tongue*, but in _____ and in _____. Where is this Bible verse found? _____

8. Where does accountability start?

9. Where is this Bible verse found: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life”? _____

10. For those who are married, what is “a most vital responsibility”?

11. To whom should those who are unmarried be accountable?

12. What Old Testament passage did Jesus quote concerning marriage in both Matthew and in Mark? _____

13. What did Paul use as an illustration of the connection between Christ and the church?

14. What brings release from the fear of our sins being exposed? What can break the cycle of sin?

15. One cannot lead until he or she first learns to follow in _____ to authority and _____.

16. What is the home a testing ground for?

17. What are some of the qualifications for bishops based on?

18. What should be maintained in all relationships?

19. What are some examples of accountability in the community?

20. Those in the close circle of our community are in the best position to do what?

21. Why should Christian character be modeled in the church?

22. What are some indications that Paul was accountable to leaders in the early church?

23. Who did Paul send to the Colossians and to Ephesus with a report about his state of affairs?

24. What was the issue at the first church conference in Jerusalem?

25. What four things were Gentile Christians required to conform to because of the council in Jerusalem?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

26. Because of the accountability of Paul and Barnabas to the decision of the council in Jerusalem, what blessing followed?

27. What is one benefit of organizational structure?

28. What instruments did Jesus use to teach leadership?

29. What does Matthew 20:28 tell us about the mission of Jesus?

30. What is needed before we can truly be accountable to ourselves?

31. What two things do we depend upon completely to live an overcoming life?

A. _____

B. _____

32. According to Jeremiah, "The heart is _____ above all things,
And desperately _____."

33. Who is the only one who truly knows the heart?

34. Personal accountability is crucial to what?

35. What verse of Scripture gives us assurance that we will be victorious in our walk with Christ Jesus?

Lesson 9

Ministers' Relationship with Superiors

KEY VERSE

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7, ESV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *submission*
- Name and characterize the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4
- Realize the precedent established in Acts 15
- Understand the organizational structure of the church
- Comprehend the concept of divine authority

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

As a divine institution, the church is established upon divine authority. Jesus said, "I will build my church," indicating that He is the founder and head of the

church (Matthew 16:18). For the church to function according to His divine purpose, the Lord has delegated authority to men and women of His choice to administer spiritual leadership over the church. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, taught that “when He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. . . . And He himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:8, 11, NKJV). These persons, by their ministries, have divine authority to be exercised for the growth of the church.

However, as the church grows in numbers and becomes more organized, the need to establish administrative structures and relationships becomes urgent and important. Therefore, ministers with certain administrative abilities and skills are elected or appointed to carry out various functions for the continuous growth of the church and cooperation among the ministers and members. Scripture requires ministers to submit themselves to these people in authority. (See Hebrews 13:17.)

THE MINISTER’S SUBMISSION TO SUPERIORS

The early apostolic church in the Book of Acts is a classic example of how submission to authority can facilitate a peaceful atmosphere and rapid growth in the church of God. The apostles made decisions that were accepted and carried out wholeheartedly. The council of Jerusalem’s judgment on circumcision for the Gentile churches became a rule of law (Acts 15). The reason for such a humble attitude of the Gentiles to the apostolic authority was the understanding that the apostles were guided by the invisible presence of the Holy Ghost.

In these present times, the occurrence of contention in the church is alarming. Defiance of authority is becoming too frequent. It appears that the scriptural directives leading the children of God into submission to authority have been overlooked. The situation, however, becomes disappointing when ministers are equally guilty of defying the very authority God has endorsed by His Word.

The writer of Hebrews clearly stated: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. . . . Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Ministers as examples and leaders of the church must

be the first to demonstrate submission to their superiors. As teachers of the flock, ministers ought to remind themselves of Paul's directive in the Book of Romans: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans 13:1-2).

THE MINISTER'S COOPERATION WITH SUPERIORS

The element of human nature is not eliminated on a minister's election or appointment to an administrative office. Superiors, which are as human as their subordinates, are likely to conduct themselves contrary to the requirements of their office. Ministers affected by such behavior should be guided by the commandment of Jesus on submission: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:38-39).

Instead of reacting negatively and arrogantly toward the bad attitude of their superiors, ministers should cooperate by showing patience and long-suffering. Strained relationships should be normalized by ministers offering to their superiors constructive suggestions in the spirit of humility and meekness. They should strengthen their cooperation with their superiors in higher responsibilities and authority by constantly praying for them and bringing their shortcomings before the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Ministerial authority is divinely instituted. However, the organization of the church has brought into being an administrative structure and relationships that call for election or appointment of certain ministers to exercise specific functions. These people, by virtue of their office, may become our superiors and lead in the decision-making process. Ministers that are subordinates to these ministers having rule over them should be submissive and cooperative for the sake of Christ, the head of the church. Ministers should be examples of humility toward authority.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What verse of Scripture indicates that Jesus is the founder and head of the church?

2. Name the fivefold ministry listed in Ephesians 4:11

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

3. What council settled a dispute brought before it by the church in Antioch? What was the dispute about?

4. What one word aptly describes how ministers should relate to their superiors? _____

5. Cite one New Testament verse of Scripture that instructs ministers to be subject to their superiors?

6. When superiors offend their subordinates, what should the offended subordinates do?

7. In what spirit should subordinates offer suggestions to their superiors?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 10

Ministers and Their Relationship with Other Ministers

KEY VERSE

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. (Psalm 133:1).

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Recognize the two significant blessings that come out of brethren dwelling together in unity
- Follow Paul's instructions to believers to foster harmony
- Realize the first test of new ministers is their attitude and remarks about their predecessor
- Strive for good relationship with their successors
- Believe that all things can work together for their good

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

The psalmist wrote, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). No other community of people can compare

to ministers who relate to one another in understanding, love, and unity. The beauty of the ministry is best demonstrated by the cordial relationship and complementary functions operating among the community of ministers.

While this cordial relationship is the desire of all ministers, occasions may arise where ministers run into problems of misunderstandings and conflicts. Underlying these problems are the wrong attitudes of envy, greed, intolerance, and jealousy. Paul's advice applies to ministers as they interact with their colleagues, predecessors, and successors: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each other esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

MINISTERS AND THEIR COLLEAGUES

Ministers in the same church organization may be required to move from one station to another for specific functions. They may even be called upon to occupy certain positions that may highlight their ministries and spiritual gifts more than their colleagues. These changes usually create some conditions that seem to favor some ministers more than others. The tendency of those feeling neglected and despised is to harbor ill feelings and react negatively against their counterparts. To this attitude James gives a timely counsel: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. . . . For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:14, 16).

All ministers must realize sovereignty rests only with God. But our good God makes sure that every member being a component of the body of Christ has some role to play in the Kingdom. It is only a matter of time for every minister to be given his or her turn by the Lord of the body. Solomon knew this plan of God and said, "He hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

MINISTERS AND THEIR PREDECESSOR

As the church organization grows and expands, changes may occur among ministers in their fields of operation. Pastors may be transferred to new fields of labor. Administrators and evangelists and even departmental heads may be required to operate in new fields that have already been pioneered, pastored, or evangelized by other ministers. The first test of new ministers is

what attitude and remarks they unleash about the achievements of their predecessor. Recognizing the functions of the body of Christ as Paul illustrated in I Corinthians 12:12–26, the incoming minister should complement the achievements of his or her predecessor.

Commending the former minister will in turn enhance their respect and acceptance by the congregation and ministerial team. The members will certainly trust the person who is willing to share the goodwill of his or her people with those who have helped build it.

Many ministers, in their effort to win the attention and love of their new people, do everything possible to put out of sight any good traces of their predecessors. This attitude and behavior does not augur well for the ministry, because it ends up tearing the ministry apart. Ministers who are confronted with such situations should remember Paul's thoughtful statements: "Who then is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Corinthians 3:5–7). Succeeding ministers must appreciate and establish a relationship with their predecessors that will keep the unity of the ministry intact.

MINISTERS AND THEIR SUCCESSOR

The attitudes that characterize many ministers who leave their stations for other areas have been regret, embarrassment, unwillingness, and bitterness. These attitudes become heightened when their former stations or positions hold much more prospects for them than their new ones. The resulting thinking and feeling of many ministers are jealousy, intolerance, faultfinding, and non-cooperation toward their successors. Ministers who believe that God has a divine purpose for each one should not kick against the incoming ministers. If they are to fit into the overall plan of the Lord concerning His church, they can do no less than allow Paul's affirmation to govern their lives: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

CONCLUSION

All ministers will at one time or another become predecessors or successors and, therefore, their maximum cooperation should not be denied those who deserve it. Paul instructed, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). Jesus sealed it with a commandment, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. According to Psalm 133:1, what two significant blessings come out of brethren dwelling together in unity?
A. _____
B. _____

2. Ministers occasionally run into conflicts because of wrong attitudes. Name two of them.
A. _____
B. _____

3. In Philippians 2:3 what did Paul instruct believers to avoid to foster harmony?

4. According to Philippians 2:3–4, how should ministers relate to each other?

5. What should ministers do to those who preceded them?

6. What is the first test of a new minister in a new station?

7. Why would some ministers not want to leave for their new stations of transfer?

8. Give one scriptural reference that says everything that happens to the minister can work for his good.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 11

Ministers' Relationship with the Opposite Gender

KEY VERSES

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites . . . He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD. (I Kings 11:1-3, NLT)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Understand the strategies of the devil
- Benefit from the failures of men in the Bible
- Know precautions to take in dealing with the opposite gender
- Comprehend how men are attracted to women and how women are attracted to men
- Follow Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 10:12.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION—THE THREE STRATEGIES OF THE DEVIL

Since his fall and the creation of man, the devil has developed three strategies by which he attacks the saints of God, seeking to alienate them from the grace and spiritual positions they occupy in the Lord. The first is the lust of the flesh, followed by the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The apostle John was not ignorant about these devices of the devil and therefore cautioned the saints: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof” (I John 2:15–17).

Among these strategies, the weapons the devil frequently uses to trap ministers of the gospel are *sex* in the strategy of the flesh, *money* in the strategy of the lust of the eyes, and power in the strategy of the *pride* of life. But sex as part of the lust of the flesh seems to be Satan’s most effective weapon against ministers of the gospel. The number of respected ministers who have fallen and lost their ministries because of fornication and adultery is alarming. One wonders how and why the devil continues to be successful in this particular area. Ministers in modern times have got to put on their “binoculars” of vigilance to counteract this strategy of Satan.

SOME BIBLICAL MEN WHO BECAME VICTIMS

David, the friend that won God’s heart to the extent of receiving the everlasting promise of a kingdom, was a victim to this insidious trap of the devil. From an elevated position of his house, David’s eyes fell on Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, as she was bathing. David could not control his sensual emotions and quickly sent for Bathsheba for an adulterous relationship. The outcome of that act was a chain reaction that cost David very dearly. God used Nathan, the prophet, to get David to repent and reestablish his relationship with God.

Solomon, David’s son, was also the son of Bathsheba whom David later married after the death of Uriah. The sexual lust of Solomon was even greater than his father David:

But King Solomon loved many strange women . . . and he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his

heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (I Kings 11:1-4)

Samson and King Ahab are other examples of leaders of Israel who were swayed from the will of God by foreign women who were not God-fearing. Delilah tricked Samson to tell a secret he did not have to reveal. King Ahab was influenced by Jezebel to replace the worship of the God of Israel with idolatry.

A POWERFUL LESSON FROM FALLEN MINISTERS

Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians is thought provoking: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). The carefulness ministers should attach to their ministry in their relationship with the opposite gender can never be over-emphasized.

Men are always men and women are always women. The sight that has always attracted men to women, like David and Bathsheba, is ever present as long as humankind lives in this world. In the same vein, the touch that has always attracted women to men is ever present as long as the world continues to exist. The lasting cure for this ministerial menace is to keep an eagle eye in the interactions with the opposite gender.

VISITING WITH MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER

Visitation is part of the responsibility of pastors. Since the church is made up of both genders of human beings, the minister may be required to visit the opposite sex in his or her home for some particular need. It would be wise for ministers to take someone with him or her on these visitations to nullify the temptations Satan normally builds up in those circumstances. The prudent minister will make sure that the place of visitation is always kept out of any suspicion. Doors and windows will be left open and the discussions will be made in tones that create openness. The time of visitation must be appropriate and if possible, pre-arranged. The main principle here is that ministers should "let not then your good be evil spoken of" (Romans 14:16) and "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

PRAYING FOR MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER

The Lord promised that believers – and for that matter, ministers – shall lay their hands on the sick for prayer and healing (Mark 16:18).

Laying on of hands has been a regular feature, not only in praying for the sick, but also in times of prayer for the Holy Ghost baptism and deliverance. Where a minister places the hand when praying for and with the opposite gender can have some emotional influence on the person. Many reports have been given by ministers to the effect that some sensual excitement had operated in them as they laid their hands on certain areas while praying for the opposite gender. It is always advisable to lay hands lightly on the shoulder or head each time hands are necessarily going to be laid on the person requiring prayer. Praying for or with the opposite gender will be more advisable if it is done in the open than in a secluded area.

COUNSELING WITH MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER

Church members need counseling to be able to make appropriate decisions that will uplift their spiritual levels. As good as these counseling periods are to the spiritual growth of members, they are also full of temptations when counseling the opposite gender. A counselor-minister in such a situation should create the same congenial conditions as discussed under visitations and praying for the opposite gender.

CONCLUSION

The writer of Hebrews gave ministers food for thought: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. . . . Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:1, 14).

Laying aside every weight and sin that so easily destroy the ministries of men and women demands a high level of vigilance in their relationships with the opposite gender. **YOU CANNOT BE TOO CAREFUL!**

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Name the three strategies of the devil against the saints of God as in I John 2:16.
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

2. What three weapons does the devil frequently use against ministers of the gospel?
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

3. Name one king who became a victim to the devil's trap of adultery?

4. According to this lesson, how are men attracted to women?

5. According to this lesson, how are women attracted to men?

6. Name four things a minister should do when visiting members of the opposite gender to avoid immoral temptations.
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____

7. How should ministers lay hands on members of the opposite gender when praying for them?

Lesson 12

Ministers' Relationship Morally

KEY VERSE

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Define *ethical behavior* and *moral character*
- Understand the difference between ethical behavior and moral character
- Live the practical guidelines to develop moral character
- Lay a strong moral foundation for those who follow to build on
- Take responsibility for one's actions.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

What, if any, are the differences between *ethical behavior* and *moral character*? Some differences exist, so let us look at a brief definition and description of each term.

Ethical behavior is to conduct oneself in a way that is consistent with a code of ethics. Doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and other professionals learn ethics that pertain to their field of study and their expected conduct toward their clients and others in their profession. Rarely will a doctor criticize another medical professional. A psychologist would not discuss the problems of another patient that were shared in confidence. This is the expected demeanor dictated in their codes of ethics.

Moral character, on the other hand, is to conduct oneself with moral integrity regardless of professional ethics or codes of conduct. Behavior that is guided with principles of moral conduct will reveal a person's moral character.

Not all ethical standards are moral choices. We live by some guidelines as ministers of the gospel that are not clearly identified as *right* or *wrong*. Some things are not ethical, but may not be sinful. When people visit a church and the pastor determines they are from another congregation within the fellowship, ministerial ethics dictate that he or she should contact the other pastor. It would not be a sin to neglect this contact, but it would be considered unethical.

Moral character is dictated by God's Word and church teaching of those things that are right or wrong. Scripture provides a foundation for all morality. The teaching of biblical values, especially learning the lessons that Jesus taught in the Gospels, will lead people to exhibit good moral character. Moral conduct is the outward demonstration of good behavior stemming from the root system of good moral character.

Society or culture may establish ethical guidance for conduct in some situations while convictions born of moral character will cause you to conduct yourself in righteousness regardless of cultural standards. Moral conduct will be consistent even if society changes and the culture embraces what it once condemned.

Professionals can follow ethical standards and still be immoral. For example, professionals may conduct business affairs according to legal guidelines and be honest in their dealings with clients. The same people may be living in adultery or be abusing their children at home in their private life. One could say they are ethical, but not moral.

Moral people will naturally observe many ethical principles and will find it easy to adapt to ethical guidelines just because "it's the right thing to do." Good

moral character of such people will also cause them to practice right behavior in every area of life.

Being right morally is more than sexual purity. People may abstain from fornication and commit themselves to abstinence until they are married. They may be faithful to their spouse and never entertain the temptation of adultery. However, the same people may be dishonest in their business practices. If they cheat others for financial advantage or lie to make themselves look better than others, they are not of good moral character. If they secretly view pornography and entertain impure thoughts or talk about such things privately with others, they are not a moral person. Morality is practicing good and godly behavior in all areas of life and ministry.

How can we build moral character and become people of right conduct while being surrounded by a culture that belittles those who choose morality and attempt to live by higher ethical standards? It must become a way of life and a continual pursuit to follow godliness and seek righteousness in our personal lives. Following are some basic guidelines that may prove helpful.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING GOOD MORAL CHARACTER

1. Guard your mind.

The doorway of the mind is the access to the soul. When the door is opened and unguarded, all manner of thoughts and temptations are allowed in. The best way to keep impure thoughts out is by replacing them with wholesome, God-honoring thoughts. We must cast “down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5, NKJV).

Paul instructed the Philippians to think on “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8, NKJV). As we meditate on these positive thoughts, evil thinking and lustful temptations are pushed away.

Avoid entertaining impure thoughts by refusing to read materials that describe immoral activity or ungodly behavior. Avoid pornography or any visual

images that cause you to think immoral thoughts. The battle is great because immoral temptations are all around us, but we are not alone in this battle.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. (II Corinthians 10:3-4, NKJV)

God is with us, and He will help us if we will ask. Pray along with David against the temptation for evil:

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies. (Psalm 141:3-4, NKJV)

Here is the answer of God's assurance. Paul wrote, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7, NKJV).

2. Beware of inappropriate appearances.

We are often judged by what others see in us. Though our motives may be pure and our conduct is right, we must be aware of how others perceive us in any given situation. This can involve our manner of dress or personal appearance. While proper attire for ministers is dictated somewhat by culture, we are ultimately responsible for our own presentation. In some areas ministers are expected to dress well and appear as a professional clergy member. In other areas of the world (or even in various local regions), ministers may dress more casually and not stand out distinctly by the way they dress.

In all areas and in every situation, ministers should dress modestly and appropriately to represent their calling. Appearance should never detract from the message. If ministers' clothing, shoes, or accessories distract people, they may miss the importance of the message being presented. If their lack of personal hygiene, or excessive attention to fads and fashion speak louder than their ministry, few will be converted.

Ministers may be judged by their associations. It is true that Jesus was criticized and wrongly accused for "eating with sinners," yet none could find fault with His conduct, speech, or activities while He was in these situations.

We should take care to reach for the sinner but not become embroiled in inappropriate activities because of our association with them. We can enjoy a meal together, but should avoid places that would call our testimony into question. For example, a house of prostitution probably would not be an appropriate place to conduct outreach!

Paul cautioned that we should not allow “good to be spoken of as evil.” This may occur because of improper appearances or certain “liberties” that are offensive to others. We must do our best to refrain from offending others in our attempt to do something good for the kingdom of God.

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. (Romans 14:14–18, NKJV) (Also read Romans 14:19–23.)

3. Be holy in “conversation” and in conduct.

Peter spoke of the end of the world and the heavens and earth melting with fervent heat. With that backdrop of judgment, he admonished believers, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (II Peter 3:11).

Peter challenged Christ-followers to be holy in “conversation.” This is rendered in other translations as “conduct.” To be holy in conduct and godliness is all inclusive. Our speech, our behavior, our lifestyle, and our attitudes must all reflect holiness and moral purity.

The measure by which we judge our conduct is a most exacting one: the holiness of God. In his earlier epistle Peter challenged believers to “be holy in all your conduct.”

But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (I Peter 1:15-16, NKJV)

4. Practice integrity in all relationships.

Ethics, simply defined, is just “doing the right thing.” While it is simple, it is not always easy to do. Sometimes the “right thing” is the hardest to do, especially if it places us in a bad light or reflects negatively on our position. A person of integrity will always do the right thing.

All Christians—and particularly ministers—should endeavor to exhibit integrity. Integrity should be apparent in all relationships: personal, professional, and social. People of integrity are truthful. They will keep their word. They will be honest in all business dealings and will pay their bills on time. People who practice integrity are real and are respectful of others.

He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known. (Proverbs 10:9, NKJV)

The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him. (Proverbs 20:7, NKJV)

CONCLUSION

Excellent moral character should be the most sought-after attribute in a minister’s life. If the construction of a person’s life is erected on the secure foundation of good and godly character, his or her life will stand firm and bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ.

Paul used the analogy of construction when he said, “I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it” (I Corinthians 3:10, NKJV). Care must be given to the foundation so that the construction will endure. Others will build on our foundation. If we have been careless in the construction and neglected important moral principles, the result will be catastrophic.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. (I Corinthians 3:10-14, NKJV)

In Jesus' parable about the foolish man's construction on a foundation of sand, the storms of life utterly destroyed the house. On the other hand, the wise builder took time to build on a solid foundation and when the storms came, it stood strong. (See Matthew 7:24-27.)

We must insure that our foundation is strong, following the teaching of Scripture and resting squarely on the message of Jesus Christ. With Christ as our example and as the chief cornerstone of our foundation, we are assured of a successful ministry and a lasting construction.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Do you agree that there are differences in *ethical behavior* and *moral character*? Why?

2. What is ethical behavior?

3. What is moral character?

4. What defines a person's character?

5. What provides a foundation for all morality?

6. What does the outward demonstration of good behavior stem from?

7. Are cultural standards sufficient to define good moral conduct?

8. An immoral person can be a professional and follow ethical standards.
Circle one: True or False

9. Morality is only concerning sexual purity.
Circle one: True or False

10. Good moral character will cause a person to practice right behavior in every area of life. Circle one: True or False

11. What verse of Scripture instructs us in how we should "think"?

12. What are four guidelines to help develop good moral character?
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____

13. How can one avoid entertaining impure thoughts?
- _____
- _____
- _____

14. What does the peace of God do in His answer of assurance?
- _____
- _____
- _____

15. If you were being judged by your appearance or by your associations, what might some determine? (There is no right or wrong answer. Spend a few minutes thinking about your particular situation. What have people concluded about you, that may or may not be true, because of the way you appear or the people you are seen with?)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

16. Jesus was criticized and wrongly accused for what activity?
- _____
- _____
- _____

17. Peter challenged believers to be holy in _____ and in _____.

18. What personal areas must reflect holiness and moral purity?

19. What is the exacting measure by which we are to judge our conduct?

20. In what three areas of our relationships should integrity be apparent?

A.

B.

C.

Lesson 13

Ministers' Relationships with the Community

KEY VERSE

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16, NLT)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Realize that a pastor's influence extends beyond the local congregation
- Recognize that ministers have a God-given ministry to the community
- Understand that outreach into the community has one purpose: salvation of the lost
- Plan effective outreach into the local community
- Become involved in civic organizations

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

"Ye are the salt of the earth . . . ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see

your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:13–16). This statement of Jesus presents ministers to their communities as the spiritual leader, a leader who has all the qualities and virtues to be an example of the life that is satisfying and fulfilling.

In every community, it is likely that most of the people belong to different religions and beliefs that do not provide the reality and truth apostolic Christians are privileged to have. The Holy Spirit can be experienced only as one becomes a Book-of-Acts Christian. By the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, believers become disciples of Jesus with new perceptions, values, and attitudes that make them new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).

Ministers with their transformed personality should relate to their community in ways that will challenge them to want to become Christians. Their relationships should be aimed at winning as many as possible to their faith. Therefore, a practical demonstration of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) to the people of the community will be a fulfillment of the commandment of Jesus to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

A WITNESS UNTO JESUS, BEGINNING FROM JERUSALEM

Paul exhorted Timothy to “preach the word . . . do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:2, 5). Even though they may not have the ministry of an evangelist, ministers are supposed to be preachers of the gospel and soulwinners. The community in which the minister lives is his or her “Jerusalem” for the preaching of the gospel and soulwinning (Acts 1:8).

The truth in Jesus that they have found and believed and the power of the Holy Spirit they have experienced should be communicated to the people of the community. Both in their personal interactions and verbal communication, they should have the desire of winning their hearers to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If the community identifies ministers with Jesus Christ, as the people of Antioch observed about the disciples (Acts 11:26), they will look to them as ministers with a difference. If ministers allow the virtues and qualities of the Holy Spirit to flow freely out of them, the people will look to them as respected and dignified ministers in the community. If ministers preach the gospel of salvation in Jesus, the people will begin to consider converting to their faith. The field of the ministers’ community is always ripe for the harvest of souls. Ministers should not

hesitate to take advantage of these opportunities to demonstrate in practical terms the gospel of Jesus Christ.

GETTING INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

When it comes to matters relating to community activities, ministers have diverse opinions about the involvement of the man of God. Some share the view that ministers ought to remain in their spiritual domain and allow the community to do their own thing. They think that Jesus has already separated the two and therefore “God and Caesar” cannot be brought together. Others think that for ministers to live in their ivory towers and leave the community to themselves will be like loving only with our mouths.

Whichever view ministers hold about the relationship between ministers and their community in practical activities, they should not lose sight of the fact that they already live in the community and therefore are members of that particular community. Taking the extreme position of either getting overly involved or overly isolated will not enhance the dignity of the ministry. Being prudent and selective in the type of activities ministers could get involved in would promote their own soulwinning programs. For example, in clean-up campaigns, ministers could physically participate and encourage members of the congregation to do likewise. They could give words of encouragement, citing an example from the Word of God and drawing their attention to the attitude of service Jesus exhibited to the world for their salvation.

COMMUNITY POLITICS

Ministers, like all true believers in Christ, are ordained by the Lord to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9). Christians can assume this position only in the kingdom of God. Because Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), it is difficult for the politics of this world to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. Most politicians push the Lord to the sidelines and do their own thing.

Ministers, as servants of God, should be careful that they do not become involved in a system that is hostile to the King they serve. Ministers should be very careful as to how involved they become in community politics. Ministers have a

clear calling to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone. They do not want to limit their influence because they clearly belong to one party and therefore denounce the other parties.

Limiting one's involvement in community politics does not imply that ministers should defy the secular leadership of the community. In obedience to the Word of God, ministers should lead by example and "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans 13:1-2).

CONCLUSION

We are "in this world" but are not supposed to be "of this world." Let us set our sights and goals on things above, and look for God's kingdom, which will take us "out of this world"! Until then, we must be salt and light in our community, offering hope and a clear message of redemption through Jesus Christ.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the position of ministers in their community according to Matthew 5:13-16?

2. What should be the sole aim of ministers as they relate to the people of their community?

3. Ministers who do not have the ministry of an evangelist should not preach the gospel or be a soulwinner.
Circle one: True or False

4. What is your opinion about the minister's involvement in matters of community activities?

5. Give an example of what a minister can do to encourage people involved in community activities.

6. Why should ministers avoid the politics of the world?

7. Why should ministers be subject unto the leadership of the world?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 14

Pastors' Relationship with Their Predecessor

KEY VERSE

He that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God. (I Corinthians 3:8-9)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- React properly to people who disliked the former pastor
- Recognize potential conflict between pastors and their predecessors
- Treat predecessors with respect
- Build upon the accomplishments of the past
- Give honor to whom honor is due

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

Much of a pastor's work will be to reap where others have sown. Too many forget this in their work for the Lord. Many will say, "Nothing happened in this

town until Brother and Sister So and So came.” They forget the sacrificial efforts of those who labored previously, perhaps laying a foundation for the work.

A number of years ago we started a branch work in one of the larger cities of North America. Eventually, the work grew to where it was advisable to put it on its own, and the pastoral duties were turned over to a dear friend. He is still pastoring this thriving church, but to this day he never forgets, nor allows his congregation to forget, the formative days. Is there any wonder why God has blessed this assembly and pastor, who have this kind of spirit and attitude?

Why do some desire to erase any record of previous efforts in a place? Do we believe what Paul taught: “He that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God” (I Corinthians 3:8-9)? Could it be that we are desirous to capture all credit for what is done in a certain locality?

When you as a minister follow another in a work, you should carefully study your predecessor’s plans and methods. It is best to withhold judgment in a situation that you know very little about. It is best to continue with his or her methods, as best you can, with no radical changes at the beginning. It is also good to honor your predecessors. Think of the good they did, and compliment them publicly for their labor. Always be strictly truthful and moderate in your references.

You need to keep in mind that your predecessor may have many friends in the congregation, especially new converts who came to the Lord under his or her ministry, who still have a strong love for the former pastor. They will easily transfer their affections and be your loyal supporters if you are kind to their friend.

Guard against resentment forming in your heart toward the former pastor. The respect people show to a former pastor should assure you that eventually, if you are worthy, they will show the same love to you. You will earn your own place and standing as a leader in the congregation.

How should you react to those who dislike the former pastor? Just remember that the very ones who discuss the predecessor so freely will more than likely give you a similar introduction to your successor. Never let slip from your lips a single word of discredit to the former pastor. A criticism of a former minister given to a person of this type goes much farther than if told to others. The best thing is to refrain from speaking disparagingly of either your predecessor or successor.

Those tactless persons who delight in informing the new pastor that the former pastor never did as he is doing will always be around. Resist the temptation to tell them off or to inform them that you are not Brother or Sister So and So. A good reply is to tell them that “ministers are different and have different ways of working,” or “why don’t we just try this out and see how it works?”

What should you do when the former pastor comes back for a visit? Do not be angry if he comes to town and does not even give you the courtesy of a call. He may be fearful because of what he has heard of former pastors who came back to town. It would be wise for you as the current pastor to extend the courtesy of a call and invite the former pastor to come to your home for a visit or meal and, by all means, to come to the church.

Your attitude should not be one of suspicion. You should not think of former pastors as intruders or mischief makers. They may be lonely. Their feelings may come from a keen disappointment or from loneliness. On the other hand, it could be that you are too sensitive to their return, which could reveal something unworthy in you.

If you have any reason to suspect that the former pastor is trying to undermine your influence, first of all, give him or her the benefit of your confidence. You may have misjudged the situation. By trying to understand the former pastor and by making him or her your friend, you may avoid a lot of problems.

If it later becomes clear that the former pastor is meddling with the congregation by projecting his or her influence into a field that is no longer under his or her jurisdiction, steps should be taken to resolve the situation. With the love of God in your heart, go to the former pastor and be very frank and honest with him or her. A kind, firm, and personal approach to the problem is always more profitable than spreading the news about with the intent of destroying his or her influence. If the former pastor will not hear you, follow the steps given in Matthew 18:15-17.

Humility is a grace appreciated by every Christian. It puts people at ease about ministers since they feel they can take them at face value inasmuch as the ministers are not trying to sell themselves.

CONCLUSION

As a pastor, remember to give honor to whom honor is due and in honor prefer your brother (Romans 12:10; 13:7). How you speak of your predecessor is an indication of the type of leader you are. As a humble, God-called minister, you should understand that you are a servant. Your focus is not to make yourself look better than someone else. Your job is to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (I Peter 5:2-4).

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Why would a pastor desire to remove any record of what the predecessor did?

2. How should you react to people in your church who disliked the former pastor?

3. If you think the former pastor is trying to undermine you, what should you do? Support your answer with a verse of Scripture.

4. If the former pastor comes back to the community to visit but does not call you first, what should you do?

Lesson 15

Pastors' Relationship with Their Successor

KEY VERSES

He that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God. (I Corinthians 3:8-9)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Treat their successors with respect
- Facilitate a smooth transition by giving support to the incoming pastor
- Know when God is preparing them for a transition
- Relate appropriately to the congregation once a new pastor is selected
- Leave the congregation while maintaining their respect and transferring their loyalty to the new pastor.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

If you as a pastor still occupy the pulpit after your successor has been chosen, what should you do?

1. Speak well of your successor. Do not use flattery or be dishonest. Tell the good things you know about the person and urge the people to give him or her love and loyalty.
2. Begin to gently unwind the tendrils of love the congregation has woven around you and attach them to the person who follows you. You will save yourself and others embarrassment if you will explain to the congregation some principles of ministerial ethics. Let them know that while you will always love them and be their friend, you are no longer their pastor. Such being the case, it is proper for them to seek advice and counsel from the new pastor. They owe him or her that trust and confidence.
3. Every outgoing pastor should meet with and advise the new pastor of local conditions to be helpful to him or her. Be on guard against seeming to direct the future work. Make it clear that the situation is now entirely in his or her hands.

As the former pastor, it is not necessary for you to tell the new pastor everything you may know concerning the people of the church, and it could be a hindrance. What new pastors do not know will not necessarily hurt them. Let them find out some things for themselves. On the other hand, they may need to know some things to avoid pitfalls.

When you leave a work, you should sever your relationship with that church after you have preached your last sermon and, if at all possible, leave town. If members of the congregation call or ask for help or advice, remind them that conditions may have changed since you were there, rendering you incapable of an accurate opinion. Let the people know that you have confidence in their new pastor and that they would do well to trust and follow him. Sharply limit your correspondence; often it is necessary to eliminate it entirely. You are no longer their pastor.

Do not wish for the downfall of the church, for that would not reflect credit on you. If the church has been built on Christ, it will last. But if it has been built on you and your personality, it is bound to fall.

Tie the people to your successor. In so doing, you are helping to preserve that church. Departing pastors should continually remind themselves that the people of the church were not theirs after all. They were purchased with Christ's

blood and belong only to Him. It is in times of transition like this that we need to see more clearly our real mission on earth.

Our task is to point people to Jesus Christ while we remain in the background. And whatever good was accomplished during our tenure as pastor, we must give the credit to God, since it is He who gives the increase.

When ministers transfer to another church, they need to positively embrace this decision and inform the congregation that the national office will secure a new pastor for the church. As much as possible, the outgoing pastor need to encourage the church to accept the next successor as God's choice and together they will move forward in revival.

The outgoing pastors should spend much prayer regarding the transfer and their successor. The key to kingdom progress is unity, and this is maintained by remembering that the church belongs to God. Ministers are under shepherds faithfully serving the chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

What if it becomes necessary for you as the outgoing pastor to visit in the homes of former saints for business or other reasons? If possible, take the new pastor with you. At the very least, call and advise him or her of your plans and the reason for the visit. Do not allow unnecessary suspicions to arise in his or her mind.

To insure a smoother and more graceful changeover of pastorates, review the organizational constitution separately with the church board and with the incoming pastor. This reminds everyone of areas of potential change and protects against inappropriate changes.

Point out the opportunities the local church may have in the community, along with any obstacles. Be sure that all debts that can possibly be cleared are taken care of before leaving town. Any remaining creditors should be contacted and assured of payment. All church records should be brought up to date and arranged in good shape before you leave.

If the mission has a house or parsonage, leave it as clean as possible. Get all your belongings together so you do not have to keep returning. Relinquish your hold upon the church and turn your face and force in another direction. A gracious departure is always a victory.

What considerations should lead ministers to seek another field?

1. The deep-seated feeling in their heart that they are through, not just a passing mood. They need to ask: What have I done in this church? What more can I do? When the answer to the first completely outweighs the second, they may need to start looking elsewhere.
2. Unyielding opposition that will not give way after much prayer and fasting and when the pastor is no longer received by the people. It is very difficult for ministers to succeed in the face of continuing violent opposition.

A word of caution: Until pastors completely know the mind of the Lord, they would be wise not even to suggest the possibility that they might depart. And once they have made the decision, they should generally not reconsider.

CONCLUSION

John Maxwell has often said, "There is no success without a successor." Ministry is a rewarding yet delicate service to others. If ministers are not careful, they might think that as a minister, they control the people and the power will not allow them to easily step aside to make room for a successor.

To a certain degree, the success of the new pastor will be influenced by the support given by the outgoing pastor. Support the incoming pastor with positive, uplifting words and let the congregation see your support and approval. In the end, everyone benefits and the church moves forward.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What three things should the former pastor do to strengthen his successor in the eyes of the church members?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

2. What should the former minister guard against doing?

3. What should departing ministers remind themselves about the church?

4. After a pastor has resigned, should he or she still give counsel to church members?

5. If it becomes necessary for the former pastor to visit the house of a member, what should he or she do first to remove unnecessary suspicion?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 16

Pastors' Relationship with Their Congregation

KEY VERSES

As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly – not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. (I Peter 5:1-4, NLT)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Understand the role of a shepherd and how it relates to ministry
- Recognize their familial role to the congregation
- Develop the God-given potential in members of the congregation
- Seek to difuse conflicts within the congregation
- Equip members spiritually.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

A pastor's first responsibility is to shepherd the flock of Christ (John 21:15-17). Every ministerial activity should come from this understanding and position. One of the most important activities of ministers is the feeding and nurturing of the members of the church and providing spiritual leadership and direction toward their growth and maturity in the Lord.

THE MINISTER AS A SHEPHERD

Providing spiritual leadership for the saints is manifested as the ministers lead the congregations to seek the Lord and continually be in touch with Him. In fulfilling their priestly role on behalf of the congregation, they come before the presence of the Lord with the individual and collective needs of the people. Like Samuel, they intercede on their behalf and petition the Lord for His forgiveness and blessings (I Samuel 7:8-10). As they return from the presence of God to the congregation, they must bring to them the Word of God. They must communicate to them in their preaching and teaching the will of the Lord for the members both individually and collectively.

This shepherding role requires that they demonstrate love, concern, and care for the flock. They should have time for every individual member and listen to their needs, aspirations, and problems with the view to encourage them and find solutions to their problems. After all, when everything else has been forgotten, the practical love and concern of the pastor will long be remembered. A relationship that promotes the well-being of members in a church is the greatest and most priceless sermon ever preached by any minister. The concern and care of Moses for the children of Israel caused him to sit for long hours each day just to listen to every member of the congregation who had a petition to present to him (Exodus 18:13-16). Because of his concern and love for the people, the congregation looked to him as a leader and gave him their respect and confidence.

The tendency of many ministers is to be so preoccupied with their own personal and family problems they scarcely have time to share the needs and problems of their congregation as a whole, let alone those of the individual members.

The challenge for ministers is to identify who they really are as they ponder over the statement of Jesus: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (John 10:11-12).

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS SPIRITUALLY

For most of the day, individual members are found in their homes, businesses, and elsewhere without the pastor and the rest of the congregation. The fellowship of members that provides inspiration and courage and incites faith to fight the spiritual battle with the devil may be absent all day. They are left to battle the enemy alone. Most often, these are difficult times for members to draw upon their spiritual resources to overcome the enemy.

Ministers must find time to equip the members with the spiritual weapons of truth, righteousness, faith, the Word of God, salvation, peace, and prayer so that while they are alone, they can still battle the devil and emerge as victors in Christ.

MINISTERS AS BROTHERS OR SISTERS

Pastors must be reminded always that their congregation consists of brothers or sisters; in other words, they are not the father of the congregation. When pastors cease to be brothers or sisters and assume the role of fathers, which only belongs to God, they do a great disservice to their members.

In their brotherly or sisterly roles, they identify with the saints in their common problems and needs (I Peter 5:7-10) and seek the Lord together for His blessings. When ministers change their role and become fathers, the congregation looks to them as their providence and expects to receive from them what they should be looking for from God. As important as the confidence and trust of the congregation in ministers is, they should not yield to the temptation of playing God and making promises or attempts that in the end only lead to frustration in both the members and the pastor. Instead, ministers, as a brother or sister, should use the Word of God and their personal experiences to build the right trust and confidence in the members. They should motivate them through recognition of their efforts and appreciation of their achievements with the assurance that as the Lord has enabled them in those achievements, so will He see them through the rest.

DEVELOPING GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL IN MEMBERS

The result of every minister's responsibilities relating to preaching, teaching, and counseling is to help individual members recognize their God-given ministries, gifts, and abilities and develop them for service to the Lord. Ministers should pray in this direction and observe their members very closely to identify their gifts and ministries. As these gifts and abilities are identified, ministers should create opportunities in the fellowship to enable these members to exercise their gifts.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, as members exercise their gifts among the congregation, the occurrence of problems arising becomes inevitable. As conflicts manifest and the unity and cooperation in the fellowship become threatened, ministers should be on the alert and stop such differences before they reach such dimensions that are almost uncontrollable.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. According to John 21:15-17, what is the first responsibility of the pastor to the flock of Christ?

2. One of the most important activities of ministers is _____ and _____ the members of the church.

3. In fulfilling their priestly role, what should ministers do . . .
A. For the members before God?

- B. For God to the members?

4. What should ministers do for individual members to encourage them?

5. In these modern times, why do ministers have little or no time for individual members of the congregation?

6. In what family status should the pastor symbolically relate to the congregation?

7. What is the main goal of a minister's preaching, teaching, and counseling?

8. When conflicts arise among the congregation, what should the minister do before the problem gets out of hand?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 17

Pastors' Relationship with Evangelists

KEY VERSE

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11, NLT)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Understand the role of an evangelist
- Know how to be a good host to the evangelist
- List the pastor's expectations from the evangelist
- Value the evangelist's expectation from the pastor
- Prepare the church for the evangelist's coming.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

One of the important ministries contributing to church growth and expansion is the evangelistic ministry. Evangelists are endowed with the gifts of

soulwinning and imparting of faith through the preaching of the gospel. Whereas teachers, pastors, prophets, and even apostles may spend most of their time in one place, evangelists spend a good deal of their time visiting several churches and places for soulwinning emphasis.

By the nature of their ministry, most evangelists have an outgoing temperament and cannot easily adapt to activities that may tend to slow them down or pin them to minor things that may not be directly involved in soulwinning. As a result, many other ministers have a difficult time relating cordially with evangelists during their visitations.

THE ROLE OF THE HOST MINISTER

The recognition that the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11) is intertwined is very important to the host minister. Paul illustrated it very clearly in I Corinthians 12:12-30:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. . . . If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? . . . And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . But God hath tempered the body together . . . that there should be no schism in the body.

With this understanding of the ministry, host ministers should afford evangelists a hearty welcome. They should make sure their lodging is suitable and comfortable, and all supplies that may be needed are provided. If they live up to expectation in this area, they will soon realize that evangelists who receive the best reception turn out to be highly motivated and effective soulwinners.

When host ministers remove all doubts and suspicions, this encourages the congregation to relate freely with evangelists and share common exchanges of greeting. If host ministers approve, it is appropriate for the members to give the evangelist gifts as tokens of their appreciation as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

Good compliments are very effective motivational tools to build a minister's prestige before a congregation. The host minister should give the evangelist an equally good farewell together with the congregation. This farewell

could be seasoned with hearty exchanges of greetings and impressions about one another. It could be concluded with prayers of blessings for each other. The elders of Ephesus gave an impressive example to Paul in Acts 20:36: “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”

THE ROLE OF EVANGELISTS

Evangelists are people who visit many people and places with different characteristics. In some areas, the reception from the host minister and congregation may be first class. In other areas, it may be quite below their expected standard. Other conditions like the spiritual level of the host congregation may differ from place to place. Experiencing all these conditions, the evangelist may tend to feel more at home in some places than others.

No matter what the standard may be, evangelists should express gratefulness for whatever reception is given. Even a “widow’s mite” welcome deserves appreciative comments since the resources of each host are not the same.

Wise evangelists will not offend their hosts by criticizing them and the congregation instead of complimenting them. As they move from place to place, they must not fail to realize the changing cultural settings and practices. Therefore, what may be absurd about people in one place may be very meaningful to the people who understand the cultural ramifications. Evangelists may have to have bigger bridles for their mouths than the rest of the fivefold ministers.

The free interaction between a congregation and an evangelist should not be used as an occasion by the evangelist to steal the congregation’s love and respect for their own ministry team. No matter how appreciative the congregation may be of the evangelist’s power-packed ministry, the evangelist should still direct his or her attention and support to the host pastor, expressing by action that their ministry is only complementary to that of the host minister. They should refrain from discussing with the congregation administrative issues that have local dimensions.

CONCLUSION

Finally, evangelists should leave their hosts and congregation with the feeling of satisfaction, gratefulness, and the desire to have them come visit again. Their departing remarks should be full of respect for the efforts of their host in nurturing the congregation. The departing evangelist may even cite several examples of the areas he or she feels impressed about and encourage the host and the entire congregation to continue the good work done.

Shortly after they have left, they should send a word of thanks assuring them of their spiritual and moral support, requesting, if they so desire, to be informed of the results of the visit and ministration.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What ministry largely contributes to church growth and expansion?

2. What temperamental factor prevents evangelists from easily adapting to activities that tend to slow them down?

3. Why do other ministers sometimes find it difficult to relate cordially with evangelists during their visitations?

4. The fivefold ministry is linked together. What verse of Scripture in the New Testament supports this fact?

5. Why is a hearty welcome important for the visiting evangelist?

6. What two words are effective motivational tools to build a minister's prestige before a congregation?

7. Which elders gave a good example of farewell to Paul?

8. How should evangelists respond to the reception given them even though it may be below their expectation?

9. What should evangelists do instead of criticizing their host minister and congregation?

10. What kind of feeling should evangelists leave with their host minister and the congregation?

Personal Study Notes

Missionary Spotlight

Lloyd and Nancy Shirley

By Lloyd Shirley

I was born April 1, 1942, to Wilbur and Mary Floy Shirley, North Little Rock, Arkansas. After graduating from high school in North Little Rock in 1960, I worked a year, then traveled to St. Paul, Minnesota, to attend the Apostolic Bible Institute. It was there I met Nancy Eikamp from Cochrane, Wisconsin, who had also graduated from high school in 1960. Nancy and I were married in August 1963, and both graduated in 1964 with a BA degree in theology. After evangelizing during the summer months, we took the pastorate of a small church in Worthington, Minnesota, and erected a new facility for the church. During that time, I was elected as the youth president of the Minnesota/Manitoba District and Nancy became the editor of the district news, the *Minnesota-Manitoba Messenger*. Our three children were born in Worthington, Minnesota: Stephen in 1964, Kevin in 1967 (deceased), and Cylinda in 1968.



Our call to missions was a bit unusual. At a luncheon Foreign Missions Director T. F. Tenney mentioned that he felt the islands of the Caribbean were ready for revival. I heard the statement and thought it was a passing remark. However, several days later the conversation returned to my mind and continued to do so day after day. I decided to go to the islands to see if this was where I might fit into the work of the Lord and was overwhelmed with the great need. I did not hear a voice or see writing in the sky, but just felt the need to assist in bringing a revival to a needy area of the world. I concluded, "I may not be able to do much, but my little will be better than nothing at all." With that thought and conviction, we made application and received our appointment in 1973. We arrived on the field in August 1974 with Stephen, age 9, and Cylinda, age 6, and made our residence in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

Our work consisted of establishing Bible-believing churches in St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. Kitts, Nevis, and St. Maarten. We also began Bible college training in January 1975, and built the Bible school facility on the island of St. Croix, where we established a three-year Bible program. God did a good work. He was just waiting for a willing person to submit to His will.

During our tours of duty in the Caribbean, we enjoyed a few years of harmony and progress. It did not last forever. As people are people no matter where one resides, there arose differences of strategies and ways. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:10, "Only by pride cometh contention," and the human will brought division. Several chose to go their separate way and as a result division delayed the revival that was happening there. It was definitely a difficult time, but the blessings of the Lord prevailed. I could tell of miracle after miracle that took place, but suffice to say, God never forgot His church.

We also held short-term Bible school sessions in other islands in the summer months. During our tenure we were blessed to have forty-eight different Associate In Missions appointees work with us. They assisted in the construction of the Bible college and churches, taught Bible school sessions, and evangelized in the islands of the Caribbean.

One of the biggest natural challenges was hurricane Hugo in 1989. We had experienced several hurricanes in St. Croix where we lived during the years, but Hugo was one of a different breed. It hit the island with winds of over 180 mph and stalled. Hours seemed like eternity, but when it finally left there were very few structures that stood. All electric and communication lines were down. Fortunately, none of the members in the church or their families suffered the loss of life. Three months after the storm, the electric power was restored to our place of abode and people attempted to regain some semblance of normality. After staying in a house with blue tarps for a roof, camping out lost all appeal to our family of four.

With the Bible college back in operation, with new roofs and strengthened walls, we moved to Puerto Rico, another island about sixty miles to the northwest. All the storms of life bring you closer to the Lord and the family of God.

With the retirement of Glen Smith in 1993, I was appointed as regional field supervisor for Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean and we continued to reside in Puerto Rico. The move to Puerto Rico had placed us in a more accommodating location for travel, and travel I did. I was on the move for the next

eight years. We saw great revival and experienced the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It was in those days that I witnessed over three thousand people receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in one service. God moved in a marvelous way and brought revivals to many areas of the region. During that time, I also served as the superintendent of several nations, including Guyana, Suriname, Belize, Puerto Rico, and others.

In 1994 we moved to North Little Rock, Arkansas, and continued to serve as regional director. It was moving time again in 1999, and we resettled in St. Peters, Missouri. For one year I served in a dual capacity as the director of Education and Associates In Missions as well as the regional director for Central America/Caribbean Region for the United Pentecostal Church. In 2000, Bruce



Lloyd Shirley Family c. 1973

Howell was selected to be the regional director and I became full time as the director of Education and AIM and served in that capacity through the year 2010. We saw the fulfillment of a lifetime dream in Bible college training. Our colleges needed a common core curriculum for all nations. Other regional directors had a like vision, and so Robert Roden-

bush, Jerry Richardson, and I presented it to the Foreign Missions Board, and Global Association of Theological Studies (GATS) came into being. In 2009 the General Conference of the UPCI assisted us by giving a record offering of over \$400,000 to make this become a reality. There were 388 colleges enrolled in 2015.

While serving at WEC, I became involved with Compassion Services International (now known as CSI) and presently serve on the Board of Trustees.

Nancy began work as a part-time secretary for Overseas Ministries in July 1999, and worked there through the year 2010. Our son Steve graduated from Apostolic Bible Institute, and married Kari Montgomery from Indianapolis,

Indiana. They have three children: Kaylin, married to Jordan Dye; Kristin, married to Michael Mass; and Megan. They are superintendent of the work in the Dominican Republic and also of the Leeward Islands.

Our daughter Cylinda worked as a travel agent and graduated from Indiana Bible College. She married John Nickel from Indian Trails, North Carolina, and they have two daughters, Seanna and Emma. They attend New Life Church in Cabot, Arkansas, and are involved in leadership roles there. Cylinda also served as the office manager for Missionary Kids Ministries.

After retirement in 2011, we moved to Lake Conway in Mayflower, Arkansas, where we enjoy the beauty of nature. Nancy and I attend the New Life Church in Cabot, Arkansas, pastored by Tim Gaddy and serve as a deacon and team leaders for the "Flying Eagles," the seniors of the church. I retain my Associate In Missions status and travel overseas to minister and teach in Bible colleges. I continue to serve as an honorary member of the Global Missions Board.

I am also a pen turner and have created over 1,000 ink pens, and enjoy new woods and styles of pens. Many of those pens were given to graduates of our Bible colleges around the world. I also sell them for charity and enjoy seeing others with a nice writing instrument.