

The Life & Work of an Evangelist

Preachers Training Men to Be Preachers 2 Timothy 2:2

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! Romans 10:15b [ESV]



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1. Introduction: Why Preachers Train Other Men to Be Preachers

The Two Purposes of this Book.

This book has two primary purposes. The first is to assist men who are already preachers (or elders) in the churches of Christ to train other men to be evangelists. This command comes to us from the Holy Spirit by the pen of the apostle Paul:

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2

If you are a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, then this command from God applies to you. This book is written to serve as an outline for initial training of other men for the work of a preacher of the Gospel. You may find it useful as the first steps to teach other preachers or preaching trainees.

The second goal is to serve as an introductory guide for men who wish to become evangelists. If you are a faithful Christian man who desires to devote himself to working as a Gospel preacher, then there is no greater commitment you can make for your life's work as a child of God. This book provides a framework and structured outlines to help you begin your training. It is best if you can learn under the supervision of a man who is an experienced preacher.

Why are there Preachers?

1. Because the lost must hear the Gospel (the Word of God in the Bible), believe it, and obey it, if they want to be saved. Romans 10. Because Jesus sends His people: Matthew 28:18-20.
2. Salvation requires faith and obedience. Faith comes by hearing the Word God. Romans 10:17.
3. Preachers are those who go out by God's command to teach and preach only the Word of God. 2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:15-16., 3:14-17.

Jesus commanded His disciples to preach and teach His words by His authority:

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Preachers are the ones sent by the Word of God to tell the world about Christ and the Gospel plan of salvation. Those who HEAR the Truth preached to them and BELIEVE it have FAITH in God. Those who have FAITH (truly believe) will OBEY the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be baptized for the remission of their sins.

Romans 10:14-17 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

What is Preaching?

1. **Publicly teaching only the pure living water of God's Word, the Gospel, to others:**
2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
2. **Making disciples of Christ by baptizing the people who hear the Gospel and believe it:**
Matthew 28:19 (above)
3. **Teaching disciples of Christ (Christians) that they must live the rest of their lives in faithful obedience to the commandments of the Bible:**
Matthew 28:20 (above)

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

4. **Teaching and building up (edifying) the faithful brethren:**
Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.
5. **Rebuking and sinning Christians and restoring them to faithful obedience:**
Titus 2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Through Paul, the Holy Spirit Commands Preachers to Train other Men

The Bible command regarding how a preacher trains other men to be preachers is found in **2 Timothy 2:1-2**:

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

This command is consistent with the command that Jesus gave to His disciples to make more disciples by teaching them to obey His words and instructions: **Matthew 28:18-20**.

There is absolutely no other Bible command or example than this one in 2 Timothy 2 that gives us instruction about how to train preachers. No authority is given to human institutions such as universities or church-sponsored preaching schools and colleges to do this work.

Did the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus Obey These Commands?

Yes, indeed they did! Paul trained Timothy and Titus. Priscilla and Aquilla taught Apollos (Acts 18:26) who had already been taught by others as well (Acts 18:25).

Paul and Barnabas took other men with them on their missionary trips.

Obeying 2 Timothy 2:1-2 Will Reduce the Spread of Error in the Church

We recognize the wisdom of God in the Spirit's command for individual men to teach other men to preach.

If one preacher begins to teach error, he influences only the men he trains.

If a preaching school accepts a false doctrine, everyone in the school may be led astray. The bigger the school, the more men are influenced to sin.

American history proves this to be correct. Many errors and false doctrines have come from both Preachers and Institutions in America.

These errors were then spread everywhere in the world by the people who invented them. They were "inventors of evil things." (Romans 1:30)

When churches own or support human institutions, they feel obligated to accept what they do or risk looking foolish because they allowed false teaching to develop and spread.

Apostasy – The Outcome of Following Error

Departure from the pure Word of God (Apostasy) has happened in the past and will continue to happen.

Not long after they were freed from slavery, the Israelites began to complain and rebel against God.

They complained and sinned throughout their history until God kept His promise to send them away into captivity because of their many sins.

The New Testament also prophesies of the Apostasy we see today:

The Apostle Paul warned the elders in the church in Ephesus:

Acts 20:28-31 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Paul warned Timothy. We see these same errors today:

1 Timothy 4:1-2 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...

God has always commanded His people to follow Him only. It has always been a sin to go outside of the limits of God's Word:

2 John 8-10 *Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*

God commands our service and obedience, not our ideas. God has never authorized His disciples to follow their own ideas.

Matthew 15:8-9 These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Carefully examine any "new" doctrine by comparing it to the Holy Scriptures. If the doctrine agrees with scripture, then it is not new, and you are probably following it already.

Acts 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

But if the doctrine does not agree with the Bible, then it is error and it is a sin to teach it or follow it. All false doctrines produce bad results (bad fruit). Observe and you will see it:

Matthew 7:15-20

15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Do Not Associate with False Teachers – Stay Away from Them

Have nothing to do with false teachers and people who cause trouble and divisions in the church. If they are in the church, put them out and disfellowship them.

Romans 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Titus 3:10-11 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

2 John 8-10 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

The above scriptures do not prevent you from studying with false teachers to get them to believe the truth, change their minds, and stop teaching false doctrines.

How to Use this Book to Train Men to Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ

1. Make a Personal Commitment to Train Men to Preach

Jesus so commanded His disciples (Matthew 28:19-20)

Paul was a living example of this – as we see in his letters to Timothy and Titus.

2. Find Godly Men Who Are Also Willing to Commit Themselves to Study

Examine these men to make sure they are faithful and sincere

Invest all the time necessary to fully train these men

3. Follow the Outline as You See Fit. Teach the Scriptures and Points in It.

4. Make a Daily Training Schedule and Stick to It

5. Give Truthful Encouragement and Criticism to the Men You Train

6. Do not be in a hurry to complete training. Take your time and make sure the men you train learn all they can under your supervision. Going too fast means you will send a man out to preach who is not fully prepared.

If a man you train is not willing to make a commitment to work hard, then it may be best to end training and let him find another way to serve God and to support himself. Luke 9:23-26, 57-62.

2. The Character of a Preacher of the Gospel

Why Do You Want to Preach? Are Your Motives Pure?

What motivates you to preach is very important. The only reason acceptable to God is a deep love for God and His Word combined with a desire to tell as many people as possible about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If this is not your reason for preaching, then something is wrong. You either do not understand what preaching is, or your heart is not right before God.

Here are some sinful reasons for preaching that are condemned in the Bible:

1. Some people desire the attention they may receive from others. This is a sinful motive!

This reason makes people seem righteous in front of others, but they are not really devoted to God. That was the sin of hypocrisy that motivated the Pharisees (Matthew 23).

John 12:42-43 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Here is the correct heart and motive for preaching:

Romans 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

2. Some people want to have positions of power or influence over others. This was the sin or Diotrephes (3 John 9-10). Diotrephes was condemned. It is a sin to seek unscriptural influence!

3. Some preach only to get what they want, to cause division in the church, or to ruin the work and reputation of good preachers:

Philippians 1:15-17 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

4. Some preach only to make a living, not to stand for the Truth in the Word of God

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,
 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,
 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

Men like this do not love God. They want money. They will always be involved in arguments and conflicts because their hearts are not committed to God.

Do not preach for even one of these reasons. God does not approve, and you will condemn yourself and do great damage to the churches and the brethren you work with.

Preaching Is Never about YOU – the Preacher

1. A Preacher must live only for Jesus and the spread of the Gospel message of salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2. Do not become preacher if you want to be famous or admired by others. A preacher's work is to make the name of Jesus known and respected, not his own.

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 3:4-7 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

3. Do not become a preacher if you want to be rich like some false teachers. Money always corrupts the heart. You will destroy yourself and many of those who study and work with you.

1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Jesus was poor by choice. He owned almost nothing.

Luke 9:58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

Always Obey God and Not Men or Their Ideas and False Doctrines

This book may be of use to you in preparing to be a preacher, but in no way can it replace or even compare to the Bible – the Holy Scriptures inspired by God. Only the Bible is inspired and only the Bible must be respected as God's Truth.

Jesus was clear when he rebuked Satan in **Matthew 4:4b** – "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

Our God has all authority, and His Word must be obeyed. (Matthew 7:21-29). A preacher lives a life of obedience to God just as he teaches others to do the same. Never let yourself be influenced or controlled by the ideas or threats of others. Follow only God, just as the apostle Paul did. He is still an example to us today:

Galatians 1:10-12 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God's people are commanded to obey rulers and their laws:

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

But Christians must not obey laws that are sinful:

Consider Daniel and his 3 friends.

Daniel refused to defile himself by eating food forbidden under the law of Moses. The account of how Daniel and his friends refused to eat unclean food and how God blessed them for their faithfulness to the law of Moses is given in Daniel 1.

Daniel's three friends, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abed-Nego), refused to worship the image of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. They were willing to die rather than worship an idol. We read of how God saved them from death in Daniel 3.

Darius, the king of the Medes and Persians, was tricked into making a law that required everyone to worship for 30 days. Daniel refused to obey this law and he was put into a den of lions. The account of how God saved Daniel from death is found in Daniel 6.

The Early Christians understood who their King was:

Acts 5:24-29 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Seek to Be Approved by God and Not by Men

The one who has an honest heart full of love for God, His Son Jesus, and the Bible will preach only what the Bible says. He will obey the Bible even if everyone in the area turns against him.

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Galatians 1:10-12 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Preachers Are Living Examples of Christ and Godly Behavior to Everyone

Preachers are often in the public eye, but a desire for attention or popularity is never the right reason to preach. Always remember that people are watching you. Always behave in ways that God commands and approves. Some people watch you to see how they should behave to please God. Those who do not believe the Bible may watch you to look for opportunities to criticize you so they can turn others away from the Gospel. Either way you must be very careful!

1. The Lives of Preachers Are Patterns of Good Works:

Titus 2:7-8 ... in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

2. We must deliberately set the right example to the brethren we teach and worship with, as well as to each other:

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attention to (public) reading (of the Bible), to exhortation, to doctrine...

15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

3. Hypocrisy is sin and will destroy you and those who trust you:

Romans 2:21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

22 You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

Preachers, with your families, be the living examples God commands. Live for Jesus!

Preachers Have Influence – Be Very Careful in All That You Do and Say

In the Bible, influence is compared to leaven. Leaven (yeast) is mixed into bread to make it rise into a loaf when baked. It only takes a little leaven to make a loaf of bread.

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to leaven because of the good influence of the Gospel:

Mat. 13:33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened" (see Luke 13:21).

Preachers often have influence in the community because of their work. They become known through public preaching. Be very careful. You are an example. People are always watching. Even when you do not seek such attention, you will get it anyway.

ALL Christians are to have good influence on others: Matthew 5:13-16 (Salt and Light).

Examples of Good Leaven (Godly Influence):

Paul's Good Influence on Timothy and Titus by teaching them: 2 Timothy 3:10-14.

When an experienced preacher trains other men to preach, there is the opportunity for very good influence on the other men for the rest of their lives.

The good influence of Lois and Eunice on young Timothy: 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15.

Paul commended the Christians in Thessalonica because they were great examples to others in Macedonia and Achaia: 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

Barnabas was called the "son of encouragement" for the good he did to his brethren: Acts 4:36.

Parents influence their children to live good lives by training them in God's Word: Proverbs 22:6.

Examples of Bad Leaven (Ungodly Influence):

All Christians, including preachers, must be careful not to associate with ungodly people:

1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

False teachers and others with ungodly intentions may also have influence on people hearts and minds. Such influence is harmful to their souls. The Jewish leaders in the time of Christ were hypocrites but they wanted to be respected in the eyes of the people for the wrong reasons:

Matthew 16:6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"

9 "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?"

10 "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?"

11 "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? –but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

King Solomon had a very good influence – people from many places came to hear his wisdom (1 Kings 10:24). But his many pagan wives had a very bad influence on him by turning him to worship idols.

Rehoboam's immature and inexperienced friends influenced him to say and do some very foolish things.

The Judaizing teachers (Christians who did not want to give up the old law) caused problems in many of the early churches because the first century Christians listened to them.

Even Peter, an Apostle himself, behaved like a hypocrite when he refused to eat with the Gentiles when brethren from Jerusalem came to Antioch. His behavior had a bad influence on Barnabas. Galatians 2:11-14.

Paul's Conduct as a Preacher Is Described in 1 Thessalonians 2

Paul's loving words to the brethren of the new church in Thessalonica are good examples to all preachers of how to serve a congregation. Let's study this chapter briefly:

2:1-2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

Persecution must not discourage us from preaching the Truth of the Gospel. We press on!

2:3-4 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

A preacher seeks only to please God. He never tries to deceive those who hear him. A preacher always teaches only the Truth of the Gospel, even when it is not believed.

2:5-7 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others,

when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

Preachers glorify God, not themselves. A preacher never tries to be accepted by others by telling them only what they want to hear or by false praise or compliments. The message of the Gospel is strong, but a preacher presents Bible Truth in gentle words of love. A preacher understands that he is feeding the Gospel – living water and the bread of life – to lost souls with the love and concern that a mother has for her children.

2:8-9 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

A preacher works unselfishly, with a sincere love for brethren and lost souls, even if it means he must risk his own life. If a preacher must work to support himself while he is preaching, then he will do so.

2:10-12 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Preachers always conduct themselves in only the most honorable ways wherever they go and whatever they do. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of this fact and notes that God saw all he did for them. He taught them and encouraged them just as a father does his children.

2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Paul commends the brethren in Thessalonica for accepting the Gospel for exactly what it is – the living Word of God. Paul's good conduct while he was with them preaching, helped the brethren there understand that he was speaking Truth with their best interests in mind.

2:14-16 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul even compares the faith of the Thessalonians with the first Christians in Judea. He notes that Christians in both places were persecuted by unbelievers, proving their common faith in God, just as Paul himself was persecuted (see 2:2). By recognizing this shared bond of experience, he shows that he did not behave as though he was better than any other brother or sister. Preachers, like any other Christian, suffer the same things and do not try to excuse themselves or act like they are better than their brethren.

2:17-18 *But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.*

Preachers love their brethren deeply. They encourage proper fellowship as Christians.

2:19-20 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*

Preachers never commend or glory in themselves. They love the brethren they teach who obey the Gospel. They do not forget them and they work to increase their spiritual welfare.

Always Be Prepared to Stand for God's Word

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Do Not Be Afraid or Ashamed to Proclaim the Gospel

Both Paul and Peter lived lives in bold and open support of the Gospel. They were not ASHAMED to be disciples of Jesus and to stand publicly for Christ. Like many disciples, they were persecuted for their faith in Jesus. But they had COURAGE and did not let fear or worry about their lives control them. The same must be true for you today and for anyone who preaches the Gospel.

If you want to preach, why would you ever be ashamed? What could make you draw back from your courage? One thing is fear of persecution. Another reason might be the mockery or disapproval of others. But to seek the approval of men is to reject our faith in God. To seek the approval of God is to reject the fear of men, Let a preacher never be ashamed of the Gospel!

Romans 1:15-16 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

1 Peter 4:15-16 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

1 Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

2 Timothy 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2 Timothy 1:16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Let us be bold and have courage to serve God openly and never feel afraid or timid in our stand for God. If we truly love God and trust in Him with all our hearts, then we will never be ashamed of our faith and preaching even when we are threatened or persecuted.

Hebrews 10:38-39 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Preacher: Choose Your Words Carefully!

Preaching is a kind of teaching, and teaching requires speaking. God keeps a record of all we say and do our entire lives. Our words can do much harm, or they can do much good. People are more likely to respect and listen to someone who speaks kindly and wisely.

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

Ephesians 4:29-30 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Proverbs 25:11-13 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear. Like the cold of snow in time of harvest Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

Matthew 12:35-37 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

The Lifestyle of a Preacher Is Humble and Modest

What the Bible Says about the Lifestyle of a Preacher

INTRODUCTION

There are many rich preachers, in America and all over the world. Do not envy them! What are their motives? What do they do with their money? Covetousness is the same as idolatry: Colossians 3:5.

Hear Jesus in Luke 16:13-15 *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

A. The Prophets of the Old Testament

1. The prophets glorified God never themselves.
 - a. Elijah wore rough clothes (2 Kings 1:8) and had no permanent residence.
 - b. Isaiah's prophecies were rejected all his life, as were Jeremiah's. Jeremiah's life was filled with rejection and persecution.
2. John the Baptizer lived a very humble life: Matthew 3:1-6, Mark 1:1-6, Luke 1:80.
3. The prophets endured persecution and abuse – Matthew 23:29-37.
4. They are examples to us – James 5:10-11.
5. Jesus warned His disciples they would experience the same things – Matthew 10:16-32.
6. Paul warned Timothy likewise – 2 Timothy 3:10-12.

B. What the Bible Says about Riches

1. Old Testament – Do Not Trust in Riches: Psalm 49:6-11, Psalm 62:10, Job 31:24-25, 28.
2. New Testament – Money is a snare (1 Timothy 6:9-10); run away from riches (1 Timothy 6:11).
3. The Rich Young Ruler gave up his soul for his possessions – Matthew 19:21-24.
4. Jesus commands us to deny ourselves! Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23
5. Store true wealth in heaven: Matthew 6:19-21, Mat. 19:21, Mark 10:21, Luke 18:22.
6. The wisdom of Agur: Take these words to heart – Give me neither poverty nor riches-Feed me with the food allotted to me. (Proverbs 30:8b).
7. Your heart is where your treasure is. Where are the hearts of wealthy preachers?

- C. The Lifestyle and Example of Jesus:** He had nowhere to lay His head: Matthew 8:20. Supported by Galilean women: Luke 8:1-3. He owned nothing. Serving His Father was His all: John 17

D. The Lifestyle and Examples of the Early Christians

1. Barnabas and the first Christians sold their goods and shared – Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:34-37.
2. Godliness with contentment is great gain – 1 Timothy 6:6-8
3. Give up the material things of this life: Philippians 3:8-11, 4:10-19
4. We cannot have it both ways, we must choose: Matthew 6:24

E. What about Preachers and Christians Today?

1. A Preacher may be supported by his church and others if needed: 1 Corinthians 9:6-14.
2. Live a life of self-denial and economic modesty. Support yourself as much as you can. Paul did. Acts 18:1-3, 1 Corinthians 9:15-18, 2 Corinthians 11:7-9.

F. CONCLUSION

1. Do not be deceived by materialism. Follow the example of Jesus, the prophets, and the Apostles. Be content to have the basic needs of your family supplied. Or you will sin!

3. The Work and Responsibilities of a Preacher of the Gospel

Types of Evangelism

Public Evangelism: Open Street Preaching

The Bible is full of examples of what we call “street preaching” today. Street preaching is just informal public preaching to the people in any location. The prophets did it; John the Baptizer did it; Jesus did it, and so did His Apostles after His ascension. And disciples have done it ever since. In the Bible, God often sent His spokesmen to specific people or to a specific location.

Just before He ascended, Jesus sent His disciples into all the world (Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16), and that command still applies today. This is the simplest and most effective way to reach the public in most places around the world. Street Preaching can be done by one man or several. There is wisdom in going out preaching in groups. Different men can take turns speaking. While one speaks, others can be prepared to answer questions from the crowd or exhort and encourage individual people who are present.

Door Knocking or Door-to-Door Evangelism

This kind of evangelism involves going through a community knocking on the doors of homes and businesses to offer the Gospel to anyone who will stop to listen. This can be done alone or in groups of two or more.

Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs on at least two occasions, in Mark 6:7 and Luke 10. We see the same approach used by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey in Acts 13, and then afterward by Paul and Silas, and Barnabas and Mark, in Acts 15:36-40.

There is nothing wrong with evangelizing alone. We see New Testament examples of that as well (see below). But whenever possible and practical, go in groups. When some are preaching, others can be talking with the audience or others passing by to invite them to join.

Private Group Evangelism

Speaking to a group in private may result from a personal invitation from a church member to study with friends or family. An opportunity may also arise from someone who was present during street preaching and wants to learn more in private. Meeting privately may involve making an appointment to visit a home or business on a specific day and time. Such opportunities should always be accepted because they represent an open door to teach the Bible.

Again, it is wise to bring at least two men to teach private groups. An example of this kind of evangelism is the meeting Peter had with Cornelius and his household. Jesus always used invitations into the homes of various Jews as a means of teaching.

Private One-on-One Evangelism

Preachers have many opportunities to teach people individually. Jesus taught Nicodemus (John 3), the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar (John 4), and the man born blind (John 9). Philip taught the Eunuch (Acts 8). Sometimes one-on-one studies happen in the moment when you

engage someone in conversation while doing other things. Be ready! Accept these opportunities when they arise.

Preachers Must Devote Themselves Completely to Preaching

Preaching Requires Knowledge, Strength, and Full Commitment to God and His Word

1. **Preachers must study constantly and diligently so they know the Word:**
2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
2. **Preachers must be prepared to defend the Bible to those who question them:**
1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
3. **Preachers must be prepared to endure hardship:**
2 Timothy 2:3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.
4. **Preachers must be prepared every day for war against Satan:**
2 Timothy 2:3-4 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

How do we do this? How can preachers prepare for success in this “good fight” as Paul calls it?

The Necessity of Structure, Planning, & Organization in a Preacher’s Life

A. The Specific Commands of Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:11-16

1. **Be a good example** to others (4:12).
2. **Devote yourself completely** to all the work of preaching (4:13).
3. **Meditate, give yourself entirely** (Take pains, be absorbed) (4:15) in your work as a preacher so that your good example and progress will be seen by all.
4. **Pay close attention** (take heed) **to yourself and to the doctrine you teach** / Be conscientious about how you live and what you teach (4:16a)
5. **Continue / persist / persevere** (4:16b) in your work so you will succeed in your service to God.

These commands are applied in the following sections.

B. The Life of a Preacher and a Preaching Trainee: Structure, Organization, and Discipline

1. Focus for the Trainee: Begin your training by committing to self-discipline – Faster growth.

2. Focus for the Preacher who Trains: You are an example so be an example of organization.
3. Focus for Both the Preacher & the Trainee:
 - a. **Develop and Keep a Plan for Training Growth and Success**
 - b. Plan from the top level down.
 - c. Create a **structured preacher training plan and schedule**, then **keep it**.
 - d. Write a **WEEKLY routine and schedule** and **keep it**.
 - e. Write a **DAILY routine and schedule** and **keep it**.
 - f. Experience proves that training success is unlikely without an organized plan in place.
 - g. If you are not the kind of man who can organize and keep a schedule, don't train others.
4. This kind of structure increases the likelihood that your training program will succeed:
 - a. A **WRITTEN training plan** includes all the steps necessary to prepare for a life of preaching.
 - b. A **WRITTEN SCHEDULE** allows you to devote enough time to complete the plan.
 - c. **TRACKING YOUR SCHEDULE** lets you measure your progress and change as needed.

C. Make and Follow a Preacher Training Program and Plan

1. Both the teacher and the trainee must commit themselves to complete the plan. Be diligent in keeping the plan. Leave nothing unfinished. Do not hurry or rush through the plan.
2. Devote at least a year to this training plan. 1.5 - 2 years is better. If the trainee is part-time, expect the training to take longer.
3. The Training Plan has 2 main parts: WHAT you will do and a SCHEDULE to get it done.
 - a. A good plan involves full training in all key skills and an extensive schedule.
 - b. You do not have to attempt everything at once. Begin with the basics.
 - c. Don't be in a hurry – haste will work against you.
 - d. Write your plan down. Start with an outline and fill in the details.
 - e. Keep a complete copy of the plan and improve it by revision as you learn the best way to accomplish each goal. Do not lose your copy! Keep backups stored in a safe places.

D. Best Practices: Make Very Good Use of Your Time: Colossians 4:5-6

1. **Abilities you should expect to have by the time the training period is ended:**
 - a. Able to lead or oversee the complete worship services in the Sunday assembly: prayer, communion, contribution, song leading, Bible classes, sermons.
 - b. Experience in public and private evangelism, visitation, and rebuking and restoring sinning brethren.
 - c. A completed basic study of the books of the Bible. A list of memorized Bible verses.
 - d. Able to explain the plan of salvation in detail with all supporting verses.

- e. A thorough understanding of the work and organization of the church.
- f. Able to recognize false doctrines and oppose them.
- g. At least some progress in more advanced studies (see D. 5 below)

2. Establish a Daily Routine & Discipline

- a. This routine will assist you in successful training. Stay organized for the rest of your life.
- b. Pray multiple times a day. Frequent prayer will keep you focused on God and your work.
 - i. Set times to pray alone. Keep a list of what you will say to God. Update the list regularly.
 - ii. Lead your family in prayer. Pray individually with your wife and children.
 - iii. Do not miss these times. Keep the schedule and pray faithfully.
 - iv. Study the scriptures that teach the importance of prayer.
 - v. Keep a simple prayer journal – a record of your prayers and what you have said to God. Review your journal from time to time. Read Psalms 86 and 103 and understand how dependent we all are on our prayers to God.
- c. Read your Bible on a strict schedule.
 - i. Set a plan to read the entire Bible in a year. Set time to read & study each day.
 - ii. Do not miss these times. Keep the schedule faithfully.
- d. Devote a specific number of hours each day to your training program and plan.
 - i. The preacher and trainee should meet daily to work on the training program.
 - ii. Part of this time should include prayer together as well as Bible study and class and sermon preparation.
- e. Set aside time for family even if it lengthens the time needed to complete your training.

3. Establish a Weekly Routine & Discipline

- a. This routine will also assist you in successful training. Stay organized the rest of your life.
- b. The preacher & trainee must set a fixed number of hours each day of each week to study & work. The Lord's Day and days devoted to evangelism would be exceptions.
- c. Devote this time to the study topics recommended in this book. Focus on in-depth Bible study and the points in the following sections 4 and 5.

4. Practice Teaching & Preaching

a. Practice Preaching Sermons

- i. Prepare at least one sermon a week. Two is better. Save copies of all the sermons.
- ii. Preach when given the opportunity by the preacher who is conducting the training.

- iii. By the time training is completed, the trainee will have many sermons ready to use in the future.
- iv. Learn how to prepare expository and topical sermons. You may then move on to textual (brief expository) and narrative sermons.
- v. Learn how to deliver lessons that are clear and concise.
- vi. Strive for steady improvement week to week.
- vii. Get experience with street preaching.

b. Practice teaching classes

- i. The trainee must learn how to outline and present concise lessons on books of the Bible and topical subjects.
- ii. The Trainee must become familiar with sources of sound teaching material and assemble his own library of Bible class lessons.
- iii. The trainee must develop experience in teaching and leading classes in the assembly.
- iv. The trainee must have experience in leading Bible studies in homes and one-on-one.
- v. If possible, learn to develop and present Bible devotional studies for informal meetings with brethren outside of the worship assembly.
- vi. Assemble materials useful for private and home Bible studies with unbelievers.

c. Devote time to regular Bible study.

- i. Study the Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus in detail as part of your training program.
- ii. Learn the Bible by Memorizing Scripture – prepare a list of key scriptures to memorize.

d. Visit the sick and helpless, restore lost souls, and conduct in-home studies.

5. Advanced Studies – Important but wait to Introduce these until later in the program.

- a. Include as much of the following as possible. Continue these studies the rest of your lives.
 - i. Bible History and Geography: names of people and places and timelines
 - ii. The Ancient Greek and Hebrew Languages (can be learned online)
 - iii. Understand the scriptures regarding grace, faith, prayer, the life of Christ.
 - iv. The organization of the church, understand preacher and elder relationships,
 - v. Study evidences and apologetics. Find reliable reference material on these topics.
 - vi. Learn how to refute false doctrines and denominational error.
- b. Assemble a small library of Bible study reference materials: General Bible dictionaries, Greek & Hebrews lexicons (dictionaries), maps of lands and places mentioned in scripture.

c. Find and use good Bible study websites and other resources.

E. Understand and Be Sure of the Commitment You Are Making

1. You will be an example to others – make sure your example is godly: **1 Timothy 4:12**.
2. Preachers have influence – often more than they should have. Make sure your influence is godly. Influence is called leaven in the New Testament. **Galatians 5:9, Luke 13:20-21, Matthew 16:6-12**.
3. You will experience success – **Matthew 13:23**,
4. You will experience resistance and failure – **1 Corinthians 15:30-32a, 2 Timothy 4:14-15, 2 Timothy 3:10-12, Luke 21:16**.
5. Satan will try to tear you down – **Luke 22:31-34, 1 Peter 5:8**.
6. Guard yourself against: money, sex, pride and ambition, substances. **James 4:6b, 2 Timothy 2:22**. Giving in to temptation will ruin the good influence and respect you might otherwise have,
7. Be content with what you have, ask only for what you need, and do not envy the rich – **1 Timothy 6:6-8, Philippians 4:11-13**.
8. Be Patient – Growth Takes Time – **2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 6:10-12; James 1:3-4, 5:7-8**.
9. Work Very Hard – **2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Peter 1:5-10**.
10. Be like Paul – **Galatians 2:20** – give yourself entirely to God and God alone – **1 Tim. 4:15b**.
11. Don't Neglect Your Family – **Colossians 3:18-21, Ephesians 5:22-6:4**.

F. Possible Complications – How will the preacher trainee be supported?

1. Best if he can support himself, even if he must work full-time and train part-time.
2. Can the church help by giving him lodging and a little to live on each month?
3. Work this out at the beginning, before you and he commit to training.

G. CONCLUSION

2. Always be ready to answer anyone who asks you to defend your faith! **1 Peter 3:15**.
3. Preach the Word of God! Be ready in season and out of season! **2 Timothy 4:2**.
4. Live with confidence in your salvation! Teach the Gospel to others. Organize your life to use the time you have as effectively as possible. **Colossians 1:1-12**.

4. The Apostle Paul's General Instructions to Preachers

A Preacher's Character & Work as Defined in the Letters to Timothy & Titus

Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus are the Blueprint for Training Preachers

1. Paul wrote his letters to Timothy and Titus, men he mentored, to explain to them how to do the work of a preacher. These 3 letters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, stand today as the blueprint for all men everywhere in the Lord's church who wish to train preachers or be trained to become one.
2. Paul's specific purpose in writing was explicitly instructional – 1 Timothy 3:15
... I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
3. Paul's motive is clear and simple: Paul taught Timothy (and Titus) exactly how to go about doing the work of a preacher and servant of God. Today, in the same way, these three letters teach preachers how to behave in the church, what they are supposed to do and what not to do, so each man's work will please God by fulfilling the work of a preacher exactly how God wants this work to be done.
4. Most of the verses in these three letters fit into one of two categories: the godly influence a preacher must have on others, and how to teach and preach the Holy Word of God.

Paul's Close Relationship with the Young Man Timothy

Paul first met Timothy in Lystra. Timothy is first mentioned in Acts 16:1 and he was already a disciple with a good reputation (16:2). Perhaps he was converted during Paul's first visit there in Acts 14:6-7. Paul invited Timothy to join him (16:33) and they were together often thereafter as close companions, at Corinth, Athens, Antioch, Philippi, and Rome.

In the letter to church in Philippi, in 2:19-22, Paul commended Timothy for his character and devotion. Timothy had proven himself in his work with Paul:

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.

From this passage we learn that:

1. **Timothy was dependable** – he could be relied upon to serve faithfully and with devotion.
 2. **Timothy had a genuine and sincere mind for service** (v. 20).
 3. **Timothy had proven himself to be unselfish** (v.22). He was different from so many others whose works were motivated by self-interest.
- A. Teaching by Preaching Is the Main Message of the Letters to Timothy and Titus:**
1. **Paul commands preachers how to teach in 1 Timothy**
 - a. 1:3 do not teach a different doctrine

- b. 4:6 Teach what Paul has taught him to his fellow Christians
- c. 4:11 command and teach only what Paul has taught him
- d. 4:13 read the Scriptures aloud publicly
- e. 4:16 keep a close watch on yourself and what you teach
- f. 5:7, 6:2b command these things, teach these things

2. Paul commands preachers how to teach in 2 Timothy

- a. 2:2 commit the Truth to faithful men who will teach others
- b. 2:14 remind and charge
- c. 2:25 Humbly / gently correct those who oppose the Word of God
- d. 4:2 preach the Word of God

3. Paul commands preachers how to teach in Titus

- a. 2:1 teach sound doctrine
- b. 2:15 declare these things, exhort and rebuke
- c. 3:1 remind
- d. 3:8 insist
- e. 3:14 teach

B. Other passages in Paul's letters address what to teach and/or who to teach it to

1. 1 Tim 2:1-3,8 teach about prayer
2. 1 Tim 2:9 teach women to be modest, their responsibilities in home, world, and church
3. 1 Tim 3:1ff teach about elder/deacon qualifications
4. 1 Tim 5:1ff teach various age groups about their responsibilities in the world and church
5. 1 Tim 5:20 rebuke sinners
6. 2 Tim 2:14 remind the brethren not to quarrel about words
7. Titus 1:5 teach about elder qualifications
8. Titus 1:11 silence false teachers
9. Titus 1:13 rebuke irresponsible brethren and sinners
10. Titus 2:1-10 teach various age groups their roles
11. Titus 3:1 remind brethren of a variety of responsibilities

C. Another core concern in Timothy and Titus is a preacher's influence for good

1. 1 Tim 4:7 avoid myths (nonsense stories)
2. 1 Tim 4:7b train yourself for godliness
3. 1 Tim 4:12 be an example in speech and conduct

4. 1 Tim 5:21 don't show partiality
5. 1 Tim 6:11 flee evil and pursue righteousness
6. 1 Tim 6:20 avoid irreverent babble
7. 2 Tim 1:8 don't be ashamed
8. 2 Tim 2:3 share in suffering
9. 2 Tim 2:15 present yourself as a worker
10. 2 Tim 2:16 avoid babble
11. 2 Tim 2:22 flee youthful lusts
12. 2 Tim 2:23 avoid quarrels
13. 2 Tim 4:5 be sober minded and endure suffering
14. Titus 2:7 model good works and teach with integrity
15. Titus 3:9ff avoid foolish controversies

D. There are also a few personal remarks from Paul to each man:

1. 2 Tim 4:9, 21; Titus 3:12: come and see me (companionship and encouragement)
2. 2 Tim 4:13: bring my cloak and the parchments (assist each other in work and needs)
3. 2 Tim 4:20: greet various brothers (scriptural fellowship)
4. Titus 3:13: send Zenas and Apollos along the way (assist men in their kingdom work)

These scriptures teach preachers to make a priority to help other faithful brethren. This includes women who are serving scripturally as well (Romans 16:1-2).

E. So, what is the work of an evangelist?

1. The evangelist is to "preach the word (2 Tim 4:1-5). He must put the brethren in mind of truth (1 Tim 4:6). Paul commands both Timothy and Titus to teach or remind the brethren of certain important responsibilities.
2. Observe the contrast between elders who "take heed to self... and to the flock" (Acts 20:28) and the evangelist who must "take heed to self and to your teaching . . . The primary work of the leader is related to caring for the flock (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Hebrews 13:17). The primary work of the evangelist is diligent preaching and teaching.
3. Teaching and preaching-reproving, rebuking, and exhorting.
4. Practice what you preach: Be a living example of a faithful disciple of Christ.

APPLICATIONS: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PREACHERS TODAY?

A. What is the work of an evangelist?

1. To live in a way that enables him to teach God's Word, so the kingdom grows stronger.
2. Live the Word so you can effectively teach the Word.

What does influence include?

1. Moral purity: 1 Tim 4:12, 16; 5:21-22; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:15, 22; 4:5; Titus 2:7 – you have to live it first.
 2. Treating people right: 1 Tim 5:17, 19; 5:21; 2 Tim 2:3, 25; Titus 3:1.
 3. Preparing yourself personally so you have something to say and can say it well 1 Tim 4:6 (study is necessary!)
 4. Avoiding foolish controversies that detract from your real work and make you look foolish 1 Tim 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim 2:16, 23; Titus 3:9-10.
- B. Could taking food to a sick or poor brother or sister, or making hospital calls, or going to lunch with a non-Christian, be the work of a preacher? Absolutely!
- C. What about teaching?
1. From Timothy and Titus, we learn that teaching must be done gently but firmly (2 Tim 2:24-25) and boldly (2 Tim 1:6-8).
 2. Both books emphasize faithful and steadfast commitment to the Scriptures and sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:3; 4:13; 6:14; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:16-17; Titus 2:1).
 3. Preachers must do the same!

Conclusion:

Is modern preaching more complicated than it has ever been before? Maybe and maybe not.

- A. There are at least five personal challenges preachers must manage effectively today.
1. Not being overcome by the complexity of modern life.
 2. Managing the wide variety of expectations for a preacher
 3. Humbly displaying your personal godliness as an example to others
 4. Managing marriage and family
 5. Adapting teaching style to different cultures and audiences

B. How do we answer all of that? How can we be true to God, true to our brethren and true to ourselves? YES! Follow the pattern and commands the Holy Spirit gives us in Paul's letters!

The message of Timothy and Titus answers every question and every challenge: be an evangelist! Love and live the Word so you can teach the Word correctly to others!

5. Paul's 9 "Charges" to Timothy

Paul's Firm Commands to Timothy - "I Charge You"

What does Paul mean by "I charge you?" What does the English word "charge" mean?

Definition: in the New Testament (koine) Greek, the words Paul uses are *paraggelia* (par-ang-gel-ee'-ah) - to transmit a message, to enjoin, to mandate, to command or to give a commandment; and *diamarturomai* (dee-am-ar-too'-rom-ahee) which has a similar meaning.

Since Paul is inspired directly by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:19-21) we understand that he is giving God's commands to Timothy and by extension to all who will preach the Gospel anywhere in any age.

Paul's commands are very strong and clear. He intends for Timothy to read carefully and do everything he commands because he is speaking for God. Let's study carefully these 9 "Charges" and then let each one of us make a personal commitment to obey them just as Timothy did.

Old Testament Examples of Similar Commands

Moses Charged Israel: Deuteronomy 10:12-13

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Another Similar Command from Moses: Deuteronomy 11:1

Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.

David Charged His Son Solomon – 1 Kings 2:1-3

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn...

1st Charge: Teach Only Bible Doctrine – Nothing Else. 1 Timothy 1:3-7

In this passage of scripture, Paul refers to a past charge he has already given to Timothy.

v3-4 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge (paraggello) some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

v5 -7 Now the purpose of the commandment (paraggelia) is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

Compare these instructions to what Paul says in Galatians 1:6-9, 2 John 9, and 1 Corinthians 4:6. See also Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 12:28-32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Ecclesiastes 3:14; and Matthew 4:4. No teacher or preacher or any disciple is authorized by God to go outside the boundaries of His Holy Word.

Many have tried, but no one has any authority from God to change His Words:

Matthew 4:4b *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*

Proverbs 30:5-6 *Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

2 John 1:9 *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*

1 Peter 4:11 *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

When a preacher teaches anything other than the Word of God, that preacher sins.

2nd Charge: Stand for God in Faith & Good Conscience. 1 Timothy 1:18-19a

*This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may **wage the good warfare**, having faith and a good conscience...*

Paul says there is only one way that a preacher succeeds in his work. Satan is our enemy (1 Peter 5:8). A preacher must understand that he is at war with Satan. Preachers stand for the truth of God against Satan's lies. This is a good battle, and preachers are in this war to give the light and living water of the Gospel to all who will hear and believe it.

Paul repeats this charge in **1 Timothy 6:12-14**:

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I urge you (paraggello) in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing...

At the end of 2 Timothy, Paul is able to say with absolute faith that he has done exactly what he has commanded Timothy to do:

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

This is what every Christian should be able to say at the end of his or her life! As preachers who are examples to others, let us all live in a way that we can say these very words before death.

**Thanks be to God that He has given us good weapons to fight Satan with. (Ephesian 6:10-18)
Make sure you use them and teach all brethren to do the same. Our weapons are more powerful than Satan's!**

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 *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, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

A preacher must have a faith in God that is seen by all, not just in words but in his deeds (actions) as well. Preachers live lives of obedience to God, and so they have a clear conscience before God.

3rd Charge: Teach the Truth Just as Paul Has Said. 1 Timothy 4:11

These things command (paragello) and teach.

Is Paul referring to the points he makes just before or after this verse, or is he injecting a summary statement about all that we read in 1 Timothy? Either way, these words stand as inspired by God and necessary for preachers to obey.

Paul **commands** Timothy (and all of us who have come after him) to teach others what Paul has taught him. Paul speaks by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:14-17), and so Paul was an approved writer of the Words of God. Likewise, when you and I speak today ONLY from the Bible (1 Peter 4:11) we also follow God's command to Timothy through Paul.

4th Charge: Commands about Older Men and Widows. 1 Timothy 5:1-7

1-2 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.

3-4 Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.

5-6 Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.

7 And these things command (paraggello), that they may be blameless.

Note the same point here in v. 7 that was made above regarding the context of the third charge. No one, including even Paul himself (Galatians 1:6-9) is allowed to change God's Word. We must preach only what God has revealed to us in His inspired Word.

This includes ALL God's commands about men, women, marriage, and family.

5th Charge: Obey These Commands without Partiality. 1 Timothy 5:19-21

19-20 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

*21 I charge (diamarturomai) you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, **doing nothing with partiality.***

It is a sin to show partiality (James 2:1-9). The sin of partiality is to treat one person or group of people differently from others for no godly reason. The Holy Spirit condemns this as unjust and dishonorable. The godly virtue of "loving your neighbor as yourself" is called the "royal law" in James 2:8. Therefore, when we show partiality based on tribe, family, status, poverty, clothing, appearance, or for any other similar reason, we sin because we have become "judges with evil thoughts" (v. 4).

6th Charge: Live Godly, Be Content with What You Have. 1 Tim. 6:6-13

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13-14 I urge (paragge) you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing...

A true and faithful disciple of Christ loves God with all his heart and mind and body and strength (Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27). This kind of love leaves no room for anyone or anything else to come before God (Matthew 10:37-39). This includes even our own physical lives and all kinds of wealth (Matthew 6 especially v.24).

We must never let the love (or lust) for the things of this world keep us from serving God with all our ability. If we seek money to the point that we sin by compromising our complete trust in God, we will lose our souls even after we have preached the Word to others.

7th Charge: Commands for Wealthy People. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 Command (paragge) those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul follows his 6th charge with a similar one: Paul tells Timothy what to teach wealthy people. Wealthy people often trust money and themselves because they have been successful in some ways in their lives. When the wealthy do this, they sin because money and possessions have become their god, whether they realize it or not. Consider the example of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) and the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21).

A preacher must be very careful to be content with what God provides to him for this life. See the 6th Charge above. A preacher works to lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20, 19:21) and not treasure on earth for himself (Luke 12:21).

If a preacher is faithful in this, he will be an example of this very command to those he teaches.

8th Charge: Teach Brethren Not to Engage in Empty Talk. 2 Tim. 2:14-16

Remind them of these things, charging (diamarturomai) them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Even faithful brethren can be forgetful of the Holy Word of God. Part of a preacher's work is to remind brethren of what they have already learned so that they do not forget it (2 Peter 1:12-15; 3:1-2). One thing that is very important for Christians – including preachers – to remember is not to let themselves get involved in pointless discussion about ungodly ideas. These kinds of empty arguments only serve to undermine the faith of those who listen to it.

Instead, diligently learn the scriptures so that you are able to understand and explain God's Word correctly.

9th Charge: Always Be Ready to Preach! God Will Judge You! 2 Timothy 2:14

I charge (diamarturomai) you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching ... But you:

*be watchful in all things, endure afflictions,
do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Preach Because False Teachers Ignore God's Word and follow their own desires –

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

A preacher must learn the Truth and always be prepared to answer false doctrine with the Word of God.

Titus 1:10-11 *For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.*

Some Additional Clear and Specific Commands for Preachers

Guard the Truth, Do Not Get Involved with Worldly Ideas, and Hold on Tight to Sound Doctrine!

1 Timothy 6:20-21 – *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge– by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.*

2 Timothy 1:13-14 – *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

Teach these Holy Commands to Others!

2 Timothy 2:2 – *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

Where the Strength to Keep These Commands Comes From:

2 Timothy 2:1 – *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

And Jesus Will Be with You!

2 Timothy 4:22 – *The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.*

6. Studying the Text of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

This section contains only an introductory study of the so-called “pastoral letters.” As you grow in your work as a preacher, you will have many reasons to return to these letters time and again. Seize on those opportunities to study further to deepen your understanding of the Word and your commitment to your work in God’s Kingdom.

Paul’s First Letter to Timothy

1 Timothy 1:3-11

Paul begins with a past command he gave to Timothy, that Timothy instruct others to **teach no other doctrine** except what Paul has taught him. Preachers must be very careful to teach only the Bible.

Included is the command to resist idle (empty) talk, because it is speech that is damaging to faith:

4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,

6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,

7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

Paul warns Timothy about people who want to teach, but do not bother to learn the Truth. They do not understand the words they speak (v7). They are ignorant and lack godly motives (v 5).

In verses 9-10, Paul describes what is against sound doctrine:

the lawless and insubordinate, the ungodly and for sinners, the unholy and profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, manslayers, fornicators, for sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and “any other thing” that is contrary to sound doctrine,

Sound doctrine is found only within the Gospel: **11 ...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.**

1 Timothy 1:12-16

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul humbly admits his past sins, then thanks and glorifies God for His grace and mercy. This is an example to all preachers to show open and genuine humility both in public and in private.

1 Timothy 1:18-20

18 *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,*
 19 *having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,*
 20 *of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Preachers have accepted God's call to battle against sin and error. ALL Christians must make sure they are armed for this battle (Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6). Preachers have chosen to put themselves in the battle by openly proclaiming the Gospel. Keep yourself ready to defend the Gospel at all times (1 Peter 3:15, 2 Timothy 4:2, Galatians 6:9). Preachers must count (understand) the cost (challenges) of their work and be ready to pay that cost:

Luke 14:25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,
 26 *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*
 27 *And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*
 28 *For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it –*
 29 *lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,*
 30 *saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'*
 31 *Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?*
 32 *Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.*
 33 *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."*

Luke 9:57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."
 58 *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*
 59 *Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."*
 60 *Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."*
 61 *And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."*
 62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Matthew 10:27 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.
 28 *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

It is very important for you to think carefully about what Jesus says to His disciples in these passages. Are you willing to pay whatever price the Gospel asks of you?

1 Timothy 2

*1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,
 7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
 8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;*

Preachers must teach brethren to pray diligently for each other. This includes prayers for the leaders in your own nation. This command can seem difficult when most leaders are corrupt, and we know that Christians must not approve of the actions of ungodly people.

Read carefully. Paul does not tell us to approve of them. He only commands that we pray for them. The reason is stated in verse 2 – for the peace and welfare of the disciples, not the corrupt leaders. God knows who is corrupt and who is not.

But if we pray, our prayers must be genuine and holy. We pray sincerely, not in anger or with any doubt (v 8). We also know from James 5:16 that when anyone who is righteous prays intently, God hears us!

*9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,
 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.
 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.
 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.
 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.
 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.
 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*

Preachers must teach only pure Bible truth about the correct conduct of women in the assembly, in marriage, and in public. Many societies try to elevate women over men or make women the slaves of men. Neither idea is taught in the Bible. A thorough study of this subject is beyond the scope of this book, but please make sure you teach only what the scriptures say. For example:

Women are to dress modestly (v9). Women may not have authority over men, including when teaching (v12). The conduct of women must demonstrate faith, love, holiness, and self-control (v15).

There are other scriptures on this subject that must also be studied: Proverbs 31, Titus 2:3-5, Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7, and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Be absolutely sure that your preacher training program includes a full study of all of the Bible scriptures that explain the responsibilities of men and women.

1 Timothy 3

1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;

4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,

9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.

10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.

11 Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 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.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 along with Titus 1 gives us the Bible qualifications for elders in the church. Likewise, 1 Timothy 3:8-13 give us the Bible qualifications for deacons.

A detailed study of all these qualifications and how best to understand them is also beyond the scope of this book. Some basic points you must understand, follow, and teach are:

Elders and deacons are men who have lived in godly marriages with obedient children in their homes. They must be people publicly known for their godly faithful conduct.

Be absolutely sure that your preacher training program includes a complete study of all of the Bible scriptures that explain the responsibilities of elders and deacons.

14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;

15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Paul explains to Timothy that he is teaching him all about how a preacher must behave in his work in the church. Thus, Paul makes clear that his letters to Timothy are the pattern for the lifestyle and teaching that a preacher must follow.

1 Timothy 4

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;

5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The Holy Spirit told Paul that, in the future times, many would fall away from the Truth. This is called apostasy, from the Greek word *apostasia*, found in Acts 21:21 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The word *apostasia* means to forsake or abandon, in this case to leave the New Testament doctrine of truth. We read of many examples of this in both Testaments.

- 6 *If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*
 7 *But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.*
 8 *For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*
 9 *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*
 10 *For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*
 11 *These things command and teach.*

In this passage, Paul explains that a faithful Gospel preacher (good minister) is a man who faithfully teaches the scriptures (words of faith and of the good doctrine). A true preacher does not teach or follow anything except the Word of God.

- 12 *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*
 13 *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*
 14 *Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*
 15 *Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.*
 16 *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

A faithful Gospel preacher is an example of godly living in all he does: his words and behavior, and the love and faith he demonstrates to all. He reads scripture in public, and he encourages all souls to come to Christ and be saved. He is fully devoted to his life as a disciple of Christ; so devoted that all who know him know he is entirely committed to God. His devotion includes an unwavering obedience to Bible doctrine. To do otherwise is hypocrisy and he will cause others to mock God.

1 Timothy 5

- 1 *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers,*
 2 *older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.*

Treat all your brethren with true respect, both the elderly and the younger ones. This is proper.

- 3 *Honor widows who are really widows.*
 4 *But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.*
 5 *Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.*
 6 *But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.*
 7 *And these things command, that they may be blameless.*

The church has an obligation to provide for the needy in its own number, including widows. But they must be truly needy (really widows), having no one else to care for them (left alone). Widows who have family – including children or grandchildren – should be supported by their own family.

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man,

10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

The Spirit commands that people work to provide for themselves. Those who are able to work, but do not are sinning. In verses 9-10 Paul gives the qualifications a widow must meet to be supported by the local church. These qualifications are specific commands and must be followed.

11 But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry,

12 having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

A younger woman who is a widow must seek to remarry and live as a responsible wife and mother (v 14) (which is how they would have lived anyway if their husbands had not died).

In v. 16, Paul summarizes v. 3-15 by repeating the Spirit's command that widows who have believing family should be supported by them.

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

Elders can be paid (double honor) for their service if they are effective (rule well and teach or preach – see also 3:2). How much they can be paid is not stated, so it is a matter of judgment.

21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

24 Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.

25 Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Christians, including preachers, must never be guilty of prejudice or partiality (see also James 2:1-9). He must be objective and unbiased in all he does. He must also keep himself from sin by remaining pure and holy in his conduct.

1 Timothy 6

1 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Slaves (doulos) who are Christians are commanded to be faithful to their masters, even if their masters are Christians too. The reason for this is to keep God's Word from being blasphemed by unbelievers. This is a difficult passage to read for many of us today, but it teaches us that God's name and glory are higher than all things, even forced servitude.

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,

5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

Paul commands Timothy to stay away from all who teach doctrines that are against the Bible. This does not forbid attempts to convince them and get them to repent. But, people interested in false doctrines have evil minds with no knowledge of truth. They are very bad company for a sound preacher.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Christians must not seek wealth. This is true for preachers also. Preachers are in the public eye and open to criticism from nonbelievers. If we have what we need (food and clothing), then we can and must be content. Consider and learn from this wisdom passage from Proverbs 30:5-9 –

5 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

6 Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

7 Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die):

*8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me; **Give me neither poverty nor riches-Feed me with the food allotted to me;***

9 Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Paul next explains that a desire for money is certain to lead us into serious sin. This is true whether or not we succeed in getting the money we lust for. The desire itself is a sin. You have seen preachers who are motivated by money and not the Word of God. Some of them have a lot of money because they constantly ask for money from the people who follow them. They do not teach or live according to the Holy Scriptures. Keep yourself far away from these sins and the people who commit them.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

A faithful preacher stays busy proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He plants churches, helps them grow, and trains men to do the same. A faithful preacher keeps himself engaged in the daily battle against Satan. He lives to be the good example of Christ to all others. He fights the good fight of faith.

17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul tells us what to say to the rich: be humble, trust God and not money, enjoy what God gives us, and use their money to do good works by sharing their riches with others.

20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—

21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

Preachers must treasure the Truth of God and guard it carefully from those who teach against it. Do not let yourself or your brethren be lied to by people who think they are wise but are not.

Paul's Second Letter to Timothy

In this letter Paul speaks of evangelism in both his present day (chapters 1 and 2) and in future days (chapters 3 and 4). This may be the last letter Paul wrote before his execution for being a Christian.

2 Timothy 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,

4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

Paul warmly greets Timothy and says to him what he often says to many brethren – that he prays continually for him. Paul also commends Timothy's mother and grandmother for teaching him. These are good examples to all who preach the Gospel.

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Paul was never ashamed, and he never became discouraged, despite all the abuse he suffered, because he knew that God keeps all His promises and will save him when the great Day comes:

Paul encourages Timothy to never be afraid of his work and to never be ashamed to speak and preach the Truth of God. Our strength is our absolute faith and firm stand in the promise of Christ our Savior. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10b).

Preachers must try hard not to be discouraged even when persecuted, or we see our companions mistreated. We share with each other in these trials by praying for each other, helping each other, and comforting each other in any way we can.

13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Everyone who stands for Christ – including all preachers of the Gospel – must HOLD FAST THE PATTERN OF SOUND WORDS in the Bible. We do not stand in any fear or doubt, but in faith and love.

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.

18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day--and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

It is very disappointing when friends and companions turn away from us because of our faith in God. Sometimes preachers can feel like they are alone. Paul boldly condemns those who have not stood courageously, including two men who have left Paul. Their reason is not given, but whatever it was, it was not right. We must never lose hope, because God is always faithful.

All Christians, preachers included, must not let hardships discourage us. Instead, we must be determined to endure and overcome challenges by our faith in God. Philippians 4:13. And we thank God for the brethren who help us. Paul mentions one such man, Onesiphorus, who traveled all the way to Rome (apparently from Ephesus) to find Paul in prison and then “refreshed” him.

2 Timothy 2

1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

In these words of Paul, we find the Holy Spirit's clear command about how new preachers are trained. Just as Paul trained Timothy (and Titus), he now instructs Timothy to do the same.

3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

Preachers are called to trials and hardships, just like their master, Jesus. We keep ourselves free from the cares of this life so that we may endure better without temptation and distraction.

6 The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

7 Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Here Paul tells Timothy that a preacher is to be compensated for his work the way a farmer lives from the harvest of the crops he planted. See also 1 Corinthians 9:7-14.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,

9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

A preacher willingly endures trials for the sake of the brethren and their spiritual welfare. Paul confirms the hope we have in Jesus: those who die with Christ will live with Him eternally. He will deny those who deny Him, so let us endure no matter what we experience in this life.

14 Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

A preacher will succeed in his work for God by applying himself diligently (study) to the work of an evangelist. Diligence prevents the shame of failure in the work of preaching:

16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

Preachers must not let themselves get involved in foolish, empty, or ungodly ideas and discussions. Paul has warned against this already in 1 Timothy 1:4-7; 4:7; and 6:4,20-21. A preacher teaches only the pure sound doctrine of the Bible.

19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

A faithful preacher keeps himself pure and free from sin. He seeks to have a pure heart by departing from sin and fostering in himself righteousness, faith, love, peace. He is gentle and patient and always willing to teach those who will hear the Words of God. He is able to stand against those who speak against God, but he does so with a humble heart.

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul compares the work of a preacher to other kinds of work and relationships:

A Son (v1) – a preacher may be taught by an older man and, figuratively, be raised up to full ability by that man. Paul thought of others he trained as his sons: Timothy (Philippians 2:22), Onesimus (Philemon 10).

A Soldier (v3-4) – A preacher endures the hardship of spiritual battle and does not let himself get distracted by the worldly concerns of this life.

An Athlete (v5) – A preacher honorably obeys God's commands like an athlete obeys rules in sport.

A Farmer (v6) – works hard, waits for the fields he has sown to bring harvest, and enjoys the results of his hard work in the kingdom / vineyard of God.

A Laborer (workman - v15) – work hard to be approved by God and you will not be ashamed before Him.

A Vessel (container – v20) – preachers keep themselves clean from sin so that we are vessels of honor that are useful to God for every good work a Christian is to do.

A bondservant (slave – v24) – develops and maintains the good qualities of humility, submission, patience, gentleness, peacefulness, and being able to teach.

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul teaches us about the behaviors Preachers must REJECT and AVOID:

Affairs (concerns) of this life: 2:4

Breaking God's rules: 2:5

Profane and idle speech: 2:14, 16

Pointless Arguing and quarreling: 2:23-24

Youthful Lusts: 2:22

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul also teaches us about the behaviors and traits a preacher must MASTER:

Teach others about the Gospel: 2:2

Obey the rules of the Gospel: 2:5

Endure hardship: 2:3, 10-12

Work diligently to win God's approval: 2:15

Keep clear of dishonor: 2:21

Be humble: 2:25

Reward we will receive: Reigning with Jesus in Glory – 2:10-12

2 Timothy 3

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

In any age, there are always times of trouble. There are always famines, wars, natural disasters, and bad economies. First, Paul explains what the signs of such times are in verses 2-5. He tells how people behave in such times. We might ask, have there even been times when the behaviors in v.2-5 have not been true? Perhaps Paul was telling Timothy (and us) that in the future things will become very bad and these sins will become common.

But, what do Christians do in times that are especially perilous spiritually? Paul gives good advice: turn away! Be sure to keep yourself far from them and beware of them!

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

Paul also explains that people of this sort can be known by their foolish actions and words. Be watchful for their fruits! Turn away from those who really are making bad fruit by disobeying God. They will fail.

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

What else are the righteous supposed to do? Paul explains in verses 10-11 – follow God and trust Him and His word to deliver us as he sees fit to do so, just as He delivered Paul. In verses 12-13, Paul also warns us that all who truly follow Christ will experience persecution. There is comfort in considering what Paul wrote about this in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 1 Peter 3:12-17, 1 Peter 4:1-16 and finally, Revelation 2:8-11. Do not be afraid, but be strong and endure.

14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

What is the comfort and certainty of the Christian and the preachers of the Gospel? The Holy Word of God! How does knowledge of the Word of God sustain us in this life? Paul's answer: the Word gives us wisdom (v.15 - God's wisdom not our own), the Word profits for the work we do – teach

sound doctrine, reprove (rebuke) the weak and sinful, correct those in error, and teach righteousness (v. 16).

What is the result of knowing God's Holy Word, the Word we preach and teach? We are complete so that we have all we need (thoroughly equipped) for everything God requires of us.

2 Timothy 4

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

No matter what the times or circumstances (in season and out of season) a faithful preacher fulfils the will of his Master – he preaches the Word of God. The Gospel is the ONLY Word that saves us.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Whether those who hear believe or not – preach the Word. The faithful preacher's duty is to do the work of evangelism. While we fulfil our calling, we endure patiently whatever we have to endure for the sake of the cross of Christ and the salvation of the souls who will hear the Truth of God.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul understood well what his life's work was and he completed it in obedience to God. And so he was able to say truthfully that he had FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT – daily battle against the lies of Satan, daily proclaiming the Gospel in every place where he went. Paul was faithful to God in all his preaching. And so, the reward God has promised to all His faithful children was waiting for Paul. That same reward is yours if you also keep the faith and fight the good fight.

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly;

10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica–Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come–and the books, especially the parchments.

It is right for a preacher to ask for help and to explain why that help is needed. Even though Paul knew that his life on earth was coming to an end, he kept his mind on his work and his heart on service to his Lord Jesus. So he instructed Timothy to bring others with him when he came to Rome.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

It is right to identify by name those who resist the spread of the Gospel. Do not be afraid to say their names and to warn others about them.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

Paul has endured much persecution and hardship as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul does not complain about these things. Instead, he praises God for standing with him and giving him strength in trials. He graciously asks God to forgive those who left him alone when he was accused. And Paul states his faith in God's deliverance and salvation. This is the perfect example for every Christian!

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

21 Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

As Paul closes this, his final letter, he remembers his fellow workers. He asks for greetings to his dear brethren and passes greetings from those who are with him. Preachers always remember and pray for their companions and brethren.

Summary points from 2 Timothy – Paul's Loving Instructions to Timothy in His Second Letter:

“Stir up” (rekindle, or fan back into flame) (1:6-7). Evidently, what Paul wanted Timothy to bring to life was a gift of the Holy Spirit he had been given by Paul himself through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:18). Whether this was indeed a miraculous gift, or some other gift, the point is clear that it was up to Timothy not the Spirit to accomplish this reenergization. Paul instructed Timothy to stay active and motivated.

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words” (1:13). See and note 1 Timothy 6:3, which explains the opposite of what Paul is saying here. Paul tells Timothy to “hang on tight” to the truth because he lived in a day of apostasy and faced worse days to come! Compare with 1 Timothy 1:3-10; 4:6; 4:16 (sound doctrine) and 6:20. Speak this truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

“Endure hardship” - 2:3-4. Timothy was a soldier, and as such he needed to prepare to endure hardships. The Christian life is no “bed of roses”. Grace is needed (verse 1), but grit is needed also (verse 3) ☐- compare Luke 9:23. Because there is a war on (verse 4), we are to free ourselves from every entanglement, and notice the reason we are to do this (verse 4).

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God” (2:15). A preacher's great ambition is to be that of gaining God's approval, both privately and publicly as a good example (1 Timothy 4:12). The way to achieve this goal is to always give the Word of God its supreme place in our lives, and this will safeguard us against all sins, public and private.

“Flee also youthful lusts” (2:22). In other words, “run away from” the foolish desires of youth. Compare the lust of 1 Timothy 6:9-11 and Proverbs 7 to the wise action of Joseph when he ran away from Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:7-12. Be the example mentioned in 1 Timothy 4:12. We

are to “flee” from every suggestion of impurity. We are to “pursue” four things (verse 22). Read Proverbs 18:10.

“Continue in the things which you have learned” (3:14). A preacher must be steadfast and not give up the work he has given himself to do. We do not lose heart (Luke 18:1, 2 Corinthians 4:1-16, Galatians 6:9, Ephesians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 15:58) Read John 8:31 and 15:1-10 and compare Acts 1:14, 2:42, 13:43, 14:22, and Colossians 4:2. Contrast with Luke 9:62 and 2 Timothy 4:10.

“Be watchful in all things” (steady, sober-minded, clear-headed) (4:5). Compare to 2 Timothy 1:7, Ephesians 5:15-16, Matthew 26:41; Colossians 4:2 and 1 Peter 4:7.

In 2 Timothy, Paul knows that the time of his death is near.

1. His tone is not one of despair or even fear, but one of victory through Jesus – 2 Timothy 4:6-8.
2. Timothy will lose his faithful mentor, companion, brother in Christ, and friend.
3. Paul’s final letter to Timothy contains many words of encouragement and exhortation, as you might expect from one brother who has a very close bond with another:
 - a. 2 Tim. 1:6 Be sure to “stir up” the gifts he has received
 - b. 2 Tim. 1:13 “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”
 - c. 2 Tim. 1:14 Keep the “good thing” committed to him.
 - d. 2 Tim. 2:1: “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”
 - e. 2 Tim. 2:7-8: “consider what Paul has told him,” “remember Christ was raised.”
 - f. 2 Tim. 2:22: “flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness.”
 - g. 2 Tim. 3:10-14: “you have carefully followed (my example),” now “you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of”
 - h. 2 Tim. 4:1: “I charge you . . . preach . . . be watchful . . . endure . . . do the work . . . fulfill your ministry.”
4. 2 Tim. 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God.” A preacher seeks only the approval of God, not in himself or in the eyes of others.
5. 2 Tim. 4:2: A preacher’s success lies not in his notoriety or the size of his church, but in his faithfulness to God’s message: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Paul’s Letter to Titus

Titus 1

*1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,
 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,
 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;
 4 To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.*

It is clear that Paul loves Titus. Preachers, love the men you train for the work of evangelism!

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you--

6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Here in verses 5-9 is the second place in the New Testament where the qualifications for elders are stated. These qualifications match with those in 1 Timothy 3. The words in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 are only slightly different. The two chapters do not contradict in any way. They must be understood together as the scriptures we rely on to choose elders for each local church.

10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

One very important responsibility of elders is to openly defend the truth of the Holy Word against people who argue against it. Public preaching and teaching is not just the work of preachers. This ability is also shown here to be a requirement for elders.

12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Paul commands Titus to openly rebuke those who claim to follow God but do not know what they are saying or doing, as many of the people of Crete were known to do. A preacher must be ready to rebuke anyone who speaks against the Word of God.

Titus 2

1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

Paul commands Titus to speak sound doctrine – what is in the Word of God. He gave the same instructions to Timothy also: 1 Timothy 4:6-13.

2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--

4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Paul explains to Titus what to teach his brothers and sisters, both young and old. These commands are not the only things a preacher is required to teach, but they matter and must not be overlooked.

*9 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,
10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*

Preachers teach everyone to serve in this life in the orderly way that God expects us to. This includes even those who are slaves. The word adorn means to “put in a proper order so that it is pleasing to those who see it.” Even slaves who are Christians must serve so our works glorify God and His Word.

*11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,
12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,
13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Jesus Christ died for all, so that those who believe and obey His Gospel will be saved. This alone is sufficient reason for all of us to deny lust and sin and live “soberly, righteously, and godly.”

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Preachers must be able to defend the Truth and rebuke sinners successfully, so that those who hear them have no reason to disrespect them. See also 1 Timothy 4:12.

Titus 3

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

Preachers instruct the brethren to respect authority (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:17). Christians are called by the Word of God to always do good works (Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 10:24). Paul mentions good works 4 times in his letter to Titus.

2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

Preachers teach and are living examples of godly conduct.

*3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.
4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Preachers remind the brethren that it is God and not us who has made salvation possible to sinners.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Paul commands Titus to constantly teach the importance of good works to the brethren (see v14 also).

9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

Just as he told Timothy, Paul instructs Titus to not get involved in empty and useless arguments.

*10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,
11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*

Preachers warn people who cause division in the church. If the troublemaker will not stop, put him out.

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

13 Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Paul closes with instructions, remembrance, and greetings from and to the brethren.

Summary Points for All Three Letters – 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

A preacher must teach only the Truth of the Word in a world filled with error of all kinds. Paul's three letters to Timothy and Titus devote much instruction to differentiating between God's Truth and the errors of men.

Keep Error Out of Your Mind and Your Sermons:

1. 1 Tim. 1:3-4: "no other doctrine, . . . fables and endless genealogies"
2. 1 Tim. 1:6: "idle talk"
3. 1 Tim. 1:20: "blaspheme"
4. 1 Tim. 4:1-3: "depart from the faith, deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods"
5. 1 Tim. 4:7: "profane and old wives fables"
6. 1 Tim. 6:3: "if anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, ...disputes and arguments over words, ...useless wranglings of men"
7. 1 Tim. 6:20: "profane and vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge."

8. Titus 1:10-16: “idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ...teaching things which they ought not, ...Jewish fables and commandments of men”
9. Titus 3:9: “foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law.”
- 10.2 Tim. 2:14-19: “strive about words, ...profane and vain babblings, ...resurrection is already passed”
- 11.2 Tim. 2:23: “foolish and ignorant disputes”
- 12.2 Tim. 3:5: “a form of godliness but denying its power”
- 13.2 Tim. 4:4: “fables”

True teaching – Teach only “the truth” of God found in His Word

1. 1 Tim. 2:4: “knowledge of the truth”
2. 1 Tim. 2:7: “I am speaking the truth . . . in faith and truth”
3. 1 Tim. 3:15: “pillar and ground of the truth”
4. 1 Tim. 4:3: “by those who believe and know the truth”
5. 1 Tim. 6:5: “the truth”
6. 2 Tim. 2:15: “rightly dividing the word of truth”
7. 2 Tim. 2:18: “strayed concerning the truth”
8. 2 Tim. 2:25: “that they may know the truth”
9. 2 Tim. 3:7: “come to the knowledge of the truth”
- 10.2 Tim. 3:8: “resist the truth”
- 11.2 Tim. 4:4: “turn their ears away from the truth”
- 12.Titus 1:1: “acknowledgement of the truth”
- 13.Titus 1:14: “who turn from the truth”

What Preachers say to those who hear them: “Tell them what they need to hear”

1. Set in order the things that are lacking (help the church be faithful and active – Titus 1:5)
2. Rebuke those who need to be rebuked – so they will be sound in the faith – Titus 1:13
3. Speak sound doctrine – Titus 2:1
4. Always be a pattern of good works – Titus 2:7
5. Speak, Exhort (encourage strongly), and Rebuke as necessary by authority of the Word of God – Titus 2:15
6. Keep the brethren mindful (aware) of what they need to know and do – Titus 3:1
7. Remind them of: their obligation to rulers – Titus 3:1a; to do good works – 1b, to speak no evil – 2a; to conduct themselves well as Christians – 3:2b
8. Avoid foolish arguments – Titus 3:9

“The Word” – God’s Inspired and Revealed Truth

1. 1 Tim. 4:5: “sanctified by the word of God”
2. 1 Tim. 5:17: “those who labor in the word”
3. Titus 1:3: “manifested His word through preaching”
4. Titus 1:9: “holding fast the faithful word”
5. Titus 2:5: “the word of God”
6. 2 Tim. 2:9: “the word of God is not chained”
7. 2 Tim. 2:15: “rightly dividing the word of truth”
8. 2 Tim. 4:2: “Preach the word!”

“Sound doctrine” – Principles and Commands from the Inspired Word of God

1. 1 Tim. 1:10: “sound doctrine”
2. 1 Tim. 6:3: “wholesome words,” “...the doctrine which accords with godliness”
3. Titus 1:9: “by sound doctrine”
4. Titus 2:1: “proper for sound doctrine”
5. 2 Tim. 1:13: “pattern of sound words”
6. 2 Tim. 4:3: “not endure sound doctrine”

“The faith” – The Collective Set of Truths that Must Be Taught and Defended..

1. 1 Tim. 1:19: “concerning the faith”
2. 1 Tim. 3:9: “the mystery of the faith”
3. 1 Tim. 3:13: “in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”
4. 1 Tim. 4:1: “some will depart from the faith”
5. Titus 1:13: “sound in the faith”
6. 2 Tim. 3:8: “disapproved concerning the faith”

7. Sermon Outlining and Preparation – the Basics

But if I say, I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name, then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.
Jeremiah 20.9

First Things First

Our Father God wants His Truth preached and His Son's Gospel spread everywhere. So, pray sincerely and humbly for God's wisdom and guidance. He promises to provide: James 1:5-6.

Relax and enjoy your work as an evangelist in God's Kingdom! You are glorifying God and His Word. It is not about you; you are not under a microscope, and so you should rejoice in the opportunity to preach the truth.

You will help to save lost souls. You will be an example to others of how to respect God, His Son Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Truth of the Gospel. People will thank you for it.

Caveats:

The best teacher is experience, and experience comes by doing. Almost everything takes practice - the only true failure is never trying or growing.

There is no "one way" to preach, but there are general principles that are widely useful and applicable. Regarding preaching methods, there are exceptions to nearly everything, so be flexible.

Do not let yourself be influenced by other peoples' contradictory opinions and inflexible mindsets. Here are some examples of contradictory views that you may encounter:

"Never use PowerPoint" or "Always use PowerPoint."

"Never put scripture on your PowerPoint." Why? They should find the verses themselves

"Put only scripture on your PowerPoint" Why? Nothing else is important.

"Stand still when you preach" or "Always move around."

"Never use humor when you preach, it is disrespectful to God" or "Always use a little humor"

"You should do this, you should do that..." Answer: "Okay, then **you** preach..."

Which of these opinions is best? Decide for yourself. But always preach only from the Bible.

And ... don't look at the "audience" and wonder what they are thinking. Sadly, some of them aren't.

Types of Sermons:

Topical Sermons:

Possibly the most common method in use today. Some subjects can only be dealt with this way. Rather than focus on a certain book or section in a book of the Bible, a topical lesson addresses a specific subject or series within the Bible.

A topical sermon will usually involve multiple scriptures and points supporting the main topic or theme. This method requires the listeners to follow the scriptures during the lesson to keep up.

When preaching topically, it is helpful (but not mandatory) to have a handout or use a PowerPoint presentation. Examples of topical sermons are sermons about: proper moral conduct; baptism; marriage divorce and remarriage (MDR); instrumental music in worship; drinking, gambling or other specific sins; the power of prayer; the encouraging service of Barnabas; false doctrines; etc.

Topical sermons are effective when you want to:

- Trace a theme through multiple books of the Bible, showing the consistency of Scripture.
- Use multiple scriptures to show most or all that the Bible says about an issue.
- Explain / answer doctrinal questions and controversies.
- Use the most appropriate verses from Scripture to explain a specific topic.

Textual Sermons:

The speaker selects a passage of scripture and uses the message of the scripture chosen as the basis for developing the meaning of the passage or a related subject. **Textual sermons will be focused on one main passage with multiple supporting points, but other scriptures may be used as well to clarify specific points and meaning.**

Examples of textual sermons are sermons about:

- evangelism* based on the Samaritan woman at the well - John 4
- response to the gospel* based on the parable of the sower - Matthew 13
- rebellion and forgiveness* based on the parable of the Prodigal son - Luke 15
- Settling doctrinal disputes* based on the conference in Jerusalem - Acts 15

Textual sermons are very similar to the final category, expository sermons.

Expository Sermons:

Expository (or exegetical) preaching occurs when the message of a specific Bible text becomes the focus and outline of the sermon. Exposition explains the meaning of a particular passage of Scripture for the sake of the meaning itself. It reveals, or exposes, what the Bible means by what it says. **Exegesis** is technical and grammatical exposition, a careful drawing out of the exact meaning of a passage in context.

Advantages of expository preaching: many believe it is the safest way to handle the Scriptures; it teaches the congregation the Bible in the shortest possible time; it is the least damaging way to deal with problems within the congregation; it emphasizes the wisdom of God, not of man - more than with the other two types of sermons.

Keep in mind: many passages in scripture can be used in two or all three of the ways just described. The nature of your sermon will likely change, depending on how you use the material, but the flexibility to choose your approach is there in many cases.

Expository Sermon Outlines

INTRODUCTION

1. The sermon outlines presented in this study are intended to show you how to prepare expository sermons. Preachers, teachers, and those who hear them will benefit greatly from this type of lesson and study.

2. Expository sermons are lessons that develop the core message in a passage in scripture. The study presented stays entirely within the specific passage with only a few departures to other scriptures for applications.
3. Christians are supposed to read the Word and meditate on it daily. As you read, you will recognize how passages state God's Truth and His principles in ways that are concise and easily taught.
4. Expository lessons are efficient in both your use of preparation time and in the amount of wisdom packed into just a few verses.
5. Some passages of scripture contain accounts of events or the behavior of people. Often such scriptures are ready-made texts for expository lessons because the account in the passage is both a story (easy to explain and to hear) as well as a rich source of insight into God's will for us as we live and serve Him.
6. Another excellent source of expository material is the parables of Jesus. The parables are intended to teach important principles in a simple story form. They are very straightforward to teach.

A. Overview – List of the Sermon Outlines

- Luke 15 – 3 Examples or Illustrations in the Parables of How We Can Be Lost
- Neh. 1:4-11 – Nehemiah's Prayer to God
- What We Are to Live By – Matthew 4 - Jesus Rebukes Satan
- 2 Kings 4 – The Pot of Oil: Obey God and Your Life Gets Better
- 1 Timothy 3:16 – Six Things That Are True Beyond Doubt
- 1 Kings 1 – I Will Be King – How Carnal Pride and Ambition Can Destroy Us
- Genesis 24 – Traits of a Servant of God (Lesson from an entire chapter in Genesis)
- Numbers 11 – How Petty Discontent Can Lead to Disaster

B. Luke 15 – 3 Examples or Illustrations in the Parables of How We Can Be Lost

1. The Lost Sheep – Luke 15:3-7 – You can be lost in the wilderness – unsafe places you should not be in and that you may not know are dangerous.
2. The Lost Coin – Luke 15:8-10 – you can be lost at home (where you do feel safe) because you do not know how God wants you to live.
3. The Lost Son – Luke 15:11-32 – You can be part of a godly family and be lost because you are interested in the world and your carnal desires and so your heart (mind) is not thinking right.
4. Have you ever been physically lost? What was it like? Many are spiritually lost and don't even know it.
5. The worst state of "lost" one can be in is to be lost in sin. Don't let that happen to you! Understand how God saves. Then believe in God and His Son and obey His plan of salvation.
6. Jesus finds the lost sheep, but they must follow Him. What is your decision?

C. Nehemiah's Prayer to God Example of a heart-felt appeal for help.

1. v4 – tears and fasting before the prayer.
2. v5 – God is great, faithful, and merciful.
3. v6 – Appeal and trust that God will hear.
4. v7 – Admission of sin, God holds us accountable.
5. v8-9 – Admission that God both punishes and rewards according to His promises.
6. v10 – Statement of faith that God redeems His people.
7. V11 – Appeal for mercy and success.
8. You can use Nehemiah's genuine prayer of trust, humility and appeal to help you pray.

D. Jesus Rebukes Satan in the Wilderness – Matthew 4

1. "Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" Matthew 4:1-4
 - a. Only 4 verses and the key is verse 4. Can we get a useful sermon out of that?
 - b. Jesus says that we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.
 - c. What does Jesus' statement teach us?
 - i. Only the Word of God makes us live and keeps us alive – nothing else is mentioned.
 - ii. We must keep every word, not just the ones we like or want to keep.
 - iii. To live by these words, we must read, learn, and use them daily, not just occasionally.
 - iv. Jesus does not mention anything else other than God's Word. We must not add to it. God's Word is all we need!
2. Do not let your own words trip you up! Matthew 12:35-37.
3. Do not be deceived by the words of men! Galatians 6:6-9.
4. Speak only what God tells us to speak: 1 Peter 4:11a
5. Go and sin no more! John 5:14, John 8:11.

E. 2 Kings 4 – Obey God and Your Life Gets Better

1. v1 – a faithful widow is in debt and in need. She appeals to Elisha (and thereby to God)
2. v2-3 – Elisha provides a solution, but she must obey: borrow as many pots as she can find.
3. v5 – she did obey and began filling all the pots with oil.
4. v6 – The miracle of the oil supply stopped when the last pot was full.
5. v7 – because she did just as Elisha told her to, and borrowed all the pots she could find, there was enough both to pay her debt and to provide for future needs.
6. What if she had not obeyed? What if she had only borrowed a few pots? What if she had waited until another day? She would not have received from God what she needed.
7. The oil stopped when the last pot was full. We must obey God just exactly as we are told!
8. What if the widow had trusted her own ideas and not obeyed?
 - a. Mistake: "This is too much trouble!" What if she had said:
 - i. "It is too hard to gather so many pots. I will just use the big pot behind my house."
 - ii. "It is too early in the morning. People are not awake yet. I will ask another time."

- iii. "It is late at night, everyone is getting ready to sleep. I will wait until tomorrow."
- b. Mistake: "I see what is going to happen. I have a better idea!"
 - i. "I will also get a basket of corn and also borrow more baskets for corn, too."
 - ii. "There is another town nearby. Today I will borrow pots here. Tomorrow I will borrow more there."
 - iii. "Instead of oil, I will borrow my neighbor's little pot of gold coins, and pour gold into all the pots I borrow."
- c. **The widow would have failed!**

F. 1 Timothy 3:16 – "Great Is the Mystery of Godliness:" Six Things that Are Absolutely True

1. In 1 Timothy, the Apostle Paul provides his young student evangelist, Timothy, with a brilliant summary of the Gospel of Christ. If you understand this passage, you are ready at a moment's notice to "give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15
2. "Without Controversy, Great is the Mystery of Godliness..."

The phrase "**without controversy**" simply means certainly, clearly, without doubt. It does not mean that no one will argue; it just means that no one should – the matter is clear. Paraphrase: "Without any doubt whatsoever, this revelation of the once-hidden Gospel of Christ is truly a very great matter."
3. God Was Manifested in the Flesh

Core & key to the Gospel is the Truth that Jesus is God and that He took up human form by being born on earth: **John 1:1 & 14** - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*
4. Justified in the Spirit

Jesus did not need justification in God's eyes as sinful man does. That is not the point here, because Jesus never sinned even once. The idea was that Jesus was shown to be justified already, or proven innocent, rather than made justified as sinful man must be.
5. Seen by Angels

Angels were present with Jesus from His birth to His resurrection - Matthew 1:20, Matthew 4:11, Luke 22:43, Matthew 28:2ff, Acts 1:10; So, what is the significance of being seen by angels? Angels, as spirit beings, clearly testify that Jesus is the Savior from His birth to after His ascension back to heaven. (Revelation 5:11-14)
6. Preached Among the Gentiles

The Gospel was for all humankind. This was a key prophecy of the Old Testament - Isaiah 2:2 and 11:10. It was also prophesied in the New Testament - Luke 2:25-33 (Simeon) -also in Acts 1:8. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded it to His disciples - Matthew 28:19. Salvation came to the Gentiles as recorded beginning with Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. Completed in the 1st Century – Romans 1:8, 16:26; Colossians 1:23.
7. Believed On in the World

The spreading of the Gospel in the 1st century "turned the world upside down" (Ac 17:1-6)

The Gospel was ultimately preached everywhere: Colossians 1:3-6

8. Received Up in Glory

If Jesus had not been resurrected in the same body He was crucified in, there would have been no proof of His power over death and the grave. As a result, we would have no reason for hope of eternal life in Him. But He was resurrected, and in that same body He ascended back to heaven (Luke 24:33-43, Acts 1, especially verse 9).

G. 1 Kings 1 – I Will Be King – How Carnal Pride and Ambition Can Destroy Us

1. v.5 Adonijah decides that he will be king. He acts without authority and exalts himself.
2. v.5 He creates false impressions of his own stature. “chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.”
3. v7 & 9. Adonijah cultivates allies and forms false allegiances. He recruits Joab and Abiathar. He then invites the king’s sons and servants to a feast. These actions lend a false air of legitimacy to his actions.
4. v8. Only the honorable ones among David’s men remain faithful. They will not defect and must now stand against Adonijah. Often, the extent of the damage done and the terrible consequences are not clear at the beginning. Adonijah is responsible for this division among David’s men. Read Proverbs 6:12-19.
5. v9. Factions result. The king’s men must decide where they will stand. There is now an “in” group and an “out” group. Some form of conflict is inevitable.
6. v6. Note what did not happen that would likely have stopped Adonijah’s plot for escalating: David did not intervene. He did not call Adonijah to explain his behavior. Failure of authority.
7. **Solomon must correct Adonijah’s mistakes:** 1 Kings 1:21- 2:46. The rebels are executed.
8. Applications:
 - a. Pride & Self-Will are sins: 1 Kings 1:5 – “I will be King.”
Proverbs 16:18, Galatians 5:19-21, James 3:16-18, 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - b. Unauthorized Action Is Sin: 1 Kings 1:5 – “He prepared for himself,”
Diotrephes: 3 John 1:9-11
 - c. Creating false impressions is sin: 1 Kings 1:5 – chariots, horsemen, runners.
Matthew 23 – hypocrisy and deceit.
 - d. Cultivating Allies for plots is sin: 1 Kings 1:7 – Joab, Abiathar, plots intrigue.
 - e. Creating Enemies and Division is sin: 1 Kings 1:8 – the men loyal to David did not join him. Compare this account with Absalom’s scheming and rebellion in 2 Samuel 15.
James 4:1-7
 - f. It is then necessary to correct the error, address the sin, restore unity in the congregation. Galatians 2:11-14, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Titus 3:9-11
8. God’s people know to think and act in very different ways: Mark 9:35 and 1 Peter 3:8-12

H. Genesis 24 – Traits of a Devoted Servant of God (This is a longer and more detailed sermon)

1. We read of many devoted servants of God in the Bible. All have their noteworthy traits. Where might we look to find an account of a servant in which every trait is mentioned. Consider Abraham’s servant in Genesis 24.

2. In this chapter, the central character is not Abraham, or Isaac, or even Rebekah and her family. It is this unnamed servant of Abraham.

The main points of the lesson we learn in Genesis 24 about a faithful servant of God are:

3. The Master's command is the servant's mission: 24:1-9.
 - a. v. 3-4 The servant learns the specific details of the mission.
 - b. v. 5-8 He takes care to understand the terms & limits of his mission.
 - c. v. 9 Then he obeys and makes his commitment. (specific act seals the commitment).
4. The mission is the servant's all – (before everything else).
 - a. Immediate compliance: 24:10-11 (plus, no mention of the long 300-mile journey).
 - b. Self-denial and humility throughout:
 - He behaves according to his mission and his prayer – 24:12-20.
 - He waits patiently on God to see if his prayer has really been answered – 24:21-25.
 - He accepts Laban's invitation to stay with them – 24:28-31.
 - He will not eat until he has explained his mission and made his request – 24:32-49. Note: his account is faithful; he leaves nothing out, he does not elevate himself.
 - Only after he has explained his mission fully does he allow himself to rest – 24:54.
 - c. He refuses to be distracted until the mission is finished – 24:55-56.
5. The servant trusts his Master and plans for his Master's success.
 - a. He asks God to bless his efforts: Genesis 24:12-14 (a specific sign for certainty).
 - b. Gifts for the bride: Genesis 24:22 – gifts in hand. Like Abraham's servant, God's servant also trusts his master and assumes his mission will succeed.
 - c. Gifts for the family: Genesis 24:53 (No gifts needed if he fails. He expects to succeed).
6. Open acknowledgement of God's help & public and unashamed thanksgiving.

Glorifies God and gives public thanks immediately:

 - a. When he realizes Rebekah is the one – 24:26-28. (prays right in front of Rebekah).
 - b. In front of the family when he receives a favorable response from them – 24:52.
 - c. Nothing tentative or half-hearted about this servant!
7. A full account is expected and is given at the completion of his mission: Genesis 24:66.
8. Applications for Christians today:
 - a. **The Master's command is the servant's mission – 24:1-9.**
Matthew 4:4, Ephesians 5:15-17, Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 7:21, Rev 22:14, Luke 7:1-9.
 - b. **Mission first before everything else:**
 - i. **Immediate compliance:** Matthew 4:18-22, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.
 - ii. **Self-denial & humility:** Luke 9:23, 1 Peter 5:6, Matthew 21:28-31, James 4:10.
 - iii. **He refuses to be distracted until the mission is finished:** Nehemiah 6:3, Luke 9:61-62, Rev. 2&3 – to him who overcomes..., Mat. 24:13 – he who endures ... shall be saved, 1 Cor. 15:58, Matthew 25:21, 1 Cor. 4:1-2, 1 John 5:3, Ac. 5:29, Ro. 6:16.
 - c. **This servant trusts his Master and plans for his Master's success, thereby ensuring his own success:**
 - i. Parable of the Talents, Galatians 6:9.
 - ii. **He asks God to bless his efforts:** Acts 4:23-31, 1 Samuel 1 (Hannah), Nehemiah 1:11, Joshua 1:7, Psalm 1:1-3.

- d. **He openly glorifies God and acknowledges His help (public & unashamed thanksgiving)**
1 Kings 9 (Solomon dedicating the temple), 2 Chronicles 20 (Jehoshaphat), 2 Kings 18:36 (Elijah on Mt. Carmel), John 11:41-42 (Jesus before He raised Lazarus), Acts 16:25 (Paul and Silas in prison in Philippi).
- e. **A full account is expected and must be given:** Matthew 12:36-37, Romans 14:11-12.

I. Numbers 11 – No Self-Control: How Petty Discontent Can Lead to Disaster.

1. Have you ever had a strong craving for something? Everyone has. Strong craving is like lust, it can take over our thinking and corrupt our minds. We can learn about the sin of craving from Israel in Numbers 11. This is the very sad account of what happened when the Israelites got tired of God's gracious gift of manna. Lust kept them from thinking clearly.
 - a. **First, read the truth about manna:** Numbers 11:7-9. It was very good and it was free!
 - b. **The people had the wrong perspective** – seeing it as a loss rather than a gain (Numbers 11:4-6) People see self-control and self-denial as a loss, as a bad thing. This is what Satan wants, whining, complaining – “God is not fair.” This is a failure of FAITH!
 - c. **Israel lied to themselves by emotional reasoning** - Numbers 11:5-6 - Israel "remembers" incorrectly their past life. Things were bad in Egypt and they complained (Ex. 1:9-14).
 - d. **Israel falsely exaggerated the "cost" of the trial** - Numbers 11:6 - They said they were "dried up." Not so!
2. **Moses' frustration with Israel's whining requires him to have some self-control also - Numbers 11:11-15.**
 - a. **Self-pity:** Why me? Numbers 11:11-12.
 - b. **Helplessness:** Believing that you just can't do it. Numbers 11:13.
 - c. **Not even trying** - fear of failure, giving up. Numbers 11:14.
 - d. **Blame God**, demand a way out. Numbers 11:15 - irony: God never asks the impossible of us - there is always a way to resist (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - e. Moses' words are very hard to read! Yet frustration is common behavior.
3. **Applications: Develop Self-Control and Be Stronger in Your Faith.**
 - a. It is a sin to see self-control as a loss. The truth is that it is very great gain: 1 Timothy 6:6-8.
 - b. Sin originates within our hearts - long before we ever lose control and act in sin.
 - So give your heart to God! Jer. 29:13, Ps 119:2, Mt 22:36-38.
 - Self-control does not come easily to you when you grudgingly and half-heartedly attempt what God has asked of you from your full heart!
 - c. Say no to Satan and stand strong!
 - Paul buffeted his body daily (1 Cor. 9:27).
 - Present your own body to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
 - d. We have a promise from God - resist Satan and he will run away (James 4:7).
 - e. Exercising self-control seems frightening to some people: Acts 24:23-25, Proverbs 25:28.
 - f. Jesus was crucified for you and me. We must crucify our flesh for Jesus! Gal. 5:22-24, Proverbs 2:1-17, 3:19-26.
 - g. Pray to God for strength and wisdom to anticipate Satan's fiery darts and resist!

J. CONCLUSION

Just these 8 examples show us how rich the Word of God is when we read it as it is written and reflect on what we have read.

Now try this for yourself: read the Word of God daily, one book at a time. Give close attention to what you are reading, and your understanding will increase and you will find many lessons to teach.

Choosing Sermon Topics

1 Corinthians 14:12b " ... let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel."

Sources of inspiration for choosing sermons to preach –

Prayer – If you desire to preach and teach some, then pray to God for wisdom and guidance. He promises to answer generously those who pray in faith and sincerity, so expect help from this!

Pray also for the church and the needs of the community. Likewise ask God for clarity and inspiration.

Keep next to you whatever you use to make notes to yourself – a notepad, your cellphone, tablet, laptop, etc. When something strikes you as a possible topic, you don't have to stop right then and start outlining (unless you want to). Instead you can note the idea and whatever else related to it is on your mind, and then come back to it later.

Bible reading – you will usually have ideas appear while you are reading, studying or meditating. Note them down.

Sermon outline books – there are many of these available, some better than others, but all are good starting points. But keep in mind that outlines are just that – only outlines. You still need to build your own sermon from the framework provided. There are also many outline websites on the internet – again, some better than others.

Church websites – many congregations post audio sermons. These can also be good sources for ideas and inspiration, especially if the sermon archives are searchable.

Note on using other people's ideas and outlines: As you may already know, many people frown on this. Rightly so, if all a preacher ever does is use other men's work.

But still – if you use resources like these for ideas and inspiration from time to time, especially if it is just to get your own creative thoughts going, there is nothing wrong in that at all. After all, God wrote the Bible, and He commands us to teach from it, so there really is no originality in the Word beyond His own.

Choose your sermon topic:

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT: Lost souls need to hear:The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church needs to hear: what the Bible teaches about godly service and worship. Preach and teach these things and you will never go wrong! Romans 10:15b.

What's on your mind? What have you thought about recently regarding the needs of the church? Is there a topic or passage you have been wanting to study that would also benefit the church? Is there a spiritual need or issue that can be lovingly addressed? Is there a growth- or knowledge-related topic or series that would be good for all to hear?

What's on the church's mind? Have the members made any requests for messages on specific subjects? Is there a challenge the congregation has been facing that could be addressed with encouragement or an applicable scriptural example? Does the church have a theme for the year or the month?

Are you "filling in" for another preacher? If so, is there a theme or series you need to fit into? Perhaps the preacher is willing to provide some notes or guidance to help you get started.

Based on the above, or similar issues, choose the topic / title / scripture first, before you outline or write anything. This will lead you to your main message. (see step 1 in part 4 below)

How not to choose sermon topics...

Do the best you can to ensure that your words pull people to God and the Bible, not push them away. Avoid needless controversy - it is unscriptural - your words will likely be remembered - but for all the wrong reasons.

Make sure your topic can be addressed in the allotted time. If it cannot, then consider making it into a 2-part series.

Avoid politics, current events, personal gripes or beliefs – Preaching is just not about you, and such things are rarely as important to others as they are to you.

Remember Matthew 18 - if you have an "Issue" with a brother, keep how you handle that in line with scripture. Never address such things from the pulpit if the matter is just between you and someone else.

Keep visitors in mind - is everything you plan to say appropriate for non-members to hear?

Creating the Sermon Outline

Step 1: Main Message

Choose the specific sermon topic. In only one or two sentences, write down the primary point or core idea you want to convey to the assembly. Express this as clearly and succinctly as possible. This is your main message – what you want your listeners to know and remember, summed up very concisely. Until you can express to yourself clearly what this is, don't expect the assembly to get it.

Then – be sure to include this main message in your Introduction. You may also want to state it again in your conclusion as well.

Step 2: Primary points

What are the necessary points you need to make from scripture to ensure that your main message is conveyed to the listeners? Note I said necessary. You do not need to present every possible thought and scripture on a topic in order to get your point across. In fact, that is nearly impossible to do it, and attempts to do so will usually backfire by producing a lengthy, tedious and unnecessarily detailed lesson. Keep your points concise and directly relevant to your main message.

If you truly believe that a lot of detail is essential for your listeners to understand properly a specific subject, then do two things. First, question your reasoning: is such detail really necessary? Usually it is not, and it is best if you can avoid it. Second, if you are still convinced that much detail is required, then turn your sermon into a Sunday morning or Wednesday evening Bible study, and spread the material out over several weeks.

Examples of subjects that may be better suited to a sermon series or a class than a single sermon are:

A study of the parables of Jesus (on the other hand, teaching just one parable can be a very good choice for a sermon)

A study of the Sermon on the Mount

The Fruits of the Spirit

The Identity and Work of the Holy Spirit

A study of Revelation – and likewise for the majority of the books in the Bible

Until you have gained the experience of preaching a few dozen sermons, try to limit your primary (key) points to three. This keeps things neat and time-limited. Plus it makes outlining much easier! If, despite your best efforts, you can find no more than two key points, then be sure to develop them well enough to use your time. Likewise, if you conclude that you just have to make four key points to get your main message across, then do so, but be a bit more concise as you expand on each point (use fewer supporting points).

These primary points now become the main headers of your outline, following the introduction and before the conclusion.

Step 3: Make the Outline

Make your outline only after 1) you have decided clearly on your topic, and 2) you have chosen your three primary points.

As you fill in the outline, develop your primary points first. Present them in an order that flows logically. Establish (prove) your primary points with appropriate supporting points and scripture. Remember, you do not need to include all scriptures related to your points, just enough to establish or prove each point.

Then write your introduction; then write your conclusion. There's your rough draft.

a) **Introduction:**

Most preachers begin with some warm words of welcome to the audience. Such words **need to be brief** but not curt, are not part of your topic, but do serve to get everyone's attention and draw the listeners to you.

One mistake inexperience often causes is to never quite finish the introduction and get to the sermon. So a 30 minute sermon is 15 min of intro and 10 sermon and 5 conclusion. Practicing your sermon before you give it should help with this.

b) **Primary Points:**

Your key points should be introduced and developed in order so your listeners can keep up with thoughts and follow your thinking. Sometimes it is clear which point should come first and how the rest should follow, sometimes it may not matter. The points you make and the order you present them should always support your main topic.

In your outline - which guides the presentation of your sermon - develop each point completely before you move to the next, do not jump back and forth. Develop each point sufficiently to ensure the flow of your message and to ensure that the listeners understand what it is you want to tell them about your topic.

c) **Supporting Points:**

Supporting points follow the introduction of each primary point. Each supporting point should clearly and directly relate to or prove the primary point it follows. Most supporting points are paired with scripture that is the proof text for the specific truth or conclusion you are teaching.

In the outline template for this study guide, I show three supporting points for each of the primary points. While this is a practical rule to start with, it is not absolute. Sometimes only one or two supporting points are needed for a primary point. But, beware if you find yourself thinking you need many supporting points to prove a primary point. Once in a while, this may be so, but not in most cases. Choose just a few supporting points that clearly make your primary point, and then move on.

d) **Conclusion:**

What is the main idea you want your listeners to take away with them after your sermon? Can you express that in 1 or 2 paragraphs? There's your conclusion.

Your ending needs to be brief, but not so terse that it is over before anyone realizes you are done. It needs to be clearly drawn from your main points and totally on topic.

One common mistake is to never quite finish the sermon and get to the invitation. Another common error is to re-present most of the sermon as the conclusion. Practicing your sermon before you give it should help prevent this.

e) **Invitation:**

Always end with an invitation. It need not be lengthy, and it can be just a direct and simple appeal to those who are subject to the call, especially if your listeners are Christians. Try to segue from your topic to the need for Christ in one or two smooth

sentences and then be sure to let the audience know to come forward during the song. Don't make your invitation a second sermon on salvation unless you are addressing a crowd of unbelievers, in that case it should have been your main topic to begin with!

Use The Following Sermon Outline Template {based on the preceding points}

TITLE [per section 3 above]

INTRODUCTION

Based on the main message you developed in Steps 1 and 3a. This is where you introduce your intended message and capture your listeners' attention and interest. Explain why and how you will speak on your chosen topic.

A. Overview

(Optional) An overview can be helpful to develop the Main Message just enough to make clear to the assembly how you will

1. Point 1
2. Point 2
3. Point 3

B. Primary Point 1 [steps 2 and step 3b]

1. Supporting Point 1 [Step 3c]
2. Supporting Point 2
3. Supporting Point 3

C. Primary Point 2 [same process as B. just above]

Supporting Points 1-3

D. Primary Point 3 [same process as B. just above]

Supporting Points 1-3

E. Primary Point 4 [only if necessary]

9. Supporting Points 1-3

F. CONCLUSION & INVITATION

What is the main idea you want your listeners to take away with them after your sermon? Express that in 1 or 2 paragraphs, and there's your conclusion.

Your ending needs to be brief, but not so terse that it is over before anyone realizes you are done. It needs to be clearly drawn from your main points and totally on topic.

1. Closing Point 1 [step 3d]
2. Closing Point 2 [step 3d]
3. Invitation [step 3e]

Step 4: Prepare for delivery

Memorize: Spend time memorizing the general message and all points you will present to the point that you can quickly write them down from immediate recall.

Practice delivering your message at least twice. Just once is not really enough to get you in a groove. Be sure to time yourself.

Ice it: If you have time, set your sermon aside for a day or two and then come back to it with fresh eyes. Your message will usually benefit from this.

Once more – practice the actual delivery and hit the time window.

Archive your notes. Always save your work. It represents significant time and effort. You will need it again someday if you continue to preach.

Transition from writing to presentation:

There comes a time when you quit adding notes and get ready to preach!

Don't try to include every possible point you can find about your topic - you will never finish writing, and if somehow you could actually include every possible point, the lesson would be too long to preach.

Step 5: Practice your delivery:

This is absolutely essential until you have been preaching for a while. Why? It saves you a lot of trouble. Practicing the presentation lets you know quickly whether your outline as developed is too short or too long, clear or unclear, flows smoothly enough or still needs some wordsmithing.

Another important benefit is that you are familiar with how the sermon flows before you get up to go live with it. That familiarity will make your delivery much better.

Do not be afraid to adjust the outline (gently) to lengthen, shorten, or clarify the sermon as necessary, based on your practice of it.

Step 6: Preach Your Sermon:

Dress well (doesn't have to be a suit). Avoid distracting clothing, colors, logos.

Be yourself - within reason - but make sure you speak at a slightly elevated volume and at just a slightly faster than casual pace. Eventually you will learn how to vary these things for effect, but to get started, following these simple rules will help you.

What if you make a verbal boo-boo, get your tongue tangled, just can't seem to pronounce something after 6 attempts? **Keep moving!** It happens to everybody including experienced speakers. Don't dwell on it and draw attention to it.

What if you forget something you were going to say next? That is what your outline is for. Follow your outline and keep up with where you are in it. If you go blank, you have a handy reminder right in front of you.

PowerPoint Sermons

PowerPoint is good - but not necessary. A tool to help your listeners follow the lesson.

If you use PowerPoint, make each slide simple. Each slide should make or support a point or scripture in some important way.

Avoid the "animations" effects in with PowerPoint. They can be distracting.

The fewer slides the better. Keep your presentation "crisp" so that you can finish them all in the allotted time.

Practice your PowerPoint sermon so you know if you have about the right number of slides. If you have too many, reduce the number. If you have too few for the allowed time, then what point can you develop a little bit more?

Spicing things up.

Some preachers can incorporate effectively into their sermons tools such as humor, modern-day parables, or emotional impact to enhance their message. In my opinion, such tools are appropriate if you know how to do it, and you don't overdo it.

Humor: Laughter relaxes people, makes a connection with the audience, or relieve stress at a difficult part of the message. But – we are rarely as funny as we think we are. No one's sense of humor has universal appeal. And ... jokes can offend people. Use humor carefully. Sometimes, the safest humor involves a joke or story about yourself.

Stories and modern-day parables: stories can be very effective in illustrating / explaining how to apply a point or principle of scripture. They also pull your listeners into your message. Be sure the story is clear enough to be understood, long enough to complete the illustration – but no longer.

Emotion – other than laughter covered above: this is perhaps the most slippery slope of all. Everyone's emotional triggers and reactions are both somewhat similar and somewhat unique. Use emotion sparingly and do not base the larger part of any one sermon on it. If you use it, be bold and produce the reaction you are looking for. But then move on to make your point(s).

However – there are those who believe that displaying or evoking emotion in a sermon is wrong. The reasons given range from perceived irreverence to the idea that using emotional reactions in preaching means one is relying on it. Beware...

Example Sermon Outlines

Whose Baptism Is Right? Scripture: Acts 2:36-41, Matthew 3:13-17

- A. Jesus commanded many things, but our subject today is baptism
1. Baptism is commanded: **Matthew 28:18ff**
 2. Jesus was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness” even though He was no sinner: **Mt. 3:13-17**
 3. The early Christian converts of Acts were baptized beginning on the day of Pentecost: **Acts 2:36-41 - all accounts in Acts that give us any detail at all include baptism!**
- B. Why Baptism?
1. Baptism washes away your sins: **Acts 22:12-16**
 2. We must obey the Gospel to be saved – **2 Thessalonians 1:6-11a**
 3. What is our “calling?” — to obey the Gospel, to be a Christian! **1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Rom. 6:1-8**
 4. So very simply; we must be baptized if we are to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- C. So, does it matter “whose” baptism you receive? Can't it be any denomination's?
1. Yes, it does matter: consider a "series" of baptisms - The Jews had traditionalized many ritual washings by the time of Christ - more than we can even discuss here. They had no meaning to anyone except to those who practiced the rituals.
 2. Then came John - not with traditions - but with a Baptism of repentance - **Matt. 3:1-6**
 3. But then John's baptism fulfilled its purpose, and so it was replaced by Christ's baptism: **Matthew 28:18-19 (already cited)**
 4. So John's baptism was no longer valid - it did not apply to Christians: **Acts 18:24-28**
 5. Christians are to receive Christ's baptism: **Acts 19:1-7**
 6. What exactly is it that matters?
 - a. Baptism is immersion – that is what “*baptizo*” means – to put something completely into water. The *koine* Greek word for sprinkle was *rantizo*
 - b. Water is specifically what is used: **John 3:23 (much water), Acts 8:36 (see, here is water...)**
 - c. It is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: **Matthew 28:19 (already cited)**
 - d. It is specifically for the remission of sin and to **obey** the Gospel. It is not a work, it is an act of obedience to God!
 - e. It is for a believing person who understands sin and is remorseful and repentant **Acts 2:36-41**
 - f. It marks the beginning of a new life, not just an obligation to fulfill! **Acts 2:42-47.** The believer who is baptized needs to understand that he or she does not just go back to their old routine, esp. if that was a worldly life or a life indifferent to God.
- D. CONCLUSION & INVITATION
1. Do you see that a believer must be baptized? **John 14:6** - and Jesus has commanded baptism! **Galatians 3:27** - For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
 2. One Lord, one faith, and one baptism - **Ephesians 4:5** - the baptism we've just studied!
 3. Have you obeyed the Gospel of Jesus yet?

What Can We Do? - Telling the World about Salvation!

Scripture: Acts 2:37-41

INTRODUCTION

1. Read Acts 2:37-41 - "*Men and brethren, what can we do?*" The lost need to know what to do, *and the "cheap grace" of evangelical/Calvinistic traditions does not save!*
2. The unscriptural use of the "sinner's prayer" is not the answer to "What shall we do?"
3. Many refuse to hear this truth because of the Calvinistic traditions commonly taught.
4. But many do accept the factual examples of baptism by the first Christians in Acts.

These examples teach us to believe and obey and then teach others to obey likewise.

5. As lights in the world, we are put here by God to show Christ to those around us and to tell everyone how to obey the Gospel and about the joy of our salvation
6. Obedience is commanded. The disobedient will not be saved: Matthew 7:21ff

A. The early days and the young Church of Christ

1. The command of Jesus and the Great Commission
 - a. Luke 24:44-53
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20
2. Acts 8:26-39 - the Ethiopian eunuch
3. Acts 10:34-48 - The Gentile centurion Cornelius
4. Acts 16:9-15 - Lydia
5. Acts 16:25-34 - the Philippian jailer
6. Acts 17:6 - Turning the world upside down.

B. Paul's conversion

1. Acts 9 and then repeated by Paul himself in Acts 22 and Acts 26
2. Paul's account - Acts 22:6-16
3. Paul's behavior - Acts 26:19-20

C. The simple truth is all we need!

1. The actual historical examples of the behavior of the early Christians when they received the gospel all speak for themselves!
2. Focus on the life-changing power of true conviction! When has such deep conviction NOT moved people into action consistent with that conviction?
3. When the first Christians heard the Gospel, they listened and then they obeyed - they just did what they were told to do by those who were inspired directly by God's Holy Spirit!

D. CONCLUSION & INVITATION - What do YOU believe? Do these scriptures convince you of the fact that baptism is part of how we obey the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Prayer - The Power of Sincere and Persistent Prayer

SR: which one would you pick?

INTRODUCTION

1. **James 5:13-18** - Do you believe this passage? Do you pray often? Daily? from your heart?
2. Prayer is a very clear measure and test of our faith. How much do you believe - really believe - in prayer? Paul told the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing! 1 Thess. 5:16-18.

A. Overview / Subject

1. Prayer is not just begging God on the one hand or demanding from Him on the other. Prayer is acknowledging God, glorifying His name, humbling yourself before Him, and exercising your faith. **Prayer is worship!**
2. Jesus' model prayer for His disciples - **Luke 11:1-4**

B. Persistent prayer is what God wants to hear!

1. Jesus' parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow - **Luke 18:1-8**
2. Jesus' parable of the persistent neighbor - **Luke 11:5-13**
3. Persistence demonstrates that we believe what we pray, that it comes from the heart!

C. Why doesn't God always answer "yes?"

1. Prayer is not about being happy and comfortable and getting what we want.
2. Prayer is intended to deepen our faith and make us spiritually stronger.
For this reason, God did not heal Paul's "thorn in the flesh." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
3. Prayers must come from the sincere heart of a Christian who obeys what is right.
James 4:1-3 - we "ask amiss" if we pray to satisfy carnal lusts and desires.

D. The prayer of King Jehoshaphat - 2 Chronicles 20

1. Note the very severe circumstances
2. Israel was helpless, and the King humbled himself before God and admitted it.
3. God heard and answered!

E. Prayer is for us and our spiritual welfare

1. Prayer to God is not for God, He does not need us to tell Him anything.
2. Prayer is commanded for our spiritual growth and well-being
3. We must be diligent in prayer: Hebrews 11:6, Romans 12:10-12, Colossians 4:2

F. CONCLUSION & INVITATION

Prayer is our powerful avenue of communication to God. God wants us to pray persistently and reverently to Him, and to do it from the heart - very often. God hears the prayers of the repentant sinner and the prayers of His children. Have you obeyed the Gospel yet?

8. Practical Advice for All Preachers: Guarding against Discouragement and Temptation

Dealing with Rejection – It Happens. Do Not Let It Discourage You!

Paul faced skeptics everywhere he went. So did Jesus and His disciples. We do not preach for those who will not believe but for those who do believe.

Often, the Word of God is rejected by men when they hear something that they do not want to accept. There are many examples of this in the Bible.

We must not let Satan tempt us to think we are wasting our time as servants of God. That is never true if all we say and do is in agreement with the Word of God.

Remember Noah. Peter says he was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5) yet he saved no one except those God said He would give him – his own family.

Problems in the Local Assembly – Take Only the Side of the Bible

Factions and Divisions – 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:1-7,

Open unrepentant sin – 1 Corinthians 5

Pride and Complacency – the church in Laodicea – Rev. 3:14-19

Money Is a Temptation. Will You Serve God or Mammon?

Do not try to be rich in this world’s goods. Preachers often struggle to have enough financial support to live on. So did Paul. Be content with what you have even if it is less than what others have. Philippians 3:8, 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-14.

Control Your Emotions, Words, and Actions

James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Substance Abuse, Sexual Sins, and Pornography

Many experienced preachers and elders say that these three things are the greatest snares to preachers. Beware! Stay far away from these temptations!

Do not give in to any temptation to “experiment” with alcohol or drugs. Do not keep company with anyone who does. You will sin and open yourself to addition.

Do not visit women by yourself. Bring your wife or another brother or sister with you, so there are witnesses present.

Use self-control in all you do. Practice the same godly life you preach. Do not let your behavior be an excuse for nonbelievers to blaspheme God. 2 Samuel 12:13-14, Romans 2:21-24.

Be Careful With “Counseling” Your Brethren As Well As Non-Believers

Things to Think About Before Engaging in “Counseling”

(American Viewpoint)

INTRODUCTION

Willingness to engage in “Counseling” is a common expectation of ministers. But what counseling is and is not (among most Christians) is poorly defined and fraught with serious pitfalls. Ministers and elders should use extreme caution before engaging anyone in any kind of counseling.

A. Counseling has become a part of many cultures.

1. Some people think it is cool to have a therapist.
2. Courts order people into therapy more and more.
3. There are many mistaken impressions: therapy should be free, the therapist will agree with the client and never tell the client he/she is wrong or to change their behavior, etc.

B. Some Common Pitfalls of “Counseling” Christians

1. Very time-consuming. Can take both preachers and elders away from other important work.
2. Serves as an open door to people with ungodly motives and to sexual temptation.
3. Requires very clear and specific advance communication, understanding, and boundaries.
4. Comes with a very definite risk of lawsuit. The church must have insurance.
5. Requires a level of focus and vigilance that is difficult for most preachers and elders to sustain.

C. Red Flags (Warning Signs) to Look for Regarding to Someone Seeking “Counseling”

1. Insisting on talking to you and only you.
2. Insisting on meeting you alone in private places.
3. Resisting or dismissing reasonable advice and guidance.
4. Persisting in gossip or complaining about others.
5. Demanding that you be on his/her side in the discussion.
6. Resisting or rejecting a focus on Bible study in your meetings.
7. Sustained lack of progress coupled with a demand for more time.
8. Refusal to agree and abide by firm boundaries.

D. Some Appropriate Steps and Policies

1. It is wise if you DO NOT:

- a. Meet people alone and in private settings.
- b. Use words commonly associated with mental health services, such as “counseling,” “therapy,” “session,” “intervention,” etc.
 - i. These are loaded words and people attach many different meanings to them.
 - ii. Use of these words tends to set expectations that are hard keep clear.
- c. Commit to open-ended counseling. (Agree to only a limited number of sessions)
- d. See people without written and agreed boundaries set up front.
- e.

2. Absolutely DO:

- a. Learn what your state laws are regarding ministers' obligations when "counseling." Do your best to determine whether you can obey those laws and be faithful to God. If not, what is the best thing to do regarding "counseling?"
- b. Use words that are scriptural to describe the work you do, such as "bible study."
- c. Always meet in a setting where there is at least one other person present. Or video record the meetings (most people will not agree to this).
- d. Have a simple document that states what you will and will not do, how long you will meet with someone, what you will and will not keep confidential. Require a signature.
- e. Set a firm limit on the number of times you will meet.
- f. Set specific goals and expectations.
- g. Be clear about why and when the studies will end.

The Problem of Pride and Self-Will

Do not love public attention. Preachers are public speakers, and they attract a lot of attention. Some of the attention is positive and some is not. But in every case, they get attention. It is a sin to preach to get attention. **A desire for attention will lead a preacher into sin every time.** Do not let yourself fall into this trap. If you do, you will lose your soul despite your preaching. This is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Therefore, do not seek a following on social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, X, etc. Do not use social media to attract an audience. Let your preaching do that.

The Jewish leaders sinned this way: *John 12:42-43 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

Matthew 23:5-7 *But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'*

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 *But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.*

Live to be humble like Jesus was.

Matthew 23:11-12 *But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

If you do not live like this you will fail as a preacher, and you will bring shame and dishonor on the name of God. **Romans 2:21-24** *You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.*

9. Advanced Studies and Internet Resources

All preachers need access to good Bible study resources. Good websites devoted to honest Bible study are very important.

BEWARE: All websites are set up men. Men are fallible and uninspired. There will be mistakes on them, so never trust websites even if you know the man who owns it.

The ones on this list are trustworthy (but not infallible). These websites contain valuable study material, and they are very large. Patiently search the contents of each site to understand everything they have to offer.

Very Good Bible Study Websites:

Apologetics Press: www.ApologeticsPress.com – evidences-based site. Hundreds of articles and videos by Christians who are scientists.

Mark Copeland's Site: <https://www.executableoutlines.com/>

David Padfield's website:

www.padfield.com – Many outlines of sermons, Bible study material, and more.

Wayne Jackson's website: www.christiancourier.com

Many well-written articles about a wide range of scriptural topics and questions.

LaVista church of Christ: <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/articles-by-topic/>

Embry Hills Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA. <https://embryhills.com/>

Many good resources: <https://www.insearchoftruth.org/>

Andy Sochor's website: <https://plainbibleteaching.com/start-here/>

Chris Reeves' website: <https://thegoodteacher.com/>

Lesley Egharevba (Nigeria): <https://www.unmaskingsophistry.com/>

Very large website with many references: <https://djmarko53.wixsite.com/churchbooks/books>

10. Christian Evidences: Suggested Reading

What is meant by “Christian Evidences?” *Christian Evidences* is the study of the abundant evidence for Christianity – specifically, the evidence that proves the three “pillars” of Christian faith: the existence of God; the inspiration of the Bible; and the deity of Christ.

Why study Evidences? Because we must be able to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the reality of God, and the inspired truth of the Bible before all men. Preachers must be ready to do this anytime and anywhere. As Paul commanded Timothy: *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Timothy 4:1-4.*

All Christians, including preachers, are commanded by the Apostle Peter: *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear... 1 Peter 3:15.*

So study and learn the arguments from both the Bible and nature that prove the existence of God!

[A list this size seems overwhelming at first. Begin with the Case for Christ, The Privileged Planet, and The Reason for God, and then go from there.]

Evidences Fundamentals

The Case for Christ - by Lee Strobel

The Case for a Creator - by Lee Strobel

The Case for Faith - by Lee Strobel

The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict - by Josh McDowell

Standing for God openly in a skeptical and irreverent world (both are very good)

Prepared to Answer by Rob van de Weghe

The Reason for God by Timothy Keller

Evidences related to Evolution and Atheism (listed in order of value in my view)

The Creator and the Cosmos by Hugh Ross

The Privileged Planet by Guillermo Gonzales (in both book and DVD – the book is better than the DVD)

The Language of God by Francis S. Collins, Ph.D.,

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Geisler & Turek

Appendices – Independent Reading

Here are articles by older experienced American preachers. First, 10 articles from Christianity magazine (1989). Then 9 articles by David Tant. Read and reflect on these, as your time permits.

Christianity Magazine Articles – March 1989



Christianity Magazine

Theme Editorial

Editor: Paul Earnhart

Preaching and Its Challenges

THE PURPOSE OF gospel preaching is to save lost people from their sins (Romans 1:15-16). That is its simple, single intent. Therefore, those who preach this message of salvation must obviously be saved men who have a passion for the redemption of others (1 Timothy 4:12-16). The simplicity of the concept is so great that it becomes all the more marvelous that preachers and those who care about preaching should, at times, allow so much to go wrong with it.

In this issue of the magazine we want to re-examine the work of gospel preaching. Because so many Christians influence the character of gospel preachers and the nature of their preaching, we do not see this issue as narrowly focused. Parents have a significant impact. Elders of local churches play an important role. Indeed, every Christian who listens to and supports the preaching of the gospel is important in the determination of the kind of men who preach and the kind of preaching they do. As a friend of mine is wont to say, apostasies don't arise simply from wild preachers who are unwilling to carry out the Lord's charge, but from individual disciples who are unwilling to demand it of them. We are all in this thing together (Acts 2:44) and we must shoulder our responsibilities with

a sense of brotherhood. Bitter recriminations are worse than useless. What is needed is a prayerful evaluation of where we are, a determination to be where the Son of God wants us to be, and the patient teaching to put us there.

Whatever the popular impression, preachers are not the spiritual elite of the kingdom. Preachers are just Christians trying to serve the Lord according to the "measure of faith" which God has dealt to them (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11). And when they prove themselves good stewards of those abilities ("gifts") they have done no more than any other child of God who has served and honored the Lord with what was given him. Those who spend their lives in preaching Christ should be loved and regarded for their work's sake, but no more so than any other faithful disciple, man or woman. We do a great disservice to the cause of Christ when we attempt to turn preachers into a clergy class, a breed apart. They are ministers of the Word, but they are not "the minister" of local churches. There are many ministries (works of service) in Christ, and many "ministers" who are not preachers (Mark 10:43; Acts 12:25; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:12).

I have been asked more than once if I was "called to preach". The

answer is "yes". Not in the popular (and I believe mistaken) sense. There were no visions, no dreams, no voices in the night. My calling was like that of every other Christian. I was called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14), and in responding, I committed mind and muscle, tongue and talent, to Christ. When first converted, I had little idea what that might mean. The critical need for gospel preaching became increasingly apparent. I was found to have some ability. I did what I could. I had no choice (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Preaching the gospel is not a profession. Like every other good work in the kingdom of God, it is the inevitable product of discipleship and is a work of humble service. It must never be done for the sake of money (1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 6:5) or as a vehicle for prideful ambition. These are the marks of a hireling who will refuse to suffer hardship (2 Timothy 4:3-4). The kingdom does not need one more professional hack who has seen preaching as a neat way to go ahead. The Lord needs true disciples who love Him, and the lost men and women He died to save. And the rallying cry of every true evangelist should be the words of Paul to the Corinthians: "For we preach no ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

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Preaching and the Study of the Scriptures

■ by Ferrell Jenkins

THE PRINCIPAL responsibility of a preacher of the gospel is to proclaim the word of God. No two mature preachers are likely to use the same techniques or style of delivery, but an emphasis on the Scripture is the one thing that should be common to all preaching. Too many men use their pulpit time telling stories that are interesting, but which do little to instruct their hearers in the way of the Lord. It is my conviction that the man who fails to point people to the Scripture has failed in his responsibility as a preacher.

Topical and Expository Preaching

Two types of preaching are in common use among us—topical and expository. In *topical* preaching one selects a topic of interest and then looks to the Scripture for verses dealing with the subject. In this method, the cross-references which are contained in a Bible and the concordance prove to be helpful in the selection of material to be used. In *expository* preaching one turns to a certain portion of Scripture, a paragraph or chapter, does an exegesis to determine what the portion is teaching, and then prepares an outline which conveys the truth of that passage to the modern hearer. Expository preaching is much more difficult than topical preaching because it requires a greater knowledge of the Bible and demands that one spend more time in preparation. One must master the context of his text, which usually includes the entire book, study its historical background, and learn the meaning of all words in the text. This will involve the use of word studies and lexicons as well as grammars. This is also the time to examine the appropriate Bible dictionaries, atlases, and commentaries. After long hours with the Word, one is then ready to decide on the homiletical form his lesson will take.

In the course of expository preaching, one may see that the Bible doesn't put as much emphasis on some of his pet notions as he once thought it did. Could this be one of the reasons many shy away from it?

The Danger Of Topical Preaching
Topical preaching has its place, but

also has inherent dangers. New Testament preachers and writers made frequent use of this approach. Peter used a topical sermon on Pentecost. His announced topic was "Jesus the Nazarene" (Acts 2:22). He spoke of the ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. Peter's major text was Psalm 16:8-11 and he also used 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 110, and other Scriptures.

What can be the danger in topical preaching? When one selects verses from the Bible somewhat randomly because they contain certain words, there is a danger of taking the verses out of context. A "text" often becomes a "pretext" to say what one had already decided before he picked

**Too many men
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the verses. Is it too harsh to say that one should not do topical preaching until he has mastered the context of every verse he uses? And yet most of us began with topical preaching! And some never move beyond it.

When we first begin preaching, we often utilize the outlines of other brethren whom we have heard. Even if our exemplars did use topical lessons, they may have done their homework before presenting their lessons. We only see the various points, each backed by a scriptural reference. For example, a lesson on "The Two Covenants" might be presented in a topical fashion and others might repeat the lesson. However, at some point someone had to carefully study Romans, Gala-

tians, Hebrews, 2 Corinthians 3, etc. Before I can be sure that I am teaching the truth with my topical presentation, I must engage in that firsthand study myself.

Paul described the preacher as a workman. He urged Timothy to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The preacher who does not handle the word of God accurately will not be approved of God and ought to be ashamed.

Let The Scripture Speak

Regardless of which type of lesson we choose to use, we must be sure to point our hearers to the Scripture and to the Christ revealed therein. When we spend our time mastering the clever stories and illustrations of some of the popular preachers and motivators of our day, our preaching will never be what it ought to be.

When a "sermon" consists primarily of a great idea the speaker got from a billboard, a TV jingle, a bumper sticker, or a story he read from an outstanding motivator, you can be sure that he has not spent enough time with the Word of God. One of the finest articles along this line I have read, and one I used to share with my students in the "Work of the Preacher" course at Florida College, was written by Floyd Doud Shafer. In this article, entitled "And Preach As You Go!", the author suggests that the congregation "Form a choir and raise a chant and haunt him with it night and day: 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' When, at long last, he dares assay the pulpit, ask him if he has a word from God; if he does not, then dismiss him and tell him you can read the morning paper, digest the television commentaries, think through the day's superficial problems, manage the community's myriad drives, and bless assorted baked potatoes and green beans ad infinitum better than he can. Command him not to come back until he has read and re-read, written and re-written, until he can stand up, worn and forlorn, and say: 'Thus saith the Lord' " (*Christianity Today*, Mar. 27, 1961).

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Preaching and Personal Life

■ by Ken Leach

IN ROMANS TWO, the apostle Paul deals with what we might call "practicing what you preach". Note the following verses:

"And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?"

"... you therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking of the Law, do you dishonor God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written" (2:3, 21-24).

I suppose a month doesn't go by any more without our hearing about some preacher, elder, deacon or Bible class teacher being caught in immorality. Surely, the moral decadence of the twentieth century has spilt over onto those who should be our spiritual leaders. Not only does this overt immorality harm the body of Christ in the eyes of the world (sometimes irreparably) but it fosters many false doctrines which try to justify conditions found in the families of those who teach such. Who does not know someone that has changed his teaching on divorce and remarriage shortly after someone in the immediate family wants to marry without scriptural authority?

Why is it that preachers who spend years publicly proclaiming godly living get caught up in such messes? Do we have a "professional clergy turning out so many sermons for so much money"? Are we not making personal application of those things we preach? Preaching truth without making personal application is like trying to get clean by showering in a wet suit. Are we overcome with attitudes of selfishness, self-pity, covetousness or callousness not found in preachers of past generations? I think not. What, then, is the problem?

In trying to answer this dilemma, I am reminded of a study which

showed that doctors are killed in private plane mishaps more than any other profession surveyed. The study concluded that a significant number of physicians felt an infallibility beyond the chance of being wrong and, consequently, did not take precautions that others normally take. They simply were overconfident. It is akin to when I was in college and had a layup to win our thirtieth consecutive game. Who, pray tell, couldn't make an uncontested layup? The answer is, one who asks such a dumb question! I think preachers get overconfident. This may or may not be conscious (probably not), but it is real nonetheless. We walk right in where angels fear to tread, feeling impervious to temptation because, after all, "If you can't

the road conducting gospel meetings need to memorize and practice Paul's admonition found in 1 Corinthians 7:3. Marriage partners who are satisfied at home seldom look for satisfaction elsewhere. Remember, my Christian brother, we must, as did Paul, "buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Finally, let me suggest that while adultery, shady business endeavors, tax evasion and other criminal activity are very serious, these are probably not the most widespread of our problems related to practicing what we preach. Other "little sins" (whatever that is) really tell the story of how serious one is about being a Christian. Have you considered the

"Preaching truth without making personal application is like trying to get clean by showering in a wet suit."

trust your preacher, who can you trust?" Paul wrote, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). We sometimes forget that 1 Thessalonians 5:17 applies to everybody.

Human emotion and physical desires are the same for bankers as they are for preachers and vice versa—I've been both. When scantily clad and well-formed women are exposed to "red-blooded" normal men, the natural result is physical desires which place before both parties temptations that need not be faced. A "come-on" look is the same in the church building as in the office. A "more than friendship" hug is the same from a hospital bed as from some dimly lit corner. Preachers who spend all their nights and energy doing "personal work" or on

impact that driving over the speed limit has on those who listen to your Romans 13:1-5 sermons? How about those who hear you preach on 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and then see you smoking a cigarette? We can expound all day on 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, but the lessons ring hollow when we neglect visiting the sick and needy. I also wonder how serious one is about truthfulness when he is always late for appointments. Yes, it is the everyday kind of things that most of us fall victim to. I do not know of a profession (save politics) that is as closely scrutinized as that of a preacher. We need not complain and cry about it... we need to pray and put into action the words we preach.

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Preaching and People

■ by Mark White

EVERY TIME SOMEONE asked little Tommy what he planned to do when he grew up, he always replied, "I want to be a preacher." That pleased his parents and amazed some who asked the question. But one day after the usual question came, little Tommy gave a different response. He changed his mind and declared that he wanted to be something else. Shocked, his mother and father asked him why he no longer wanted to preach. Little Tommy responded, "Well, I finally decided that I really wasn't mad at anybody!"

That is a humorous account of a little boy's impressions of what it meant to be a preacher. But I am not fully convinced that this is not a more widespread perception, even among those who preach. Some brethren see preachers as mean, nasty, crochety old "sticks-in-the-mud" who have a bone to pick with everything and everyone. They do not see preachers as men who have an intense love for people. Rather than being moved by compassion for their souls, they preach because it gives them opportunity to vent their frustrations with their fellow man behind the cloak of a pulpit. To be sure, people can provoke us by the way they live (Acts 17:16). But to mount a pulpit and preach because people have made one angry can tempt a preacher to treat people in a less than honorable fashion. A gospel preacher can hate sin, but he must be very careful not to hate the people who commit the sin.

People are the objects of a preacher's life and work. If he would truly proclaim the message of the Master, he must be possessed of the same love and compassion for people as was Jesus. Jesus was a good teacher because He taught the people "as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). But Jesus was also such a popular teacher with the masses because He *loved people*. His gregarious spirit is seen by Matthew's account that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when

he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (9:35-36). The people responded to Jesus so well because it was evident that He cared for them. A gospel preacher must be fully convinced that he loves people like Jesus loves them. Only then will he be properly motivated to go to the cities and villages

Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision telling him to continue his preaching work. The reason? "For I have many people in this city." (Acts 18:10). Paul heeded the vision and stayed in Corinth for a year and a half teaching the word of God among those people (verse 11). Paul was not in Corinth to "see the sights." He was there for the Lord's purpose. He had to get among the

"People are the objects of a preacher's life and work. If he would truly proclaim the message of the Master, he must be possessed of the same love and compassion for people as was Jesus. . . . The people responded to Jesus so well because it was evident that He cared for them."

"preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . . among the people."

A preacher must find himself "among the people" if he is to teach them. He cannot isolate himself (even in his study) from the rest of the world if he is to carry the gospel to it. Paul must have been concerned, if not frightened, about his preaching at Corinth when he first arrived there. Even after many of the Corinthians had obeyed the gospel, the

Corinthians and preach the gospel. By doing so, people who would obey the Lord could be found. What a tremendous lesson for those of us who claim to be gospel preachers. A preacher must care deeply for those to whom it is preached. If the gospel is rejected, may it not be because the preacher rejected the people.

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Preaching and Prayer

■ by Dennis Allen

CONSIDERING THE ROLE of prayer in the life and work of New Testament preachers will challenge us to greater devotion and closer communion with God. The significance of prayer among early saints can be traced to Jesus, where we will focus our attention in this brief look at personal prayer.

Our Savior's instruction about prayer is far more comprehensive than an occasional example of what to say. He, above all others, understood the value of communication with His Father. Having accepted a position of dependence upon the

ing the footsteps of Jesus will lead us to devote considerable time and effort to communicating alone with God—addressing Him in prayer and listening as He speaks in the Word.

Solitude in Prayer

As He prayed, Jesus consistently sought solitude in place and time. One wonders how many miles He walked and how many mountains He scaled to be alone with His Father. Jesus seemed to prefer the surroundings of natural beauty when praying, choosing settings that would remind Him of the majesty of God instead of the corruption of men.

temptations (Matthew 26:36-44). I am awed at the self-control and determination of Jesus as He emerged from Gethsemane and marched without hesitation up Calvary's trail of tragedy and triumph. In reflecting on that resolute power of Jesus, we are forced to see the power in prayer.

Prayer At Busy Times

Jesus prayed when He was busiest. When pressed by the eager and needy multitude, Jesus withdrew to pray (Luke 5:15-16). He taught His apostles the need to get away from the demands of their work for rest and prayer (Mark 6:30-32,46; Luke 9:10,18). Through prayer, Jesus endured a heavy load of work, temptation and grief (consider Matthew 14:23-25 in context). How often do we fail, not because of unbearable stress or "burnout" or malicious brethren, but because we don't take time to get away from it all to pray?

Practical Suggestions

Let's close with a few specific suggestions gleaned from a study of the Scriptures and the helpful advice of others—suggestions which can help all of us grow closer to God and more determined in spreading the gospel.

1. **Make appointments with God—and keep them!** Set aside a time free of interruptions for serious prayer and introspective study of God's word. If necessary, get up an hour earlier to meet with God before facing the tasks of the day.

2. **Pray with your eyes open so you can read from a list of people and things to pray about.** Note needs of others and reasons you're thankful for those people. Thumb through a church directory and pray about each member of your local family.

3. **Mix reading with prayer.** Take breaks from talking with God to listen to Him. Read—ponder—pray.

4. **Do as you pray.** Praying for someone is the most you can do, but don't forget to look for little ways you can help to meet their needs.

5. **Make a regular investment of time and energy in prayer.** Don't forget the apostles' example: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

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"Set aside a time free of interruptions for serious prayer and introspective study of God's word. If necessary, get up an hour earlier to meet with God before facing the tasks of the day."

Father, He demonstrated the importance of prayer (see Hebrews 5:7). Prayer was a key to the strength of Jesus in making decisions, facing grief, enduring trials and advancing confidently into the jaws of death. If Jesus needed frequent and fervent prayer to endure His earthly sojourn, how can we expect to survive with less?

Most of what we learn from Jesus about prayer is by observing His habits of private devotion. This article is not about leading public prayer or preparing lessons for others; it considers a more fundamental aspect of preaching. Follow-

Many of the Master's prayers were uttered at times of day which would generally be free from intrusion. He prayed early in the morning, late at night, and even all night. When forced to choose between praying and sleeping, Jesus would pray.

Prayer in Special Circumstances
Jesus met special circumstances with special emphasis on prayer. He prayed when facing major decisions (Luke 6:12-13). He prayed when preparing for tough teaching which had the potential to alienate followers (Luke 9:18-27). He prayed after completing major tasks (John 17:4). He prayed at times of special trials and



PREACHING AND ITS CHALLENGES

Book, Chapter and Verse: Is It Outdated?

■ by Allan Turner

THE WORD OF GOD tells us that whatever we do in word or deed must be done in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). This means that if we are going to say it or do it, we must have a "thus saith the Lord" for it. Additionally, we learn that even our thoughts are to be governed by the word of God (see Proverbs 27:3; Matthew 5:27-28; Romans 12:3; etc.). In fact, God, through His revealed word, "has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). In other words, God's people, through a study of His word, can be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work, and this is why "all scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim-

pilgrims on earth" (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

But an ill wind has begun blowing within churches of Christ. Even though we correctly resisted the unscriptural schemes of our liberal brethren who turned their meeting houses into holy gymnasiums and "Family Life Centers," we have still fallen victim to the secular philosophies of our age. Humanism, rationalism, pragmatism, materialism, and hedonism form the foundation of the "American Dream" that, in turn, has taken its toll on us all. Our "can-do" spirit has taken us from an on-our-knees study of God's word to a stand-on-our-two-feet, we-can-do-it-through-science-and-technology mentality. Such has moved us away from our duties to

truth. Bowing to the totem of the self-actualized, autonomous *self*, more and more of us are rejecting what is being called the "sin-oriented, negative message" of the Bible, and have replaced it with the "feel-good-about-yourself" gospel of self-love.

In order to become successful in such an environment, gospel preachers have become counselors and therapists. Instead of addressing the timeless message of God's word to the real problems of life, they have pored over their secular books and accommodated the Bible to the messages found there. As a result, personal charm, eloquent speech, academic credentials, and organizational ability are becoming much more important than a preacher's knowledge of God's word. Consequently, both in the pulpit and the pew, we are losing our biblical world view. Many are no longer preaching book, chapter and verse for what they are teaching and many of the brethren "love to have it so" (see Jeremiah 5:31).

Like those of old who did not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires and because of their "itching ears" heaped to themselves false teachers, we, too, have turned our ears away from the truth and have turned aside to fables (2 Timothy 4:3-4). The only thing that will prevent this ill wind blowing among us from turning into a full-scale cyclone of apostasy is repentance and a return to the objective standard of God's word. We must demand a "thus saith the Lord" for everything we do in every facet of our lives. We must demand that preachers of the gospel "preach the word!" We must demand that they be ready "in season and out of season." We must demand that the word of God be the only standard used to "convince," "rebuke," and "exhort" us, "with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Is book, chapter and verse preaching outdated? Among some, yes; but among God's peculiar people it is the "power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. . . . For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:16-17).

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"Personal charm, eloquent speech . . . and organizational ability are becoming much more important than a preacher's knowledge of God's word."

othy 3:16-17). Therefore, if anyone speaks, he ought to speak as "the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

Our allegiance to these truths has made us the unique people we are: a people dedicated to God and His word. Consequently, we are a people, both scripturally and traditionally, who have demanded book, chapter and verse for everything we do in all of life. Like the noble Bereans, we have "searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). While others have floundered in a sea of subjectivity, we have stood on the bedrock of that objective standard found in God's word. And, while our religious neighbors were being further secularized, we were being molded into a seemingly ragtag group of "strangers and

God and caused us to seek personal gratification—the satisfaction of "needs"—in all that we do. Consequently, churches are seen by many as country clubs that have been created solely for the purpose of satisfying our "need" for "fellowship." Likewise, worship, in order to be relevant, should be entertaining, and must promote our self-esteem.

Discouraged by society's past resistance to the gospel of Christ, and influenced by the previously mentioned mentality, we have begun constructing a gospel that is pleasing and acceptable to the "this-worldly." Consequently, the latest self-centered theories from pop-psychology, sociology, and success/motivation training have been dressed up in biblical language and passed off as gospel



Preaching: Positive, Negative, or Both?

■ by Ken Weliever

A PREACHER ONCE delivered a scorching sermon on hell. After the lesson, one sister approached the elders and objected to the sermon. "Don't you believe in hell?" they asked. "Oh, I believe in hell," she replied, "and I think it ought to be preached, but I wish he wouldn't act like he's glad I'm going there." This story unveils part of the problem our question raises.

Need To Understand the Terms

The *New Random House Dictionary* lists thirty-two definitions and/or usages for the word "positive" and the same number for "negative." Positive may be defined as "emphasizing that which is laudable, hopeful and good," while negative may be defined as "lacking in constructiveness, helpfulness, cooperativeness." A positive person is an optimist; a negative person is a pessimist.

However, positive can be defined as "that which is explicitly stated—a positive quality or characteristic—good or smooth." Likewise, negative can be defined as "to refute or disapprove something—that which is denied."

In addition, the terms "positive" and "negative" may refer to either the content of the message or the attitude of the messenger. Thus, it is possible for a preacher to deal with a negative case in a positive manner, seeking a favorable result. Conversely, one may deal with positive commands in a negative way that is insulting and demeaning to the hearers.

We Need To Rebuke Sin

Paul charged Timothy to "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2, NIV). It has never occurred to me in twenty-three years of preaching that I should not correct error and rebuke sinful attitudes and actions. Paul plainly states this is the "work of an evangelist." In that sense, preaching should be negative. It must say "no" to everything that exalts itself against a knowledge of God. The faithful preacher must proclaim to the brethren and to the world those passages that say "Thou shalt not."

Preaching, however, must be prac-

tical and meet the needs of the day. One may rebuke all kinds of sin, yet never deal with those sins where he lives and preaches. If the church is filled with gossipers, then we need to rebuke them (Romans 1:29-30). Preaching a sermon on the sin of covetousness won't correct the crisis. Thus, we have failed and are no better than the so-called "positive preacher" who won't condemn either sin.

We Need To Encourage Saints

But preaching is more than just condemning sin. It involves encouragement. Preachers can play a great role in stimulating brethren to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Some preachers are so afraid they are going to make a sinner feel good, that they make the struggling, sin-

Preachers possess the potential to promote such an environment, but by exhorting brethren to "grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord" (2 Peter 3:18).

We Need A Positive Attitude

As we "correct, rebuke, and encourage," let us do it with "great patience." As we deal with negative situations, let's develop the attitude recommended by Paul who said, "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those that oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

As proclaimers of the Word, may we exemplify the positive, joy-filled

"Preaching is more than just condemning sin. It involves encouragement. Preachers can play a great role in stimulating brethren to . . . good works."

life described in the book of Philip-
ians; the positive character of love depicted in 1 Corinthians 13; the positive action of faith demonstrated in Hebrews 11; the positive power of peace promised by Jesus in John 15:27; the positive results of Christian growth portrayed by Peter in 2 Peter 1:5-11; and the positive steadfastness of our hope which Paul proved by the resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15.

I like what Mike Willis once wrote: "We need an environment in the congregation in which a man who makes an effort is encouraged to keep trying, even when his performance of the activity was not the very best. When he makes a mistake, we need to pat him on the back and encourage him to try again" (*Guardian of Truth*, March 3, 1988, p. 22).

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Brethren, let's not get bogged down in the mire of semantic quibbles. Let's preach the whole counsel of God—both the positive and negative features as needed. And may we ever strive to walk in the spirit, demeanor and disposition of the One whose gospel we positively proclaim.

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Preaching vs. Pop Psychology

■ by Rod Boston

FOR THE TIME will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The latest trends in society will always forecast the kind and content of preaching that many audiences will soon be hearing. That is because most preaching is accommodated to the people—their wants, their personal concerns, and the wisdom in vogue. "Trendy" preaching is what it might be called as it sails along with the prevailing social winds. Keeping people happy, the urge for popularity, even a preacher's job security, are strong motivators and pressures to conform.

No doubt, many of the popular preachers of today would not have been tolerated by generations, say, one hundred years ago—not their style nor their message. Denominational preaching of years ago, at least much of what I have read, was substantive, doctrinal, with calculated attempts to preach what they believed the Bible to teach. But, then, society in general was conservative, had a stronger moral bent, and was "Bible believing." In contemporary man's addiction to personal rights, free thought, feeling good, and a humanistic type of "positive thinking," this kind of conservative preaching has become dated. Now, the rule of the day is pop-psychology, family life centers, social work, group therapy, zillions of "How-to" religious books, and a generation of people who could not identify gospel preaching if their lives depended on it.

One of the forces at work making this trend in preaching so popular is that most people are turning to religion as a release, a tool to help them adjust in their worldliness. High-tech, nearly 21st century living, with its accelerated pace and one-week-behind schedules, comes with an expensive price tag—stress. People are turning to religion as a release from that stress. Do you see the point? They are not turning necessarily to God; they are not seeking to be obedient disciples of Christ; they

don't want to be servants, they want to be self-actualized; what they want is assistance in dealing with the routines and pressures of life. Enter pop-psychology. They want to be stroked and pacified, energized for their new week—tell me I'm beautiful, tell me I'm valuable, and tell me all things are possible for me. "Easy listening" sermons is what they might be called, as you listen to the latest analysis of Christian psychology. In this environment, to speak of responsibilities, repentance from dead works, and cost of discipleship, well, that would not be tolerated. Who wants to go to church only to face more stress?

In contemporary man's addiction to personal rights, free thought, feeling good, and a humanistic type of "positive thinking," this kind of conservative preaching has become dated.

The ill effects of all this upon the Lord's church are substantial. There are brethren who begin to confuse positive preaching with positive mental attitude and clamor for "Mr. Feelgood preachers." Preachers preach "Readers' Digest" sermons with clever titles that contain a few moving stories to stir emotions and no serious study of Scripture. And while a few good lessons are taught, nothing is said to tie the hearer to God and to Christ. Evidence of the imitation of "trendy" preachers becomes apparent and their prolific writings become the talk of the day. Christians are in the world and every social change seems to make an impact on the church—and to take casualties.

What must Christians do? On the one hand, brethren must certainly know the substance that gospel preaching is made of, so that they can demand and support it. They must be students of the examples of preaching recorded in the Bible. They must know that something is wrong when Peale is being quoted more often than Paul. On the other hand, gospel preachers must commit themselves to the task of accommodating the people to the gospel, no matter what the world may prefer. They must be devoted to proclaiming the truth of God, knowing that in the context of man's sin and the saving power of the gospel, pain and reproof are often what are needed to bring lasting joy.

Finally, gospel preachers must know who they are. They are not psychologists or after-dinner speakers; they offer none of the current wisdom, they seek only to communicate the eternal message of God that can save a man's soul. With such a noble objective and such a powerful message, why would a man want to pollute it with anything else?

Nothing is more positive than a man entering fellowship with the almighty God, no experience more rich than the eternal blessings realized in Christ. The gospel is the epitome of positive, edifying, and uplifting; its message is worth everything a man owns (Philippians 3: 7-11). But for every positive, there is a negative and the negative in life continues to be the sin of man. The need, then, is for repentance and for man to transform his life after the image of Christ. Pop-psychology has nothing to offer here.

There is no reason for gospel preaching to be boring. The truth of the Bible needs to be presented in a relevant and listenable way, and only the preacher who is well-studied has any hope of doing that. Good illustrations are excellent for communicating the essence of a studied scriptural text. But when favorable audience response, praise and applause, becomes more important than the divine message, then the preacher has failed the people and His God.

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Preaching Like the Prophets

■ by Robert Harkrider

THE OLD TESTAMENT prophets were dynamic figures who blew the bugle call of God with no uncertain sound. Insisting that God seeks righteousness, their resounding theme was a pronouncement against sin, a prediction of judgment, a call for repentance, and a promise of hope to the faithful. Those who could preach the gospel can learn salient principles from the prophets.

1. Preach what people need, not just what tickles their ears. While it is granted that times have changed and new gadgets have become abundant, the basic issues of life are not different today from those of the days of the prophets. Men still trust

in the past, but many qualities of their work are needed in our generation. Where can one find a more relevant message than Micah's question, "and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (6:8).

2. Preach with sincerity of heart. The prophets were men of deep convictions and heartfelt love. Some were eloquent; some were plain-spoken; some were fiery. Some used piercing words; some sobbed out their broken-hearted appeals. The prophets each were different from the others and individualistic, yet all of them spoke in the language of the

say something rather than joyously excited because he has something to say! Mature preaching comes from fervent prayer, arduous study of God's word, and quiet meditation about every phase of the message.

3. Preach a message of hope. If one desires to preach like the prophets, he must be an optimist as well as a realist. If preaching is to influence people to worship a God of holiness, to obey a God of righteousness, and to love a God of grace, then the message must reveal the spiritual results of such obedience and love. Preaching should do more than denounce the sinfulness of sin; it must also declare the eternal hope which is promised through Christ.

Hosea wept as he condemned the sins of the people of Judah, but he promised healing of their wounds if they of Zion would repent (5:13; 6:1). He held out a hope for the nation of a bright future (14:4-7). Amos thundered denunciation upon those who were guilty of social sins, but he was quick to declare that Jehovah was a forgiving God who would restore Israel. There would be flourishing cities, fruited fields, happy abundance (9:11-15).

It is said that for every person in a church pew today who needs correction and denunciation, there are ten persons who need comfort and love. Within every heart there is an unquenchable thirst for assurance of a better life to come. The human heart is weary of spiritual wanderings and it wants an eternal home. It despairs under continual disappointments. It is restive under the frailties of the flesh and with the illnesses that plague the body. There is an irrepressible faith that springs up continuously in the human heart, believing that there awaits a heaven of bliss in the presence of God. Thanks be to the Lord Jesus Christ, we can preach of the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by faith.

May the Lord help us today to preach His word with the same fervor and character as did His spokesmen of ages past!

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"Lessons from the prophets will never be out of date. Those spokesmen for God may have lived in the past, but many qualities of their work are needed in our generation."

in material strength and delight in wealth and luxury while they forget God. There is nothing particularly new about lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. Oppression and injustice are rampant. Men still tend to heed the speaker who presents the pleasant messages and assures them that their deeds are satisfactory. Men still prefer the easy-to-be-godly appeal of outward form, raise-the-hand and pray method, rather than a total commitment that involves learning and doing God's will.

Lessons from the prophets therefore will never be out of date. Those spokesmen for God may have lived

average man. Any man on the street who heard could know what was on the prophet's heart.

Whatever else may be said about the prophets, they were not what someone has called "preacherettes preaching sermonettes to Christianettes." It is certain they were never dull. No preacher needs ever to get into a rut, becoming as monotonous as a child playing on a piano with one finger.

So long as one speaks God's word, it will not return void. It is pathetic, however, when a preacher comes on Sunday morning unprepared to preach, fearfully uneasy and nervously ill-at-ease because he has to



The Honor of Frontier Preaching

■ by Darrell Hymel

PAUL SAID, "I planted, and Apollos watered." There was no reason why the Corinthians should divisively say, "I am of Paul" and others "I am of Apollos," for it was "God who caused the growth" in both cases. These men were "not anything" but servants and their usefulness depended upon their opportunities and abilities given by God (1 Corinthians 3:4-8).

Yet, Paul "aspired" (NASV) to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that he might not build upon another man's foundation (Romans 15:20). The Greek word for "aspired" is *philotimoumenon* which, literally, means the "love of honor" (W. E. Vine). Stimulated by this motive (the love of honor), Paul was driven to strive, to be ambitious, to make it his aim to preach only on the frontier where Christ had not been preached. In this work he found a reason for boasting (Romans 15:17-21; 2 Corinthians 10:12-18).

Before we discuss why Paul considered preaching on the frontier to be such an honor, let's discuss Paul's motive of seeking honor. Was it right for Paul to boast about his accomplishments of planting instead of watering? Paul boasted about his frontier work only because those who were undermining his apostleship were boasting in the work already laid by him and others (Romans 15:15-16; 2 Corinthians 10:8,12-18).

But even with this ground of boasting, he only boasted in things pertaining to God, not in what he did (Romans 15:17). He told the Corinthians, "But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord, for not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2 Corinthians 19:17-18). Paul simply commended himself as a faithful priest and the Gentile converts were his offering to God, given to him by God through His grace (Romans 15:15-16). So, even though it was Paul's words and deeds that led to the conversion of the Gentiles, Christ accomplished it through the power of signs and wonders and in preaching in the power of the Spirit (Romans 15:18-19).

Let us preachers always have the attitude of Paul. Even though the success of a work depends on our faithful stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:2; 3:12-15), we have our talents and opportunities by the grace of God! (1 Corinthians 3:5,10; 15:10). What a tremendous privilege and entitlement has been given to those who preach; God allows His unfathomable riches to be displayed in mere earthen vessels and allows the very least of His saints to proclaim His message so that the power may be ascribed to God! (Ephesians 3:8; 2 Corinthians 4:7). What do sin-laden preachers have to glory in but the cross of Christ?

But, like an explorer who is thrilled by conquering the unknown, Paul thought it a point of honor and boasting to limit his mission to those regions where no one knew Christ. The chief reason Paul gave was that

example for today as well) to send letters of commendation for preachers (2 Corinthians 3:1; Acts 18:27). But false teachers and men who preached with wrong motives secured them as well. Men who followed Paul to Corinth brought their letters, but when Paul arrived at Corinth it was a frontier where letters of recommendation were worthless. His own converts became his letters of recommendation (2 Corinthians 3:1-3). When we preachers make a habit of building on other men's labors, there is a tendency to also boast in other men's labors as our own. Are we like some teachers who followed Paul: do we build ourselves up by tearing the previous preacher down? (2 Corinthians 10:10-18). It is not wrong to be a "waterer" where someone else has "planted," but to boast about improvement since we arrived or to downplay the man who preceded us

"The frontier spirit must be renewed if the gospel is to reach the world in our generation."

he "might not build upon another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20). In preaching to those who had not heard, he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah which said, "They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand" (Romans 15:21; Isaiah 52:15). As long as frontiers existed where none knew the name of Christ, Paul would not duplicate and build on the work of others. So strong was this ambition that it had hindered him from coming to Rome, an already established congregation. Even if he came to Rome it would only be in passing on to Spain where the gospel had not yet been preached (Romans 15:22-24).

One advantage that frontier preaching gave to Paul was his ability to answer jealous brethren and false teachers. It was the practice of first century congregations (a good

is wrong. While the majority are sometimes impressed by those who toot their own horn and commend themselves, the converts of a pioneer who built from the ground up speak for themselves. As their faith grows, they will enlarge the horizons of their father in the faith, by sending him on to regions beyond (2 Corinthians 10:15-16). The frontier spirit must be renewed among preachers if the gospel is going to reach the world in our generation. Local churches that exist where the word has already been preached must stop "swarming" in their neighborhoods and start "colonizing" on the frontier. What men in the 20th century will be like Paul, what congregation will be like Antioch and Philippi? May the love of honor (*philotimoumenon*) move us to this good work.

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So You Want to Be a Preacher?

9 Articles by Jefferson David Tant

There is no more noble aspiration than to be a servant of the Most High God in seeking the lost and encouraging the saved. After more than 65 years of engaging in this labor of love, please allow me to share some perspectives from my viewpoint. With my father and grandfather having been preachers (beginning in 1881), perhaps I can offer some worthwhile thoughts.

Preaching is not a way to get rich [1]

If you are looking to preaching as a way to line your pockets with silver, you have made a poor choice. While it is certain that in general preachers are supported better than they were in times past, preaching is not a path to wealth. I suppose there have always been those who looked upon it as a way of gain, as Paul had to deal with such attitudes in his day. "And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingers not, and their destruction slumbers not" (2 Peter 2:3). In Romans 16:18 he wrote of those who "serve their own belly," and then in 1 Timothy 6:5 he warned about those "who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

We are encouraged to trust in the Lord. "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). One said preachers are to be humble and poor, and that we should depend on the Lord to make us humble, and the brethren to keep us poor. Paul said he had learned to be content with much or with little (Philippians 4:11-13). It would do well for every young man wanting to preach to read J. D. Tant, Texas Preacher and see how it was 100 years ago when most preachers had to farm and do hard labor in order to feed their families while they preached.

In my first work among the Choctaw Indians in Pushmataha County, OK, I believe I was paid \$25 a week (1959). We lived in a little unfinished 4-room house in this community of 600. We drove about 25 miles to Talihina to do our laundry, and 37 miles to Antlers for doctor visits when we were expecting our first child. Gasoline was eating us up. The Castleberry church down in Ft. Worth increased my wages by another \$25. It was still tight, but we were making it. After being there a year with increasing attendance and contributions, I approached the congregation for a slight raise. "What are you doing with the \$25 we are already giving you?" (I had previously told them of the \$25 from Ft. Worth, but I guess they had forgotten it.) After their question I dropped the subject and never brought it up again. In fact, in 53 years of preaching, I think I asked for a raise only one other time, and I believe that was for \$5 a week.

At times I have supplemented my income with part-time work when we had high medical bills, but we never went hungry. I can remember when my father had to sell our car to pay the bills when the church could have easily increased his income, but a power struggle among the elders prevented a raise. But I never heard my father complain or contemplate giving up preaching. I certainly believe the Scriptures teach a preacher should be supported, and adequately, but "money-seekers" should seek elsewhere.

Preachers should be prudent in preparing for old age. Not many churches provide any sort of retirement package, and too many preachers become the object of charity because they have

not been wise in preparing for the future. Solomon urges us to “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest” (Proverbs 6:6-8).

Preaching Is a Life of Teaching [2]

If you don't like teaching others, then preaching is not for you. Over and over again Paul instructs the young preachers Timothy and Titus to preach or teach. “Prescribe and teach these things” (1 Timothy 4:11). “And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing” (2 Timothy 2:24). “Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2). “But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).

Whom shall we teach? Obviously we are to teach and encourage the saints. “Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:14). But what about those who are not saints? Some preachers seem content to “preach to the choir,” and don't feel the need to heed the Lord's charge to “Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

I never knew a preacher that did not wish the congregation to grow. (I take that back. A church in Jamaica had six members. The preacher said, “That's enough.” If the church grew larger, it would be harder to control everything. Thankfully, he no longer preaches.)

How does a church grow? There are three ways to grow. (1) Members have babies and teach them to serve God. (2) Members move in from other areas. (3) Go out and win others for Christ. Now, having babies is great, but not everyone can have babies, such as older folks, singles, and those who cannot afford more. Then the matter of growing through moving is not really a growth in the kingdom. That's just a shifting of the sheep.

The people in the prophet Haggai's day were lamenting “Is the seed still in the barn?” (Haggai 2:19). If the people were lamenting a lack of harvest, one possible cause is that not enough seed had been sown. That may well describe the problem in many congregations that are stagnant from a lack of growth. Most church buildings are full of Bibles. In the parable of the sower, Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Peter declares that we are “born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23).

Preachers need to get out of the study and out in the field seeking the lost. After all, that's what it means to be a disciple of Christ. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). If we claim to be his disciples, then we must act like disciples. A disciple follows the example of his teacher. There are people out there who will listen. I find them all the time—in banks, restaurants, service stations, neighbors, grocery stores. For example, I have little accounts in multiple banks. I go from teller to teller until I find one who will talk to me, and then I seek to establish a relationship with that person. A few have been baptized as a result. What are you doing to find prospects? If you are not willing

to go out and talk to people and seek to save their souls, then you need to find another line of work.

“And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2). One thing is sure. If you the preacher, who should have the time and knowledge, is not actively seeking the lost, you are not going to find many members fired up about doing it. The preacher’s example is a great motivator in this area. A preacher who is stuck in his study and pulpit may be tending to the garden, but he is not “sowing the seed,” which is the Word of God (Luke 8:11).

Preaching Is a Life of Serving [3]

A preacher is often called a "minister." That is an apt term, and is the word oft used in the Scriptures to describe both spiritual and physical service. “...the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). There were certain women “who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women that came up with him unto Jerusalem” (Mark 15:41). In these two passages, we have both spiritual and physical service under consideration.

I have discussed much of the spiritual ministering under the topic of teaching. What about the physical side? There are many situations where a preacher is called upon to be a servant. Sometimes this is abused, as some members are known to look upon the preacher as the “gofer” guy. He is the one called upon to run all sorts of errands for the members.

While the “ministering” concept can be abused, the preacher must also recognize there are genuine needs that he can fill when others are not available. By the fact that he is not tied to a 9 to 5 clock, he may be called upon to take someone to the doctor. And there are other situations when both a spiritual and physical need may be combined. I once was called at 2 or 3 A.M. to go get a young man and take him to the hospital. He had tried to commit suicide and needed to be admitted to the psychiatric ward. That trip entailed some 90 miles. Not only did he need hospital care, but he needed someone with whom to talk to about some serious spiritual concerns.

Do you enjoy visiting hospitals? That may not be the most pleasant task—to be around sick and dying people. I do not suggest that visiting hospitals is the preacher’s job. All Christians share the same responsibility to visit the sick and give aid and encouragement. But once again, by reason of having time available, preachers often may be able to go when others cannot. And who knows what may be accomplished by such visits.

Once I was talking with a young woman we had converted. Her father was dying of cancer. I asked if he would talk to me. She asked, and he agreed. Coincidentally, he was on the same hospital floor where his daughter Jennifer worked. We had a pleasant visit, and I elicited from him the fact that he was not ready to die. He was a Baptist in his youth, but had not practiced religion for some time. We talked about the plan of salvation. The room began to be filled with nurses and family. I said I would be back. Two days later I came to talk with him. He said, “Preacher, I don’t know you very well, but I would like for you to say a few words at my funeral.” I said I would be glad to do so, but I would also like to say something at his new birth. “OK,”

he said, "I'm ready." We made arrangements to baptize him in a pool in the rehab unit Friday at 11 a.m. He died the next day at noon. That was not the first time I had baptized someone in such a circumstance.

How often have you driven 100 miles round-trip to pick someone up for services? Or 50 miles? On more than one occasion have I regularly gone to pick up people who lived a good distance away. Sometimes others would offer to help, but it was usually my job. Was it sometimes inconvenient? Yes. But I suspect our Lord and the apostles also encountered some inconvenience on more than one occasion. Did you ever sit up all night with a sick child in the hospital so the parents could get some rest? Do you visit the aged and shut-ins?

Have you ever mowed a sick person's yard? Have you had Bible studies in a jail? Have you gone to the jail to see a member's son? One preacher told the congregation that if their son ended up in jail, they were not to call him. I guess he failed to see the word "service" in his job description.

Preaching Is a Life of Facing Difficulties [4]

I call as my first witness an early preacher - the apostle Paul. Paul. If you don't recall his difficulties, get your Bible and read Second Corinthians 11. I don't think I could round up 1,000 preachers whose combined experiences could add up to what Paul encountered. Thankfully, most of those who read this live in a nation where we have freedom, and where we are financially comfortable. That part about "financially comfortable" certainly was not true of an earlier generation of preachers.

My own forebears, both father and grandfather, faced financial hardships in preaching. My grandfather, J. D. Tant, farmed to provide for his family, and my grandmother Nanny looked after the farm while he was often gone in gospel meetings and debates. One on occasion he held a meeting the brethren deemed successful, and they invited him back the next year, but said they would have no money for his wages. He offered a solution. Some of the members raised hogs. Grandfather suggested that each one take a runt of the next litter, feed it the leftovers from the family dinner table, and he would take that at his pay. They got their pencils out and did some figuring before announcing they could not afford that. Grandfather's response was that if his preaching was not worth the slop from their tables, then there was no use in his coming back. (You need to read the biography J. D. Tant, Texas Preacher. It is a rich reading experience.)

I remember my father, Yater Tant, was preaching for a large church with 1,000 or so in attendance on Sunday. He was paid very little, which was partly due to a power struggle among the elders. We took in boarders, and eventually sold our car to pay the bills. Thankfully, we lived on the bus line, and were only a few blocks from the church building, so we could walk to services. My family has endured hardships along the way, such as living in a mouse-infested four room house with three children and my wife's sister, for whom I fixed a room in the attic.

Financial struggles are not the only difficulties. There are "brethren" difficulties. Many years ago while in New Mexico a local theater presented a live show featuring a "dance contest" with Chubby Checker, a popular rock-and-roll singer. I learned that one of our young teenagers was going to attend, and possibly would enter the contest. After our Ladies Bible

class one morning, I took the newspaper clipping to the mother of the girl, and quietly asked her if she thought her daughter ought to attend. Mom commenced to scream and shout that I should leave her alone, and left the building in tears. The next night the two elders came to visit me and criticize my meddling in the affairs of that family. They opined that I was lucky her husband did not come and hit me. They instructed me to leave the members alone and teach the aliens while they would take care of the members. I replied that I was glad to hear that, as there was another particular family whose daughter was not behaving right, and they needed to talk to them. “Well, you preach about that from the pulpit. They know what’s right. So what else do you want us to do?”

We invited M. Roy Stevens for a singing school. The elders asked me to select men for him to work with. About the third night of the meeting, the younger elder told me the older wanted to fire me—that night! Why? Because I had not asked him to lead singing yet! And so it goes.

How does one respond to such situations? You accept it as part of being a servant of Christ. You do not throw up your hands and quit, nor do you in anger retaliate. You sometimes bite your tongue, and you pray for your brethren. As Paul detailed the hardships he had encountered in his travels, he concluded by writing, “Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?” (2 Corinthians 11:28-29). “Take brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord” (James 5:10).

Preaching Is Not a "One-Man-Show" [5]

What is a preacher? He is a servant, not the master. He is not the ringmaster of the show. He is not the “be all, end all.” He is just a humble servant, a sinner saved by the grace of God. Even the apostle Paul, as great as we think he was, did not have too high an opinion of himself. “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (1 Timothy 1:15).

If there is one thing I have been careful of in my life of preaching, it is that I did not want the church to be “my church.” I am aware that there have been a few through the years who made such an accusation when things didn’t go their way, but their assertions were disabused by the vast majority of the Christians who were part of the body.

Obviously, there are situations in smaller congregations where the preacher must play many roles. There have been occasions where I have led singing, served the Lord’s Table, preached and prayed. Yet even in those situations, I did not set out to make arbitrary decisions. In beginning the work where I have been the past three-plus decades, we had about 12 members at the start. Besides myself, as I recall, there were four men—three young and one elderly. None had any experience in leadership roles, and in fact some were fairly new converts. But in making decisions about the work, we discussed things together.

In the absence of elders, the temptation may be stronger for the preacher to make arbitrary decisions. But this will never help men to develop leadership qualities, and lends itself to the “pastor” system that we see in so many denominations.

The large mega-churches that are growing are often cult-like in their focus on a charismatic preacher. These preachers get so full of themselves that they are setting themselves up for a

huge fall. We have seen the headlines through the years—sexual immorality, financial shenanigans, dictator-style rule.

I consider myself an important part in the work of the congregation, but I am just one of many parts. In addition to being a preacher, I have also served as one of the elders. But I was not the “head elder.” When we had congregational meetings to present plans to the church, or discuss certain matters of mutual interest, I generally let one of the other elders make the presentation. When we had a meeting of the elders and deacons, I was usually not the “chairman.” Nor did I feel I was the only one capable of making announcements.

On occasion, we have a young man sharing the responsibilities of preaching and teaching. I don't have to preach most of the time. In fact, we share equally when I am in town. But in addition to that, we work to develop the talents of others. Every third Sunday one of our young men preaches. The youngest has been 12 years old, and he did a very good job. Including all males who have the ability to preach, we have perhaps 20, out of a total membership of about 130.

We cannot depend on the schools to train our preachers. We must depend on local congregations, and that may mean that the local preacher must step aside from the pulpit from time to time to prepare our young men to fulfill this stewardship. This will also involve some study time with these young men to instill both knowledge and skills. A doctor must spend much time in preparing his knowledge and skills for his important role. And although it may not take six years to prepare a man to preach, it should be obvious that time is needed. And who better to do this teaching than one who is already experienced?

(“For in fact the body is not one member but many.” - 1 Corinthians 12:14)

How Do You Take Correction? [6]

Taking correction is a part of living. It begins when we are children and are rebuked for doing something wrong, or for not doing something right, like cleaning up our room. And it continues through our teen and adult years. Even Jesus Christ was criticized time and again by his enemies.

And preachers are not immune to receiving criticism from those we serve. The attitude of a preacher clearly contributes to how successful his ministry is, whether he builds up or tears down. Preachers have been known to drive people away because of their poor attitudes in receiving criticism. We can look at some instances in the Bible where criticisms or charges were made, and note how they were received.

We know of David's adultery with Bathsheba. In time, Nathan told David about a rich man who stole and cooked his neighbor's pet lamb. David was incensed at this foul deed, and told what should be done to the rich man. “Nathan then said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul’ (2 Samuel 12:7). Nathan went on to explain the consequences of David's sin.

And how did the King respond? “Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’” (verse 13) David did not speak in anger against the prophet, nor did he try to shift the blame by pointing at Bathsheba's poor decision to bathe where she could be seen.

We remember when God confronted Adam concerning the eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam pretty much blamed his sin on God. “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12). It was all God’s fault. If God had not created Eve, then Adam would not have sinned, seems to be Adam’s reasoning.

I must confess that I do not like correction or rebuke. I don’t like to take medicine, either. But I know medicine is for my good, so I take it. And correction is also for my good, and I need to take it in a good spirit. The writer of Hebrews goes to some length to deal with chastening or discipline from the Lord, and points out that it is for our good.

“For whom the Lord loves he chastens, And scourges every son whom he receives. It is for chastening that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chastens not?” (Hebrews 12:6-7) Then note verse 11: “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Proverbs has much to say about receiving correction. “He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who forsakes reproof goes astray” (10:17). “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.” (12:1). “Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored” (13:18). “He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding” (15:31-32).

Those who want to preach should cultivate the spirit of David, whom God described as “a man after My heart” (Acts 13:22). David’s attitude is much preferred over that of Diotrephes, who evidently refused to receive John’s instruction (3 John 9-10). I am sorry to say that I have known preachers who seem highly offended if someone offered a correction, even in the right spirit. And their attitude has driven disciples away from the church. If they cause a soul to be lost, God will hold them accountable for their souls, as well as their own soul.

Female Fatalities [7]

If there is a road with more dangerous potholes than this, I am not sure what it is. More preachers have lost their souls, marriages, influences or employment due to improper relationships with the opposite sex than I can count. And this is not a new phenomenon. We can remember an influential song-writer long ago who suffered the rest of his life because of an improper relationship with a woman. He was David - a song-writer, king and prophet. His sin is recorded in 2 Samuel 11.

Where did David go wrong? How did he get off track so far? Some suggest he had neglected his duty as a king to lead the army in battle and thus was at home when he saw Bathsheba. That may have been true, but we do know that on occasion his men urged him not to go into battle: “Then the men of David swore to him, saying, ‘You shall not go out again with us to battle, that you may not extinguish the lamp of Israel’” (2 Samuel 21:17). Be that as it may, we do know that while enjoying the evening breeze on his rooftop, he “saw a woman bathing” (2 Samuel 11:2). Sometimes we cannot help what comes across our line of vision. But evidently he continued to look, which look turned into lust, adultery, and murder. “How are the mighty fallen” (2 Samuel 1:19).

Paul gave some fatherly and godly advice to a young preacher, his son in the gospel Timothy. He encouraged Timothy to be an example in his conduct (1 Timothy 4:12), and to regard “the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity” (1 Timothy 5:2). As a man, how would I want another man to treat my mother, and how would I want my sister treated? I would want them treated with respect—“in all purity.” I know of a man who enjoyed watching the “Girls Gone Wild” videos until he saw his college-aged daughter in one of them. That changed his attitude, and he became a leader in the fight against pornography.

What precautions should be taken to avoid falling into temptation? Consider:

(1) Watch what you view with your eyes. “I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?” (Job 31:1). “Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity...” (Psalm 119:37). “Turn away mine eyes--literally, ‘Make my eyes to pass, not noticing evil’” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary). We know Satan uses “the lust of the eye” to entice us, as he did with Eve. (cf, 1 John 2:16) This caution would involve avoiding pornography whether in print or on the internet. I personally know of divorces that have come from an addiction to internet porn.

(2) Watch your circumstances. Under most circumstances, it is not wise to go into a female’s home without someone with you. This may present a problem when trying to arrange a Bible study. If I cannot take someone with me, I will try to arrange a meeting in some public place. I have had Bible studies in places like IHOP restaurants when the place is not busy. This has worked well. There may be times when a woman wants some counseling or a private conversation about something troubling her. Do it in a room with a door open and someone else in the vicinity, not necessarily hearing the conversation, but at least near enough to allay any suspicions by others. At times I have had such meetings in my home with my wife obviously in the house.

(3) Be wary of invitations. Sadly, there are some women who set out to capture men. Solomon warned about this, as he said “reproofs for discipline are the way of life, To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids... Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? (Proverbs 6:23-25, 27) That’s a rhetorical question, folks. If you partake in sexual sins, you will get burned! If you are faced with such a situation, Paul gave a simple solution — “Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Run, don’t walk, to the nearest exit!

Pride, or Humility, Which Shall it Be? [8]

Some might think that is a dumb question. They would answer with a positive, “Humility!” Yet while there might be pretty universal agreement with that answer, unfortunately not all preachers act that way. But this is not a new phenomenon among religious leaders.

We can go back to the 1st Century and see what was going on during the time Christ was on the earth. We know the Pharisees were among the religious leaders of his day, and not all were exactly humble.

Consider Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:5-12:

“But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the

chief seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

We obviously connect that passage with Catholic “priests” who insist that they be called “Father,” but there are other applications just from the context of what Christ said.

I have known of preachers who like to be called “Pastor,” as the denominations do, even though they do not meet the qualifications that Paul gave concerning elders/pastors/shepherds in First Timothy 3 and Titus 1. And some like to be called “Doctor,” even though they do not have a medical degree nor an educational degree. But I guess it makes them feel special.

I have known preachers who are offended if anyone disagrees with them when they are teaching a Bible class, or mentions another view. How dare anyone question a learned Bible scholar!

If anyone would have the right to feel deserving of honor, we might think of Paul. After all, he was a scholar, probably possessed a Doctor of Divinity from the noted school of Gamaliel, and he was also an apostle. And while the office of an apostle carried authority with it, yet as a person Paul exhibited a sense of humility. Note what he wrote to Timothy as he reflected on his past life: “Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

And it seems our Lord had some words for us on the matter of humility. “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4). “And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). “...and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:5b-6) “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

And consider what Jesus said about himself: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

Respect comes not from demanding respect, but from acting so as to deserve it.

Stand for the Truth No Matter What the Consequences – Larimore and Tant [9]

F. Yater Tant (deceased) | "Gospel Guardian," September 22, 1955

[Note: in this paper, the words “digressives” and “digressionism” refer to teachers of false doctrines]

In the 1890s the beloved T. B. Larimore held a six-month meeting at Sherman, Texas, and baptized something like 250 people. His influence there was almost comparable to Paul's in

Galatia at the time the Galatians "would have plucked out their eyes" and given them to the apostle.

Some months after the great Larimore meeting, the digressives moved into Sherman and literally swept the church off its feet. Of the people Larimore had baptized, something over 200 joined the digressive church. The loyal brethren, trying desperately to stem the tide sent for J. D. Tant, and worked up a debate between J. D. Tant and a leading digressive preacher of the day (we believe it was A. D. Rogers, but would have to check the records on that before saying for certain.) The debate attracted wide attention. Tant stayed in Sherman for nearly a month; he told this writer (his son) that he made more than 500 personal calls during the time he was there, talking with those who had gone astray, pleading with them to return to the truth, pointing out the error of digressionism. He made as many as six or eight calls on some families, staying in some places until three o'clock in the morning, reading the Bible, teaching, and praying with them.

When the time came that he had to leave all except about thirty of the 200 or more who went to the digressives had returned to the truth. Tant wrote Larimore that so great was the affection in which he was held in Sherman that it was his (Tant's) judgment that one simple statement from Larimore to the effect that he believed instrumental music in Christian worship to be sinful would be sufficient to cause the entire number of those still in digressionism to return to the church.

Brother Larimore replied that he had wept much over the divisions which were developing among his brethren, that he knew there were godly men and women on both sides of these questions, and that he had made up his mind "not to take sides" with either the one group or the other. He did not write the statement Tant had asked for.

Long before his death, however, Larimore realized that it was impossible to be "neutral" in a fight between truth and error. He did make the statement Tant had asked, and many, many others pleading with his brethren to remain true to the Book. He repented of his long years of indecision and "neutrality" and wrote Tant that he deeply regretted his unwillingness to declare himself during the Sherman crisis. He had made a grievous mistake, and he wished it were possible to repair the damage his silence had done.

We find a few good brethren over the country now who are attempting to walk the same tight-wire of neutrality between truth and error on the present issues before the church. One preaching brother declared he was going to "stay in the middle of the road" on current questions; another thinks it best not to use men in the congregation where he preaches if they have been "prominent on either side" of the current controversies; still another declares that he "is neither for nor against" such cooperative arrangements as Herald of Truth and institutional orphan homes and church support of colleges.

It all has a familiar ring. There were many such men in the days when the digression developed sixty to seventy-five years ago. They were determined to stay "neutral." They preached for churches that had the organ and for churches that did not have it. Most of them finally went with the digressives. A few, a very, very few, followed Larimore's course and publicly renounced the errors of the Christian Church.

When the truth of God's word is at stake there is neither time nor place for "neutrality." If centralized evangelistic cooperatives are permissible, then brethren ought to push vigorously for them, promote as many as possible; and perhaps finally develop one fine eldership which could take the "oversight" of all the foreign mission work of all the churches in all the world. This was the frankly avowed desire of one of Broadway's (Lubbock) missionaries who stated such to this writer some four years ago. If these cooperatives are not "according to the pattern" as set forth in the New Testament, then the gospel preacher who will not oppose them is either ignorant of God's word, or else is too cowardly to oppose that which is popularly received. In either event, he ought to take stock of himself, and "set in order the things that are lacking."

(Incidentally, the Sherman brethren paid Tant \$40.00 for his work with them and promised to send him \$60.00 more "when we pick the cotton this fall." In the mid 1930's Tant wrote them a letter, telling them he did not want to press them unduly, but something like forty years had gone by, and he was wondering if they had picked their cotton yet. If they had, he was sort of hard pressed, and could use the money!)

Editors Note - The history of Old Testament Israel and church history overwhelmingly testify that a falling away (apostasy) occurs on a recurring basis in virtually every generation. The responsibilities of preachers and elders is clear.

"Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:26-31).

Preacher, instead of saving your job, save your own soul and theirs (1 Timothy 4:15-16).