

As we develop attitudes of humility, a learning nature, and honesty, we will be equipped to improve the relationships with others in the local congregations.

Attitude Toward Our Brethren

Love – a major ingredient in successful relationships, John 13: 34 – 35. Peter teaches in I Peter 1: 22 – 23 not only to have sincere love but fervent love. The word “fever” originates from the same root word and means burning up, intense with a pure heart that provides the basis for a good working relationship.

Cooperation – In I Corinthians 12: 12 – 27 Paul uses the human body to illustrate how the working relationship of Christians should be in all things. No schism, the oil of love and cooperation reduces the friction between moving parts. This allows the people to help each other, working to accomplish a common goal.

Appreciation for others and their work – Paul, in his letters, expresses his appreciation for the work others were doing, I Corinthians 16: 17 – 18 is one example. Expressing true appreciation for dedicated work is like the grease on the gears of a machine, reducing the friction often caused by undue criticism and divisiveness.

Submissiveness – submitting to others creates a conducive working relationship, Ephesians 5: 21. Submitting to those in leadership roles places emphasis on the work to be accomplished, Hebrews 13: 17.

Warmth, friendliness, openness – These attitudes were present when the early church was experiencing extreme growth, Acts 2: 44 – 47. A welcoming atmosphere, to visitors as well as members, produces a comfortable environment.

Attitude Toward Our Work

Gratitude opportunity – count it all honor to offer service in the kingdom of God, I Timothy 1:12, I Corinthians 15: 9 -10.

Enthusiasm & eagerness – should characterize our attitude about our spiritual service, Romans 12: 1 – 2.

Industrious, diligence, energetic, positive, persistence: attitudes that help us reach the goal of Ephesians 4:15: *speaking the truth in love, growing up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ*. Strive to be Christ-like.

Other attitudes found in Ephesians 4: 2, 32 include: meekness, forgiving, forbearing, patient, and longsuffering. We can use these attitudes to improve our relationship with God, ourselves, our brethren and our work. This will make us useful, as stated in II Timothy 2:21, *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.*



QUESTIONS



1. List 3 passages that show Paul's Christian attitude.
2. List three ingredients that produce a proper attitude.
3. Explain how a proper attitude affects your relationship with fellow Christians.
4. Explain how a proper attitude profits us at work.

The Need for Vision

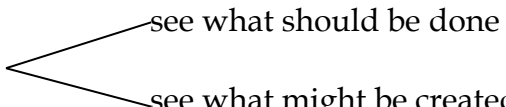
Lesson 5

The word vision means, “to see.” We use the word in different ways; the most common refers to our ability to see objects through the optics of the eye. In the scriptures, the word vision usually refers to one of God’s methods of revealing information to humankind and the third, the subject of this discussion is the vision that is a combination of insight and imagination. This valuable tool is developed, not inherited, or caused by our environment. It comes from our character, which is always a chosen path. Vision is comprised of wisdom, discernment, prudence, perception. Those who have this vision have developed the qualities of imagination, creativity, and ingenuity.

Vision gives purpose to each project we undertake. Vision is the bridge between the present and the future. “A man without a vision is a man without a future,” P.K. Bernard. The level of sacrifice that needed to complete a vision will determine the size of the people who will follow through to the completion of that project.

Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but he that keeps the law, happy is he.

Proverbs 29: 18

Use this type of vision to 

- see what should be done
- see what might be created

The work of the Lord is in desperate need of those with an elevated vision, the ability to visualize worthy goals and how to achieve those goals. Anticipating unseen consequences that any decision will bring to the congregation is vital.

An inadequate vision will be too general. Examples may include go to heaven, serve the Lord faithfully, be more evangelistic. While these are commendable goals, they are not specific or measureable. Without specifics, goals are usually unmet.

Questions to consider:

- √ How much time, money, and effort will be required to reach the goal?
- √ How will the evidence of God’s work be seen?
- √ What specific actions need to be taken?
- √ Who will need to serve as coordinator?

When considering the specific work of the Lord, use experiences to prevent future mistakes. Then we can press toward the goal (Phil. 3:14) and set our sights on a higher (Col. 3:20). If past efforts have borne limited fruit or are ineffective do not allow defeatism to keep you from reaching your goal. Learn from the past, correct, and improve. When small insignificant objectives replace deep meaningful ones you create tunnel vision.

Visions need to be

- ◆ Great in scope, such as, spread the gospel in the community.

Examples of specific actions are:

Invite friends, neighbors, co-workers

Distribute topical tracts

Use media to advertise services and special events

Schedule individual studies and advertise

Provide transportation as needed

Offer free bible study courses

- ◆ Supported by faith

Faith is the power of the gospel to save souls - Rom. 1: 16 – 17.

This power can produce souls that have been born again - I Peter 1:22-25.

Faith in God's power to open doors of opportunity - I Cor. 16: 8-9.

It empowers all who desire to do His will - Phil. 4:13, Eph. 3: 16, 20.

- ◆ Bold

Christians demonstrated boldness in the first century - Acts 4:13, 9:27, 13:46, 14:3, 19:8, & 28:31.

Do not allow outside pressures interfere with the goal of preaching the gospel - Acts 7:58.

Pray for boldness and solicit the prayers of fellow Christians - Act 4, 29:30, Eph. 6: 19-20.

Base your boldness on hope in Jesus Christ - II Cor. 3:12.

Follow Eph. 4:29 by not allowing any corrupt word come from your mouth.

- ◆ Persistent

Do not become discouraged - Gal. 6:9.

Remember that your labor for the Lord is not in vain - I Cor. 15:58.

Be diligent - II Peter 3:14.

Remember that labor for the Lord is rewarded - I Cor. 3:8.

◆ Have a sense of urgency

The Day of Judgment is coming, - Acts 17:31.

The harvest is plenty - John 4:35.

**The vision Jesus asks all Christians to have:
Set goals to follow His steps
Seek and save the lost
Be faithful until death**



QUESTIONS



1. Explain the meaning of “vision.”
2. Explain Proverbs 29:18. How does it apply today?
3. Why is the need great for visionaries?
4. How should we visualize God’s work?
5. Explain the difference between a vision and tunnel vision.
6. How do we demonstrate boldness in our culture?
7. Explain John 4:35 as it relates to this discussion.

Defining Leadership

Lesson 6

Leadership: influencing another to action and causing them to enjoy what they are doing.

The simple definition for leadership is influence and this influence can be positive or negative. The most critical element of leading is following God's word. The scriptures provide examples of good leaders as well as bad one. It is critical we understand that God requires individuals to lead, not groups or committees, but individuals. Committees can be effective in accomplishing some task but there must be a qualified leader to produce the right outcome.

EFFECTIVE LEADER

Servant - Phil. 2:15
Workman - II Tim. 2:15
Teacher - Heb. 5:12
Mentor - Titus 2
Example - I Tim. 4: 11 - 16

Leaders are developed, nurtured, and grown, not born. Just as everything in God's creation has a natural pattern of growth, all follow God's plan and leaders are no different. We are instructed to, "Grow up in Him," Eph. 4:15. Paul devotes several verses explaining the principle of maturing. I Peter 2:2 states we are to long for the Spiritual milk, "unto an elect race, a royal priesthood, becoming God's own possession. II Peter 3:18 directs us to grown in the knowledge of our Savior.

... and exercise yourself toward godliness. 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,
I Timothy 4: 7 & 8.

5 Principles of a Good Leader

- **Committed** to the Lord –
To change the hearts of others
Rom. 12: 1-2
- **Live** a good life –
To inspire others
Col. 4:6
- Be an **example** –
To live what you teach
I Thess. 5: 22 -23
- **Practice** what you preach –
To allow God's glory to shine
I Tim. 4:12
- **Give** the precious gift of God –
To save souls
Rom. 6:23

“Good leaders do not waste time looking for more favorable circumstances in which to demonstrate their skills or display their wisdom. They recognize that if the circumstance were completely favorable their services would be scarcely needed. Hard work during hard times is what leadership is about. All good leaders want those they lead to be enabled and empowered.” Gary Henry

Steven Covey's book, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, identifies and discusses the biblical principles found in scriptures. We can also identify the seven habits of highly successful shepherds that will benefit the Lord's church now and in the years to come. The three keys to developing these habits are to learn what they are, recognize the value they provide, and then apply them to our daily lives. Remember, this is personal; it is about growing into a more effective leader.

► BE PROACTIVE

In our personal lives we are following God's will which will guide us to "take control of the situation and prepare for possible future problems" (Webster dictionary). We are to be responsible for my own life, decisions, character, and conduct; acting on our own principles, not just reacting to the happenings around us (our environment). As we mature, we should be in a position to apply these same habits in leading fellow Christians in the Lord's church. The opposite approach is *reactive* to any given situation. There are times it is necessary to be *reactive* as a follow-up to the *proactive* plan. As an example: we are *proactive* in fire prevention (fire suppression, evacuation plans, etc.), however if a lightning strike starts a fire we would be *reactive* by extinguishing the fire out. There is a sizable difference in the results if NO *proactive* steps have been taken. If we are just *reactive*, we have given no serious thought to future situations.

Joshua 24: 15, Daniel 1:8, Acts 2 (Peter), Acts 7 (Stephen)

► BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Leaders develop specific goals to reach a desired destination, defining a meaningful mission. After choosing a desired destination, make the proper choices for successfully reaching that destination. Often people avoid setting goals, thinking they cannot fail if they have no goals. This is the epithet of an unsuccessful person. This person will drift aimlessly in life because they have no direction from God. Moreover, they probably will not ask for direction if they get lost and they will. "Thoughts lead to propose: purses go forth in action: actions from habits; habits decide character; and character fixes destine." (Tyron Edwards)

Hebrews 6:1, 12:1; Luke 9: 62; Phil. 2: 13 & 14

► FIRST THINGS FIRST

Putting first things first requires not only discipline but also wisdom. Because we have multiple priorities daily we must use the wisdom of God to prioritize what is most important. Ask the question, what must I do to reach the ultimate destination of heaven? We cannot become distracted with the “stuff” of this life. The challenge is to recognize that which is truly important then act based on that priority. Paul said, *This one thing I do ... Press on for the mark of the prize*, Phil. 3:14. It is easy to delay, put off till tomorrow., *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*, Proverbs 6:10. Take note of the ant of Proverbs 6:6, consider her ways, winter is coming, get food, and prioritize as opposed to the old saying the squeaky wheel gets the grease.”

Heb. 6:10; II Tim. 4:7; II Thess. 1:11; Matt. 6:33

► Think “Win-Win”

Look for the “everybody can win” solutions in life. In Phil. 2 Paul displays this attitude, no one has to be torn down for another to win. *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let, each esteems others better than himself*, Phil. 2: 1 – 3. When driven by priorities everybody wins because we are seeking the same destination. We have our focus on serving God.

Rom. 12: 9 – 13; II Cor. 13:11; I Peter 3:8

► SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND

When listening outweighs talking, the meaning and significance of the subject better understood occurs. Successful listening is a learned habit. John 17:8 is the record of successful listening but it took Jesus’ disciples some time to acquire this trait. Growth in understanding requires humility to recognize I do not understand everything; I need instruction and wise counsel. Avoid the folly shown in Prov. 17:24 and learn from James 1:19, *Be swift to hear, slow to speak is the recipe for successful communications.*

John 8:43, 9:27

► **SYNERGIZE**

Synergize is an ancient word for teamwork. Teamwork is the result of people working together to complement or compete another’s work. Paul planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase (I Cor. 3:6). Together we can accomplish greater things than an individual working alone can. The above five steps must be in place for synergize to be successful. An ox and a donkey have no synergize (Deut. 22:10). The average horse can pull about 700 – 800 pounds however, a two-horse team can pull 3,000 pounds. It requires maturity to work together as a team, getting past the pettiness of immaturity, and with enough humility to contribute to a worthwhile project. Team members are content with the team to receiving credit for the completion of a project. There is great strength in unity, Eph. 4: 13 – 16. In Paul’s letter he uses the human body to illustrate how working together in unity brings about growth and strength. Rom. 16 he identifies fellow saints who worked with him.

► **Sharpen Your Saw**

It is vital to renew oneself regularly: taking time for personal growth. If we are not growing, we are dying! Paul clearly showed God’s plan for personal growth in Eph. 4: 1 – 16. All seven habits of Highly Effective People are contained in these verses. Study them, understand them, and apply them to your lives.

Phil. 4:8

	“The final test of a good leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and will to carry on.” W. Lippman

Leadership in the Local Church

Lesson 7

Positive Leadership in the Old Testament



Moses

Moses is the example of the quintessential leader figure from the Old Testament. While it is obvious that elders and deacons do not occupy the same position with God as did Moses, there are still leadership characteristics exemplified in Moses that are worthy of emulation.

1. IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Though Moses had every earthly advantage in his Egyptian connections, *when he became of age he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, Heb. 11: 24 & 25.* These people were slaves, despised and subjugated foreigners from the Egyptian perspective. Yet, Moses saw value in them because they belonged to God and were heirs of the promises made to Abraham. All leaders must first and foremost love the people of God and appreciate their uniqueness.

2. SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

Moses first tried to exert leadership on his own terms by killing an Egyptian who was brutalizing one of his brethren. *For he supposed that his brethren would understand that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand, Acts 7:25.* The Israelites rejected him and God sent him to the wilderness of Midian for forty years to learn that God's work follows God's will. Moses presumed that which was the prerogative of God.

3. COURAGE

Moses lacked courage when God first called him however; it grew as he approached Egypt and Pharaoh. How difficult it must have been to walk into the courts of Pharaoh, the most powerful ruler on earth and demand that which was odious in his sight. What courage it must have taken for Moses to ascend the quaking and rumbling Mt. Sinai, a sight which terrified the rest of the people (Ex. 20: 18 - 21). Many other acts of courage adorn Moses' resume.

4. PATIENCE

Moses endured repeated episodes of unfaithfulness among those around him. Aaron disappointed him by making the golden calf (Ex. 32); the people chronically grumbled and murmured about the care God extended them (Ex. 15: 22; 16: 1ff; 17: 1-3, Num. 11: 1 - 15); his leadership was challenged by friends and foes alike (Numb. 12: 1 - 10; 16: 1 - 50). He lived an uncomfortable life in the hostility of the wilderness, not because of anything he had done, but because of the faithlessness and disobedience of others. For forty years, he endured that which we might find demoralizing after a short while. If an elder is appointed at 50 years old, he may serve 20 - 30 years if he enjoys a full lifespan. This can seem lengthy given the stresses faced. As in the case of Moses, the first two-thirds of life often prepare us for greater service in the final third.

5. WISDOM

The people depended heavily upon Moses to help them settle their disputes (Ex. 18: 13 - 26). Diplomacy, the art of seeing different sides of an issue and helping men come to a common understanding and agreement is indispensable to any leader. Paul counsels the appointment of wise men to help settle differences of judgment (I Cor. 6:5).

6. FAITHFULNESS

Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, Heb. 3:5. This does not mean Moses was sinless, for his failure to hallow the name of God before the people testifies to his imperfection. However, Moses was dependable, steady, and constantly available to God for whatever service he could render. All Christians should strive for such faithfulness, but it is necessary in elders and deacons. Their faith cannot ride a pendulum; an elder cannot be one person one day and someone else the next. There must be maturity of faith that leads to habitual service.

7. ZEALOUSNESS

Moses was humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth (Num. 12:3). That is the highest of praise. However, do not confuse humility with softness or weakness. Moses was not one to campaign for himself or blow his own horn, but when it came to defending the honor of God or the welfare of the people, he was fierce. Moses boldly stood up to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16); he was a warrior who led Israel in victory even in his waning years (Num. 21: 21 - 35); even at the end he angered God by repeating his request to enter Canaan and participate in the conquest (Deut. 3: 23 - 27). An elder is not to be so tenderhearted as to let unscrupulous brethren

walk over him. There is a time for elders to be tough and hold people rigidly to the Lord's standards. Men who have no zeal to defend the truth and protect the flock against savage wolves lack the tools to lead.



David

DAVID AND SAUL

David is in a special category as a King, prophet, and military commander, but he manifests certain qualities needed by spiritual leaders as well. What is it that inspired people to sing David's praises, follow him into battle, and remain loyal to him as Saul tried to hunt him down and kill? What was it about Saul that caused the nation to decline under his watch?

1. DEPENDENCE ON GOD'S REVELATION

Early in his life, as a fugitive from Saul's murderous plots, David maintains a vital connection with the will of God. David inquires of God concerning his fate among the people of Keilah (I Sam. 23: 1 - 11). When the Amalekites plundered his camp and David found himself facing a near mutiny, David strengthened himself in the Lord his God ... So David inquired of the Lord ... (II Sam. 30: 6 - 8). He inquired of God about where he should go once Saul was dead (II Sam. 2: 1ff); he consulted God on attacking the Philistines (II Sam. 5: 19- 25); he appealed to the prophet Nathan in reference to building a temple (II Sam. 7:2); Nathan initially gave him his blessing but he later reversed his advice at God's insistence). The times where David got into the most trouble are the instances where he did not consult God's will: moving the ark (II Sam. 6: 1 - 10); adultery with Bathsheba (II Sam. 11: 1 - 5); excusing Amnon's rape of Tamar (II Sam. 13). David demonstrates the importance of seeking to do the will of God as one leads the people.

2. HONEST ASSESSMENT OF SIN

Like Moses, David is no a flawless leader. However, when confronted with his sin, David does not deny, hide, or cast blame. His psalms of confession of sin are some of the most meaningful to good people who occasionally stumble. (Psa. 25; 32; 51) David blinded for a time in relation to Bathsheba, took responsibility for his actions when Nathan condemned him.

3. FAITHFULNESS TO THE WILL OF GOD

God describes David thusly through Paul; *I have found David ... a man after my own heart, who will do all My will*, Acts 13:22. David first had regard for the will of God; then he could lead the people in the right way.



Saul

1. SELFISHNESS

When Jonathan and his armor bearer routed the Philistines, Saul *strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats food this day" and the people were faint*, I Sam. 14:28. Saul was interested in exacting his personal vengeance upon his enemies who had exposed his weakness, but in the process Jonathan notes, *My father has troubled the land*, I Sam. 14:29. Jonathan unwittingly violates the rash oath which Saul placed upon the people, and Saul is intent upon making him pay the penalty – death (I Sam. 14: 43 – 44). This leads to an uprising as the people intervene to spare their hero's life (I Sam. 14:45). Undoubtedly, the people lost confidence in Saul that day as a benevolent and trustworthy leader.

2. WEAK LEADERSHIP

When Saul was ordered to utterly destroy the Amalekites, he disobeyed and brought back King Agag and the best of the livestock (I Sam. 15). When confronted by Samuel, Saul blames the people for his actions (I Sam. 15:15, 20:21, 24). He became a follower instead of a leader.

3. COWARDICE

The picture in I Sam. 17 is a pitiful one. The army of the living God is cowering in fear as one man, Goliath, taunts them day by day (I Sam. 17: 8 – 11, 24). Saul had earlier won a great victory against the Ammonites and had delivered the city of Jabesh Gilead (I Sam. 11:1ff). However, this was in the days when, in Samuel's words, *You were little in your own eyes*, I Sam. 15:17. Against the backdrop of Saul's cowardice stands the courage of David, who takes on the giant single-handedly. Such fearlessness and initiative

inspires the people to sing David's praises and even secures the admiration of Saul's son to David (I Sam. 18: 1 - 7). Note also how the compromise and vacillation of Saul cause him to fear and oppose David, a man who has the spirit of God (I Sam. 18: 8 - 16).

Stories of great leaders abound in the Old Testament: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, Samuel, Hezekiah, Josiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, etc. We can learn valuable lessons by reading their life stories and observing the principles by which they lived.



QUESTIONS



1. What basic quality of a spiritual leader did Moses violate? Num. 20:12
2. What was a consequence of David's sin with Bathsheba? II Sam. 12:14
3. What attitude does Moses demonstrate toward God's people in Num. 14: 11 - 19?
4. When spiritually restored, what did David want to do? Psa. 51: 12 - 13

Leadership in the Local Church

Lesson 8

What God Expects from Leaders

1. OBEDIENCE OF THE RULES: LIKE ALL OTHERS



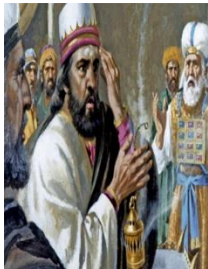
Nadab& Abihu

Nadab & Abihu, sons of Aaron, were priest during the Israelite wandering in the desert.

Privileged to travel with Moses up Mt. Sinai, they *saw the God of Israel*, Ex. 24: 1, 9ff. This should have been a humbling experience however, over time they became lax in their obedience. When they *offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them ... fire wet out from the Lord and devoured them*, Lev. 10: 1 – 2. God's explanation, *By those who come near me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people must be gloried*, Lev. 10:3. So strict was God in the matter He forbade Aaron to openly mourn the death of his sons, Lev. 10: 6- 7.

Consider the following examples of disobedience: Moses striking the rock for water, Saul' preservation of Agag, David's adultery with Bathsheba, and Uzziah' offering of incense.

2. CORRECTED WHEN THEY SIN



King Uzziah

Uzziah was the ninth king of Judea reigning for 52 years, 783 – 742 B.C.

When Uzziah became proud and entered the temple to offer sacrifice, *Azariah the priests*

went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the Lord, who were valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah... II Chron.26 16 - 20. Leaders among God's people are not impervious to weakness and sin, and they are not untouchable because of their spiritual stature. Paul directs Timothy; *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*, I Tim. 5: 19 - 20. The Old Testament gives many examples of a prophet or messenger of God attacked or faulted for opposing a man in his sin. Nevertheless, God directs that we should not be repeaters of person and excuse in somewhat would be rebuked in others (I Tim. 5: 21).

3. NOT THE CAUSE FOR BLASPHEMY



David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and then attempted to cover his sin. The cover-up included depiction as well as the death of Uriah.

David

Not only was David's crime against Uriah wrong on its own merits, *by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*, II Sam. 12:14. Pau, in Romans 2: 17 - 24, levels the same type of charge against the Jews. He saw his people as those who should have been leaders among all nations because of their peculiar relationship with God. However, there is a double standard for leaders, not one that makes them a puppet of every person's whim, but a higher standard of God-approved behavior. When any Christian sins, it harms the influence of Christ on all levels. When an elder, deacon or preacher sins it does even further damage. The world will point to such breakdowns as justification for their rejection of the truth we urge upon them.

4. TAKE THE ROLE OF SERVANT

God has never appointed tasks or functions for the benefit of the person who engages in them. God understands the harm that comes from men exalting themselves and receiving undue honor. He knows how it breeds jealousy, fosters arrogance and undermines the goal He is trying to achieve, the overall good of His people. James and John had to learn this principal from Christ. They thought leadership among the

disciples meant prominent places at Jesus' right and left hands. Thus, Jesus says to them, *You do not know what manner of spirit you are of*, Luke 9: 55. He contrasted leadership among His people with the Gentile model: *You know that the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet I shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant*, Matt. 20: 25 – 26. Leadership is a service institution; it exists to provide a much-needed service to a local church. Men who serve deserve respect, honor, and support as an outgrowth of appreciation for what God provides through them. This is not a response to their personal attributes. If a man is spiritually mature and full of good judgment, it is because God has provided for such growth.

5. KNOWLEDGEABLE IN HIS LAW

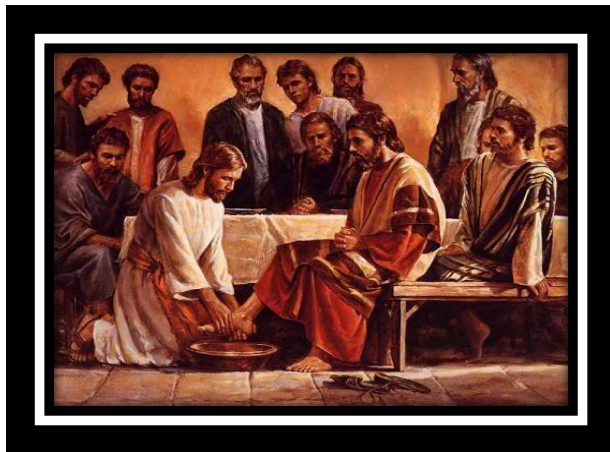
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Hos. 4:6, and this ignorance directly came from the failure of leaders to instill such knowledge in them. Josiah's desire for reformation was aimless until a copy of the law was found (II Kings 22: 8 – 10). David's attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem was a disaster until he consulted the law and discovered the approved way of moving it (II Sam. 6: 6ff). Ezra and Nehemiah reinstated public instruction in the Law of Moses (Ezra 7:6, 10; Neh. 8: 1 – 9:4). Elders are to be mature in Bible knowledge and able to strengthen the weak, refute those who contradict and comfort the troubled. They must not be merely keepers of the orthodoxy but students of the law of Christ. They must understand the historical framework of redemption, the proper application of Scriptural authority, evidence refuting atheism, basic philosophies of false doctrines, and other foundational matters that pertain to advancing and defending the truth. They must also understand how God's law operates in the lives of real people and how to advise people wisely relative to that law.

6. SACRIFICE FOR GOD'S CHILDREN

Jesus is the perfect example of self-sacrificial love and concern for the children of God. *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling ... sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters the*, John 10: 11 & 12. *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends*, John 15:13.

While death is the ultimate sacrifice and demonstration of love, elders in American culture demonstrate their devotion in other sacrificial ways. It takes a substantial amount of time to get to know brethren, to learn their lifestyles, job obligations, spiritual weaknesses, personality quirks, and other subtle characteristics that challenge people's spiritual wellbeing. Studies must be conducted; congregational threats must be considered; planning sessions must be held for future work, etc. The work of elders is comprehensive and taxing; it requires self-sacrifice to do the job well.

7. CONTINUE GROWING



The Apostles

While the apostles possessed enough character to be selected by the Lord for special service, that selection was merely the commencement of their education in leadership. They grew tremendously under the tutelage of Jesus but even at His death there were many things lacking in their spiritual completeness. We continue to witness their growth and development as we consider the history of Acts and then examine their epistles written in later years.

Likewise, while elders are to possess certain minimum qualifications before being appointed and while elders are to direct others in the process of spiritual growth, they have not personally reached a terminus in their own development. No man will reach such a state in this life, for though maturity in faith and knowledge may be realized; there will always be room for improvement. Elders must study the scriptures, explore new avenues of learning, pray, examine their attitudes, and seek counsel in their own struggle to serve faithfully the Lord. Preachers often fail in their personal growth even while attempting to direct others in the same. The demands of service can be so taxing that one may neglect himself for the sake of others. Leaders must learn to take time for themselves and invest in their own growth and spiritual health. Otherwise, they will gradually weaken and lose their effectiveness as leaders.



QUESTIONS



1. List one other leader among God's people who He rebuked for his sin and discuss the consequences.
2. Cite a New Testament passage that directs men to avoid being respecters of persons.
3. Why might the sin of an elder do more damage than someone else who commits the same sin?
4. T/F An elder should never be openly rebuked for his influence may be permanently damaged.
Explain your answer.
5. How does a congregation know if a man has sufficient knowledge to serve as an elder?
6. What was a necessary part of Ezra and Nehemiah's reforms (Neh. 8: 2 – 3, 7 – 8)?
7. On what basis should an elder be given honor? Is it based on his personal achievements or something else? Explain.

Take Heed

Lesson 9

This lesson demonstrates the various problems leaders of any congregation may face from time to time. The name of the latest movement or “ism” may change but the attack is always the same – a challenge to the authority of God and His word. *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears, Acts 20: 28 – 31.*

From the time Paul penned these words in Acts, the same warning has been sounded by faithful writers and “working elders.” Serving as an elder carries a great responsibility of caring for the souls of God’s people. All who accept this important role must know they are held to a higher standard giving an account to the Lord. (Heb. 13:17, I Peter 5:4)

Paul’s use of the term “shepherd” is an analogy for the type of care required of a successful leader in the Lord’s church. Shepherds are to serve others and guard against spiritual predators who would jeopardize the wellbeing of the flock. We are reminded of the tough job Nehemiah’s life demonstrates. Although the job is difficult, it carries a great reward both here and now as well as eternally. The acceptance of eldership responsibility MUST not be for the praise of men, as the Pharisees craved.

From Paul’s day until today, there has been some movement underway to hinder and disturb the spreading of the pure gospel of Christ. Satan employs many different methods to accomplish his goal of deterring the work of the church.

The current movement, the progressive movement, attacks the foundation of Christianity by denying authority (1) basing religious faith and practice on the scriptures (2) basing unity on common beliefs and practices revealed in God’s word.

Even today many elders, preachers, and learned men are denying the very existence of the progressive movement and the dangers it poses to the Lord’s church. The problem is real, pervasive, growing, and dangerous! Consider the warning from our text - it still applies! As this threat moves stealthily across the nation, churches are being torn asunder as savage wolves coming in among you not sparing the flock. This does real harm to the Lord’s church in many locations. Because of the pervasive nature of this movement, those who chose to do nothing will fall prey to this false teaching. Failing to learn, have a working knowledge (TAKE HEED) and some understanding of how and why it is working in so many locations is a testimony to the statement, “without a conservative stand against this movement you will become progressive.”

God does not leave us powerless but gives the guidance of His word, *kept us (preserved) for Jesus Christ*, Jude 1. He has provided us with *all things that pertain to life and godliness*, II Peter 1:3. The short book of Jude is very powerful in instructing us how to spot those “savage wolves” Paul spoke about in Acts 20. Remember they are NOT just Christians who do things a little different. Test everyone – I Thess. 5:21, I John 4:1.

Examine the teachings in Jude:

► Wolves are not grounded:

v.3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.

Warning --- the scriptures are not the last word and final authority in determining how God is to be worshipped and served. What is planned and preached is often incompatible with what Jude called the “once handed down to the saints” necessary for our common salvation.

► Wolves are not guileless:

v. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

False teachers will creep in unnoticed, keeping a low profile, waiting for the right moment to turn the grace of God for their own agenda. The wolves, in sheep’s clothing, are very deceptive gaining influence with leadership. They use language that is dishonest, influencing the direction of the congregation toward “progressivism,” ultimately taking control of the group.

► Wolves are not gracious:

v. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

There is much talk about grace, love, and unity but rarely are the thoughts related to God’s word. The definition, use, and meaning of many words are

redefined to fit the situation, ignoring clear Bible passages. Many claims are made for being gracious. However, their treatment of those disagreeing with them and choosing to follow God's word, are treated with anything but graciousness. They even label them as a Pharisee. The number of churches torn asunder disproves the claim of promoting unity. The divided families and broken friendships remind older people of the "institutional division" of the 1960s. Ask yourself the question, "How did that work out for the reputation of the Lord's church?"

► Wolves are not godly:

v. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Jude states that those who have a casual attitude toward sacred matters will divide the church. Their distorted views of grace cause a disconnection with Bible teachings on accountability and divine judgment. They do not see the need for scriptural authority using the eldership for their own purposes. Often times they criticize anyone who disagrees with their agenda. There no need to limit themselves to preaching, teaching, and practicing what God's word has revealed.

► Wolves are not grateful:

v. 11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

False teachers have a similar rebellious attitude as Korah demonstrated. The lack of appreciation for the pure and simple gospel of Christ that is able to save the lost is often lost on them. They fail to see that the power of the gospel will save souls. There is no appreciation for godly men serving in the leadership role of elders. Their purpose of promoting the growth of the church by challenging Christians to increase their knowledge of God's word is not valued.

► Wolves are lazy:

Acts 20: 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

There is little or no effort given to evangelize the lost of this world and these

savage wolves do not follow God's plan of "seeking and saving the lost." *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,* Acts 20: 29 & 30. This pattern that has existed since Paul's day and continues: crept in, rise up, draw away disciples. The only connection to God's word is the condemnation of such practices that destroy the church for which Christ died. (Eph. 5)

We must not let our minds be blinded but pray that our eyes will be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). We need to see clearly the dangers that attack many congregations. May God lift the veil so we can clearly see the deceptive practices subverting the Lord's church.

► Wolves never speak about repentance:

II Peter 3:16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

According to false teachers, salvation is about grace and love, not obedience. This requires a judgment to be made and they do not want to judge. This is a warning that the wolves are among us. Look for the teaching about repentance, baptism, and obedience to God's word. Paul's hard words are not taught.

**WATCH
THEREFORE**

WARNING

Leadership and Evangelism

Lesson 10

1. THE “PASTOR SYSTEM”

For many years, denominational models of leadership have favored a pastor system whereby one man – the “pastor” – oversees the local church. Other administrative officials or deacon boards may assist him, but “the pastor” is seen officially and unofficially as the leader. Sometimes he is dressed in clerical garments, robes, or other clothes symbolic of a “higher calling.” Often, his vocal tones and inflections exude a soothing, sometimes effeminate quality, and his speech cadence adds volleys and stresses words artificially into a “Bible-speak” lingo. His vocabulary is punctuated with “Thees” and “thous” and other expressions borrowed from the King James Version.

The typical denominational pastor wears many hats: preacher, radio, and television personality, counselor, social director and sometimes school principal, athletic director, campus architect, etc. More and more the pastor is a religious CEO. He and his carefully coiffed wife are the heart and soul of the organization, the engine that makes it all run.

This, however, is not according to the NT pattern. The term “pastor” is from the Greek *poimen* and means “a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them), is used metaphorically of Christian ‘pastors,’ Eph. 4:11. Pastors guide as well as feed the flock; cp. Acts 20:28, which, with verse 17, indicates that this was that service committed to elders (overseers or bishops); so also in I Peter 5: 1 & 2, *tend the flock ... exercising the oversight, this involves tender care and vigilant superintendence.* The consistent NT pattern is that a single congregation is overseen by a plurality of shepherds, men who meet the specific qualifications as given by Paul and who are charged with fostering the spiritual health of the church. One man was never meant to have the kind of power and influence within a local church as many modern pastors exercise.

2. THE ROLE OF THE EVANGELIST

An evangelist performs a separate function than, but not entirely unrelated to, an elder. The books of Timothy and Titus are sometimes misnamed the ‘pastoral’ epistles; they are never identified as pastors but served as evangelists. Paul urges Timothy, *Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry,* II Tim. 4:5. The term “evangelist” is from the Greek *euangelistes*, a messenger of good (*eu*, well, *angelos*, a messenger), denotes a preacher of the Gospel, Acts 21: 8; Eph. 4:11, which makes clear the distinctiveness of the function in the churches; II Tim. 4:5.

An evangelist is essentially a teacher, either of the lost in order to bring them to salvation in Christ, or of the saved in order to enhance their understanding of the truth and exhort them to faithful service. Most of the instruction given to Timothy and Titus concerned their teaching efforts among the churches where they lived and worked. An evangelist may make his living from his teaching efforts, being supported by free-will offerings of the brethren (I Cor. 9:3-14; II Cor. 11:8), or he may support himself through secular endeavors as did Paul on various occasions (Act. 18:3; 20:34-35). There is no such thing as a "calling" or "the ministry," per se, where a man is mysteriously and divinely drawn to a vocation that he can never leave without failing the Lord Himself. Granted, careful and conscientious consideration out to be given by any man before undertaking the work of an evangelist, but this is true whether he determines to make it a full-time vocation or part time pursuit.

Obviously, teaching is fundamental to the role of an elder, but this is not to say that the only teaching to be done in a given congregation must come from the elders. The church at Ephesus had elders, but Timothy is the one addressed by Paul concerning his teaching duties in that congregation (I & II Timothy). Evangelists and elders both have roles to play in the healthy functioning of a congregation. They should work together harmoniously; they should help and counsel each other in the work. However, the bottom line is that an evangelist who works within the framework of local church membership is subject to the rule and authority of the elders just like everyone else. Some brethren today believe and teach that an evangelist is sort of a "Christian at large" and subject to no one. What a disastrous mess is often made of men who feel accountable only to themselves and above the rules to which everyone else adheres. No, an evangelist must never compromise his responsibility to teach the truth, even if it means rebuking an elder in need of it (I Tim. 5: 19 - 20). Nevertheless, this is a far cry from the concept of evangelistic oversight advocated by some.

3. WHY AREN'T THERE QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN FOR EVANGELISTS?

Frankly, I do not have any idea why God did not stipulate at least *some* guidelines for evangelists. Obviously, a single, youthful man may devote himself to teaching. He may lack many qualities and traits that can only come with time, but the true power of his teaching should rest in the content of his preaching as it relates to the truth, not his range of experience. Practically speaking, a man is given only the credence that he earns by his performance. That is, brethren should only give "the floor" to men they trust, who have demonstrated ability, knowledge and insight that will cause the church to profit. Ideally, preachers will do their work under the guidance and restraints of godly shepherds who will temper their influence.

A real danger comes from evangelists working with congregations without elders. In such a situation, brethren so easily fall into the denominational "pastor" system and

force a preacher to serve them as a spiritual shepherd. This “force “ may be subtly applied, but it is applied nonetheless. Many young preachers are “burned out” by the pressure of serving, not as a teacher, but as a shoulder for everyone to lean on. People are crying out for leadership, for spiritual strength, for encouragement, and it can be too overwhelming for a twenty-something to supply for a whole church. On the other hand, some preachers feed on such dependence. They cultivate and encourage dependence because it strokes their ego. It was never a part of God’s plan to place such unilateral power in the hands of an individual. It is too easy to take advantage of, too tempting, and too corrupting.

4. CAN EVANGELISTS ALSO SERVE AS ELDERS?

If we rightly understand the roles that each fulfill, the obvious and Scriptural answer is that there is nothing to prevent an evangelist from serving as an elder. It is currently being done in many congregations, and evangelists that we have long respected through the years are currently serving as shepherds where they preach. If some hold that the deaconship is a good training ground for elders, how much better the training ground of an evangelist, when in many cases he has been treated as a de facto elder anyway?! Intensive bible study, a variety of teasing opportunities, personal counsel, dealing with the bereaved, working closely with elders, dealing with brotherhood issues, and problems, interpersonal skills, and inside look at how the gospel operates in the lives of people – all these and more are involved in the work of an evangelist.

The problem that people have with evangelists serving as elders does not rest on Scriptural grounds; it can be traced back to logistical considerations. People are afraid that an evangelist who is an elder cannot be fired. They are afraid that the preacher/elder will vote himself a hefty salary. Brethren can always find a negative situation where a preacher serving as an elder did not work out, and they will forever use this as a “reason” as to why it should never be done. But how many elders have abused their position? Do we argue that we should not have elders because some individual took advantage of his position? How many preachers cause strife and discord where they preach? Do we argue that we should not have preachers on this account?

There are objective ways of dealing with the potential conflicts of interest concerning salary and sermon content and when a change of evangelists needs to be made. To make some hard and fast rule based on potential abuse is unwarranted, and we may find ourselves being robbed of mature oversight by self-imposed rules that originate in our own judgment rather than in the Scriptures.



QUESTIONS



1. Discuss the advantages in having a plurality of elders. Are there any potential disadvantages in this requirement?

2. What is a “poimen” in Greek?

3. How should a man who works “full-time” as an evangelist be treated differently than anyone else in the congregation?

Discuss the following: Should he dress differently? Should he live on a lower economic level than others in the congregation should? Should he make more than average because of the vital role he plays in the local church?

4. Is there a Scriptural prohibition against an evangelist also serving as an elder? Cite passages.

Communication Problems

Lesson 11

1. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS

Communication is essentially the transmission of ideas and thoughts between people. “Lack of communication,” or at least lack of *meaningful* communication, is a common complaint in marriages, the workplace and in the church. People become frustrated when they feel they are being left in the dark, their concerns are not being considered, or their suggestions for improvement are ignored. In a vacuum of information, people will search for an understanding of what is happening around them. Unfortunately, they will often turn to the wrong or uninformed sources and rumor, assumption, and speculation take the place of accurate information. An eldership that does not encourage a free flow exchange of information is creating an unstable atmosphere.

2. COMMUNICATION FROM THE MEMBERS TO THE ELDERS

The ultimate example of communication by members to the leadership is the neglect of widow in Acts 6. Apparently, favoritism (a common problem addressed throughout the NT) had crept into the Jerusalem church as the pure Hebrew widows were receiving preferential treatment over the Hellenist widows. (The Hebrews, untrue to the ancient traditions and too familiar with the Greek culture around them would have seen the Hellenistic as compromisers.) In some manner, the complaint was voiced and the apostles took it seriously.

Without reading too much in to the situation, it appears that certain members of Chloe’s household may not have received a satisfactory response to their complaints about – guess what? – favoritism. This time it is a competitive exaltation of one Christian servant over another (I Cor. 1: 12 – 13). They take their complaint directly to Paul, and he responds to the situation at Corinth as outlined by Chloe’s family (I Cor. 1:11).

A good elder is one who gathers information from sources smarter and wiser than he. He then processes the information and makes the most balanced and accurate decision that can be made by the authority God has given him. This is not an affront to his authority; rather, it is the proper use of it. By comparison, no man would rightly argue that God made him head of the house because he does not need any help running the family. Any husband/father who makes decisions like some elderships would drive his family to despair in short order.

Elders need to listen to certain brethren. Sad to say, some brethren should not be taken very seriously in their chronic complaint and faultfinding. However, elders who are attuned will learn who to trust, who has sound judgment, who thinks circumspectly and soberly. He will give ear to their thoughts and views. Further, the weak and discouraged need to feel comfortable in approaching the elders as fatherly advisors. To be received gently, to be taken seriously, to be advised wisely is a great blessing to any Christian in need. Now, if they would only listen to the elders' advice ...

3. COMMUNICATION FROM THE ELDERS TO THE MEMBERS

Truly, it is by the resources the members provide that the elders are able to support preachers, buy literature, improve the physical facilities, and accomplish other financial objectives. In addition, they rule because of the congregation's vote of confidence in them. While there are many private and sensitive issues that do not belong in the public arena, the elders still have an obligation to inform the congregation on plans, dangers and opportunities that lie ahead. Elders must make decisions according to Scriptural principle and wisdom and not public opinion polls. Still, it is highly unwise to foist something controversial or challenging upon the congregation without educating them beforehand. To fail to do so is to invite a lack of support and enthusiasm.

While some brethren may look upon the contribution as "the Lord's money," it is still the elders who are going to spend it for the Lord. This means that people will naturally want to know where it is being spent and why. This is not an unnatural or unfair request, for the conscience becomes engaged in matters that we advocate and support by our financial contributions. Regular financial reports, clear communication of future intent (building projects, etc.), warnings of impending financial difficulties, etc. should be communicated to the people who will be affected by such issues.

Communication is also important as the elders seek to create a certain spiritual climate within the congregation. While the evangelist has a role in teaching and exhorting, it falls to the elders to lead the flock. If they detect apathy in the church, if they see that gossip or materialism or immoral behavior is a growing problem, if they determine that the congregation is not developing teachers or prospective deacons and elders, then they must take corrective action. Perhaps they can request certain sermon topics from the evangelist, preach lessons themselves, hold private studies, and make exhortational appeals, implement certain activities that will have a corrective effect upon the congregation (institute work groups, initiate home studies, invite preachers to deal with certain subjects, etc.). For too long, too many elderships have shut themselves up behind closed doors and either ignored what was going on around them or tried to dictate an outcome instead of leading the flock in the right path. This takes great skill and requires insight as to how to motivate people.

Elders who have the respect and confidence of the congregation, who have demonstrated wisdom and good judgment in their lives, who have displayed goodness and maturity in their own lives will inspire sincere people to follow. A brother or sister who recognizes the importance of spiritual oversight, who is striving for heaven, who knows there are pitfalls all around, who is encouraged by good men and women who have built godly lives and reputations, will welcome the stabilizing, protective, and uplifting atmosphere created by a sound eldership. It is not uncommon for brethren to drive past one congregation in order to worship with another that has elders. People are crying out for leadership; godly people want to be led by spiritual men. Effective communication will foster such a sheep/shepherd relationship and enhance the lives of both the flock and elders.



QUESTIONS



1. Discuss how the mass media has affected people's need to be informed.
2. List ways the elders could do damage by revealing *too much* information.
3. Discuss various methods of communication that would be helpful between elders and the congregation.
4. In what ways did Jesus' communication with the apostles' fall on deaf ears?
5. How can a congregation err in demanding too much information from the elders?
6. What must elders guard against in hearing the complaints and criticisms of the congregation?
7. List circumstances when women could advise elders more effectively than men could.

Elder Terminology

Lesson 12

1. NOUNS: WHO ARE THESE MEN?

Elders

The Greek term *presbuteros* can refer to one who is older in reference to others, one who is advanced in life, ancestors or ones recognized as leaders due to their age and experience. In its most highly specialized usage, it applies to a particular class of men who meet the specific qualifications discussed in Timothy and Titus and are selected to serve a local church in leadership matters. The context of a given passage will determine which application the author intends. The term “elder(s)” in this specialized sense is found in Acts 14: 23; 20:17; I Tim. 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5; I Peter 5:1.

Overseer (bishop)

The Greek *episkopos* is lit., an overseer (*spi*, over, *skopeo*, to look or watch), whence English bishop, which has precisely the same meaning, is found in Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:7; I Peter 2:25. The Old Testament term “watchman” is synonymous; elders look out over the local church and make sure it is what the lord wants it to be.

Shepherd (pastor)

This word is the Greek *poimen* and literally refers to a shepherd or tender of sheep. This well-known occupation served as a metaphorical reference to serving as an elder or overseer. The term is used in Eph. 4:11.

These three terms are synonyms and not three different positions or offices. By comparing passages, see how they are used interchangeably:

- ◆ Paul called for the Ephesian elders (Acts 20: 17) and told them the Holy Spirit had made them *overseers* (Acts. 20:28). Paul then tells these elders/*overseers* to “*shepherd*” (verb) the church, to tend the flock of the local church in Ephesus.
- ◆ Peter directed the *elders* (I Peter 5:1) to serve as *overseers* (I Peter 5:2) and “*shepherd*” (verb) the flock of God (5:2).
- ◆ Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in every city (Tit. 1:5) and then gave criteria for *bishops* or *overseers* to be selected (Tit. 1:7).

2. VERBS: WHAT ARE THESE MEN TO DO?

Shepherd

The verb *poimanino* is translated by shepherd (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28) and tend (John 21:16). This word indicates more than merely feeding the sheep; it is a comprehensive term meaning to function in all respects of a shepherd; protect, lead, calm, feed, retrieve strays – to pursue the overall welfare of the flock.

Rule

The verb *proistemi* means to stand before, hence, to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence), is translated to rule, with reference to a local church, in Rom. 12:8; I Tim. 5:17. Vine notes this is the same word of the man's rule with reference to his family in I Tim. 3:4. The English term "rule" also translates another Greek word, *hegeoi*. This word is found in Heb. 13:17 and refers to the authority of elders over the flock, not as lords" but as "examples" (I Peter 5:3), influencing Christians through moral suasion rather than heavy-handed duress.

Watch

The verb *agrupneo* means to be sleepless and is used metaphorically, to be watchful (Heb. 13:17). The word expresses not mere wakefulness but the watchfulness of those who are intent upon a thing. Elders watch for the souls of men. They are concerned about the spiritual strength and vitality of the congregation. Any conscientious elder relates to this aspect of his work, for to bear the troubles and weaknesses of others certainly rob one of sleep.

Take Heed

This means to turn one's attention to, take careful note. It is used in Acts 20:28 of the elders' own lives and then the lives of the sheep. Paul gravely warns the elders in this passage that future trouble will afflict Ephesus through the elders, themselves.

Admonish

The word in I Thess. 5:12 is an old verb from *nouthetes* and this form nouns (mind) and *tithemi*, to put. Putting sense into the heads of people can be a thankless but necessary task. Again, elders, preachers, and teachers fully understand this.

Labor

Kopiao means toil or labor unto weariness. Being an elder is work; *esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*, I Thess. 5:13. It is not an honorary or a figurehead position. The elder who is not weary from the toil of shepherding and overseeing is not doing his job as fully as he should, unless he serves a very unusual

congregation. Further, Paul refers to elders who, *labor in the word and doctrine*, I Tim. 5:17, men who concentrate upon teaching and preaching in addition to the spiritual oversight of the brethren. These, he says, should be counted worthy of double honor and he cites the same passage as in I Cor. 9:9 relative to preachers receiving financial support. An elder's work is worthy of pay, though his motivation should not be, *for dishonest gain*, I Peter 5:2. This is true with preachers also and does not mitigate against their being financially compensated for their work.

3. OTHER DESCRIPTIVE TERMS

Not by constraint but willingly, eagerly Elders should not agree to serve out of coercion, guilt, family expectations, or any other form of outside pressure. He must take on the mantle of leadership because he understands the vital importance of eternal souls and the ability God has granted him to contribute to their welfare. One may think of Elisha who accompanied Elijah as he went to meet the chariot of Israel and its horsemen. Elijah asked Elisha to let him go on alone (II Kings 2: 1-6) but Elisha would not be separated from his mentor. When Elijah indicated the end was near, Elisha asked that, *a double portion of our spirit be upon me*, II Kings 2:9. Elisha had seen all the grief and agony Ahab and Jezebel had wrought upon Elijah and all the prophets of god (I Kings 18 - 19), yet he was zealous to take up Elijah's mantle and, *part the Jordan*, II Kings 2:14. A mature man will recognize the gravity of the eldership but will not flee from it.

With joy and not with grief Of course, this in context depends upon the reaction of the sheep to the shepherds. The Hebrew author instructs them to, obey them who have the rule over you, and be submissive ... Heb. 13:17. Being concerned with the spiritual health and fruitful labor of the congregation is stressful enough. What adds to it are those who refuse to heed their warnings, who are chronically weak and disobedient, who are resistant to study, worship and meaningful interaction with other saints. These consume much of the elders' time and energy.

Being examples to the flock Elders must exemplify the principles, doctrines, and habits they urge upon others. They must be living demonstrations of spirituality, godliness, and purity. They must be studious, resilient, hopeful, and consistent. They must model, not merely command, the expectations of god. It is much easier to imitate a living examples, a personal embodiment, of certain characteristics than to conform to some impersonal theory. This is precisely why God sent Jesus into the world to live among us, not merely to deliver a message from Heaven.

As has been noted so many times before, words mean things. Since religious corruption often starts with some form of leadership aberration, we would be wise to become extremely familiar with the terminology of the NT that pertains to elders. Ignorance is the breeding ground of apostasy. We must not fall into the trap of thinking it will not happen here. Error can happen anywhere people stop scrupulously following truth.



QUESTIONS



1. T/F The church at Jerusalem did not need elders because it had apostles. Explain.
2. To what aspect of leadership does the term “elder” oversee? Shepherd? Overseer?
3. What happened to the prophets of God under Jezebel (I Kings 18:4)? How did this affect Elisha’s desire to being a prophet after Elijah?
4. What responsibility of being an elder is defined as “to be sleepless”? Do you think this is literal or figurative, or both? Explain
5. What things can rob an elder of his joy in serving the Lord’s flock?
6. How can one determine whether “elder” is referring to simply age or an overseer?
7. Do you think “bishop” is a good translation of *episkpos* in today’s society? Explain.

What's So Tough? Lesson 13

1. LOOKING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

Any job looks easier when we only see the finished product. We are often not privy to the extensive training, practice, study, and other behind the scenes preparation for any job that is done well – from playing professional sports to making an automobile to running a restaurant. Competence creates the appearance of ease and this is the curse of doing one's job well. Perhaps only an elder's wife knows the depths of agony and anxiety that must be traversed by one who wrestles with the souls of men. We would do ourselves and the leaders a great service by consciously taking note of the things that must be attended to for a congregation to function as it should.

2. NUTS AND BOLTS OF CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITY

Perhaps it would be instructive to reflect briefly upon the various elements of congregational function. The following does **not** represent the work of elders for much of this must and should be delegated in order for elders to concentrate upon spiritual duties. However, the items listed below, for which the elders will be held responsible, must be accomplished.



TEACHING

√ Bible Classes

Divisions: age, topic, special group

Coordinator for scheduling

Teacher training and monitoring

Curriculum: short, mid and long-term congregational needs

Producing physical teaching materials

Storage: materials, Resource Room

√ Home Studies

Personal teaching attention

Teachers: selecting qualified men (and women where appropriate)

Selecting beneficial topics

√ Outside Evangelists

Coordinator

Financial concerns

Visiting them

Invitations to visit us

Maintaining constant communication of love and concern

Geographic areas of concentration

Discontinuing support

- √ Local Evangelist
 - Type & amount of support
 - Determining fair salary & other benefits
 - Duties & responsibilities
 - Methods for monitoring for truth and effectiveness
 - Unifying his efforts with the elders' spiritual oversight
 - Vacation/meeting time allowed

- √ Community Evangelism
 - Methods for seeking the lost: direct mail, correspondence courses, newspaper articles, billboards, door knocking, gospel meetings
 - Gospel meetings: dates, speaker, salary, housing, setting goals, responding to visitors, frequency

WORSHIP

- √ Logistics: time, location, rent or own
- √ Maintenance and repairs: building and grounds
- √ Weekly cleaning
- √ Security: during services, weather, when building is unoccupied
- √ Insurance
- √ Coordinator/those responsible
- √ Climate control
- √ Various types of services: singing, prayer, special topic

FINANCIAL ISSUES

- √ Budget from contribution: evangelism, supplies, preacher's home, ...
- √ Coordinator: treasury, tax laws, reporting to congregation
- √ Debt: size, times, reasons

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

- √ Spiritual welfare
 - Monitoring members and frequent visitors
 - Coordinators
 - Attendance: class, worship, special services
 - Using information effectively
 - Coordinating work groups: purpose, scheduling
 - Communicating members' needs: phone, email, texting, website
- √ Spiritually Weak Members
 - Methods for Encouraging
 - Personal Visits: exhorting, correcting
 - Determining disciplinary actions

√ Communication

Methods used: annual meeting, quarterly reports, bulletin

Assessing member concerns: questionnaires, informal talks

3. CHURCH – NOT A BUSINESS

Although there are similarities between leading a business and leading the local church, the purpose is different.

- ▶ Discuss the differences (Acts 6:4)

4. BEHIND THE SCENES

If we only see each other at services, we do not really know what goes on throughout the week. We will not know of the numerous hours elders spend in private with members who need immediate spiritual attention. Marital difficulties, job woes, hidden sins, and conflicts among brethren are some of the more common issues requiring the attention. Hospital visits, funeral presence, responding to social invitations (weddings, home gatherings, etc.) all take their share of time. While the presence of other members may not be missed, the absence of elders or the preacher will be noticed and often resented. There needs to be fairness shown in this regard. Elders are not mind readers; they need to be informed of such events. Members need to realize they are regular people and circumstances beyond their control may hinder them from responding in as timely a fashion as others may assume they should. Remember, *whatever you want me to do to you, do also to them*, Matt. 7:12. Judge the elders by the standard you would like to be judged.

The bottom line, elders have a spiritually oppressive, emotionally taxing, conscience-jarring responsibility. A work that never seems to end and is under constant scrutiny is also impossible to satisfy everyone. Thus, there always seems to be discontent from some quarter or other. Second-guessing is easy when one does not have to face the real consequences of imagined decisions. The leaders are on the firing line. They are putting their happiness and well-being in the hands of often times ungrateful people whom they are trying to prop up and drag toward heaven. Serving as an elder should not be sugarcoated or fit-wrapped with a pretty bow. It is hard, exhausting work. However, it also carries the reward of knowing good people will benefit and will be everlastingly grateful for the effort some shepherd made to feed and protect them on their way to heaven. Serving as an elder is not for everyone. It is for the man who walks by faith, not by sight. It is for the man who does not become weary in well doing. It is for the man whose wife is confident enough to share her husband with the Lord as he works in the lives of men. We need more of these good men.



QUESTIONS



1. How can micromanagement hinder elders from giving attention to their specific task of spiritual oversight?
2. Why is it important that prospective elders understand the full scope of congregational function?
3. Give three practical suggestions of how to help an elder do his job better.
4. What do you think is the most difficult aspect of being an elder? After writing your answer, call one of the elders and ask **him** what he thinks is most difficult.

Why Serve As a Leader? Lesson 14

1. SHEEP NEED SHEPHERDS: A NECESSITY

An organization that operates without some kind of leadership is not effective - it only exists.



Jesus' Observation

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field," Matthew 9:35 – 38.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things, Mark 6: 34.

A characteristic of the Chief Shepherd, He was "moved to compassion." People are spiritually aimless when left to themselves without leadership, *aimless conduct*, I Peter 1:18. His solution in mark's account was to teach them, thereby consoling them.

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock," Ezekiel 34: 1-8.

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls, I Peter 2:25.

2. THE RETIREMENT PLAN IS AWESOME

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. **And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away,** I Peter 5: 1-4.*

3. I SHOULD NOT BURY MY TALENTS

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! Therefore, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. “‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags, Matthew 25: 26-28. Practically speaking, how can we do this?

4. GOD'S EXPECTATION THAT I USE MY ABILITIES FOR THE KINGDOM

The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly, I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. “The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12: 42 – 48.

Jesus, the Servant Leader

Lesson 15



In I Cor. 11:1, Paul wrote, *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.* The NIV words it, *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.* While Paul clearly writes those words in the context of his teaching in I Cor. 10, the principle nonetheless applies in all other aspects of living: Jesus is a role model for His disciples in everything – in obedience to God, in suffering, in daily living, in marriage – everything. That example includes leadership.

1. SPIRITUALLY-MINDED: OBEDIENT TO GOD

A. *Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me, John 5: 19 – 20, 30.*

B. *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, Heb. 5: 8 & 9.*

C. *For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and Guardian of your souls, I Peter 2:25.*

2. SERVANT

A. *Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”*

“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus

called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many,” Matt. 20: 20 – 28.

B. John 13:15 & 34 are the only two passages where Jesus spoke about being an example.

C. Peter and Paul spoke of Jesus as an example. *For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his step,* I Peter 2:21. *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ,* I Cor. 11:1.

D. When Jesus described a servant, He meant someone of low prestige, low respect, and low honor. When Jesus used servant, it was a synonym for greatness!

E. James and John wanted glory, not shame; a crown, not a cross; to be master, not servant. Consider Mark 10:35 – 45.

3. SACRIFICIAL

A. *Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself,* Heb. 9:26.

B. *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining^a eternal redemption,* Heb. 9:12.

4. LOVING

A. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another,* John 13: 34 – 35.

B. *Greater love has no one than his that one lay down his life for his friends,* John 15:1.

C. *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a*

woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man,
I Cor. 11: 1-8

5. HUMBLE

A. *Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted,* Matt. 23:12.

B. *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,*
Phil. 2: 5 - 11.

6. HE GLORIFIED GOD, NOT HIMSELF

A. *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work,* John 4: 34.

B. *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began,*
John 17: 1-5.

7. RESISTED TEMPTATION; UNCOMPROMISING TO TRUTH; ANSWERED CHALLENGES WITH, “IT IS WRITTEN...” ADDRESSED ISSUES WITH BIBLICAL ANSWERS

A. *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth*
56.

of God. ¹”Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him, Matt. 4: 1-11.

8. PRAYERFUL

A. It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles, Luke 6: 12 - 13.

B. He had to choose men who would be loyal; Peter, who he did not “fire” after failure and Judas who would betray Him.

9. TIME-ORIENTED

A. Consider the following texts: John 2:4; 7:6; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1

B. Jesus understood time and completed every task the Lord gave Him in the time given. Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world,” John 11:9.

10. TASK/GOAL-ORIENTED

A. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said “it is finished!” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit, John 19:30.

B. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given me to do, John 17:4.

J. Oswald Sanders, author of *Spiritual Leadership*, published by Moody Press, prepared the following chart to illustrate differences between a natural leader and God’s spiritual leader. The differences are worth noting. We can see the difference in traits when we compare Jesus and the leaders of His day.

NATURAL-BORN LEADERS
 Self-confident
 Knows men
 Makes own decisions
 Ambitious
 Creates methods
 Enjoys command
 Seeks personal reward
 Independent

SPIRITUAL LEADERS
 Confident in God
 Knows God
 Seeks God’s will
 Humble
 Follows God’s example
 Delights in obedience to God
 Loves God and others
 Dependent on God



QUESTIONS



1. Review the following passages and identify traits that describe Jesus as a leader.

John 5: 19-20, 30; Heb. 5: 8-9 _____

Matt. 20: 20-28; John 13: 1-17 _____

Heb. 9:26 _____

John 13: 34-35; 15:13 _____

Matt. 23:12; Phil. 2: 5-11 _____

John 4:34; 17: 1-5 _____

Matt. 4: 1-11 _____

Luke 6: 12-13 _____

John 2:4; 7:6; 11:1, 6; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1 _____

John 19:30; 17:4 _____

Nehemiah, the Leader Proactive not Reactive Lesson 16

Unquestionably, Nehemiah is regarded an effective leader among God's people. He saw that the walls of Jerusalem had been torn down and the gates had been burned and lamented that the city lay in ruins. So, he sought God's guidance and blessing and led the Jews in a dramatic effort to rebuild the walls in the face of opposition. The strength and success of Nehemiah's leadership sits in an interesting historical setting.

In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in brutal fashion and took exiles, those who survived Babylonian swords – to Babylon (II Chronicles 36: 15-20; II Kings 25: 4-11). The only ones left behind, some of the poorest in the land, were to work the vineyards and fields (II Kings 25:12). In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonians and established Darius to serve as a regional king (II Chronicles 36: 20-23); Daniel 5: 1-31; 6: 28). Immediately, in the first year of his reign, God moved Cyrus to send exiles back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). In 538 BC, Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, led a group to do this (Ezra 2:1-2). A terrific summary of the events is recorded in Ezra 5: 1-6:18. The temple's reconstruction did not move as quickly as it should have so Haggai and Zechariah, who prophesied during that time, chided the Jews who had built their own houses but left the Lord's house unfinished (Haggai 1:1-4). Eventually, they finished 22 years later in 516 BC. In 486 BC, Xerxes became king of Persia and Esther becomes his wife and queen in 478 BC. (Esther 2:17). Artaxerxes assumed the throne in 464 BC and in 458 BC sent Ezra back to Jerusalem with more exiles to re-establish God's law (Ezra 7: 12-14).

In 445 BC, the king's cupbearer, a Jew named Nehemiah, received discouraging news. The people of Jerusalem were in trouble, disgraced, the city's walls were broken and the gates had been burned. He was so distressed by the condition of his homeland the King noticed the difference in his countenance and asked him what was wrong. Nehemiah responded by asking the King how he could not be sad when his homeland was in such disrepair.

Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah how he could help. Nehemiah made a request to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. He also asked the King for letters to assure safe passage from Babylon to Jerusalem. The King granted Nehemiah's requests that also included from the King's forests to build the gates to the citadel and the city wall. Nehemiah then returned to Jerusalem and set about rebuilding the walls of the city (Nehemiah 2:1-9). Despite resistance of opponents (Nehemiah 2:10, 19; 4:1, 7-8; 6:1-8), Nehemiah completed the wall in fifty-two days (Nehemiah 6:15).



QUESTIONS



1. Use the chart below to consider what caused Nehemiah to be successful and the qualities that made him a strong and effective leader. All passages found in Nehemiah.

PASSAGE	TRAITS
1. 1:4, 6; 2:4; 4:4,9; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14	1. _____
2. 6:11	2. _____
3. 2:10; 1: 4-6	3. _____
4. 2:8	4. _____
5. 2:11-16	5. _____
6. 5:7	6. _____
7. 2:20; 8:10	7. _____
8. 2:18	8. _____
9. 4: 10-18; 5: 1-15	9. _____
10. 8: 1-8; 9: 3-5; 13: 4-9	10. _____
11. 2: 11-16; 7: 1-69	11. _____
12. 3: 1-32; 7:2	12. _____
13. 4:9, 16, 20 (compare 13:21, 25)	13. _____
14. 6:15	14. _____

15. How can you develop the leadership qualities Nehemiah exhibited?

16. How can they help you be a more effective spiritual leader?

17. What is the difference in being a proactive rather than reactive leader?

Becoming Approachable Lesson 17

What does being approachable mean to you? Friendly; easy to talk to? Approachability is extremely important for a spiritual leader. Those needing help will seek help from those appointed to the task if they feel safe in doing so. Shepherds should give advice that point to Heaven. Counselors, friends, self-help books are not the best resources for Heavenly advice. Better to get advice from the spiritual leader than Oprah.

Leaders should make themselves approachable for those they lead. *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, Col. 3:12.*

Be Humble

◆ *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 5:3.* Jesus describes spiritual humility as opposed to spiritual arrogance that His audience ordinarily observed.

◆ *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gently and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light, Matt. 11: 28 – 30.*

◆ *Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalte., Matt. 23: 5 – 12.*

◆ *Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock... Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper tie, I Peter 5: 3, 6.*

◆ *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, Eph. 4: 1 -2. "Tapeinophrosynei" means lowliness of mind, as in Matt. 11: 29, lowly in heart.*

Be Meek and Gentle

◆ *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light, Matt. 11: 28 – 30.*

◆ *... not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money, I Tim. 3: 3.*

◆ *... gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law, Gal. 5:23.*

◆ *Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near, Phil. 4:5.*

◆ *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger, Prov. 15:1.*

◆ *The Lords' bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, II Tim. 2: 24 – 25.*

Vine's description of meekness (gentleness): "The meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because He had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated or cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all."

Be Peaceable, not Quarrelsome

◆ *... not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money, I Tim. 3: 3.*

◆ *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God, Matt. 5: 9.*

◆ *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace, James 3: 17 – 18.*

◆ *The Lords' bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, II Tim. 2:24.*

Machomai means to quarrel, dispute, fight, strive, according to Strong's. God's man should be peaceable and a peacemaker, not a self-willed fighter. A.T. Robertson describes, in Matt. 5:9 that it is hard enough to keep peace, and harder still to bring peace where it does not exist.

Be Kind

◆ *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Gal. 5:22.*

◆ *Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, I Cor. 13:4.*

◆ *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God is Christ also has forgiven you, Eph. 4: 32.*

◆ *The Lords' bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, II Tim. 2:24.*

The idea behind kindness is to have goodness of heart.

Be a Good Listener

◆ *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger, James 1:19.*

◆ *Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed, Prov. 15:22.*

◆ *When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise, Prov. 10: 19*

◆ *He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding, Prov. 17: 27.*

You learn much more by listening than you do by talking, and Proverbs plainly advises to keep your ears open and your mouth closed. Listening encourages others to share, and conveys an openness to hear.

Wives can have an enormous impact on leaders.

▶ They empathize with members because others, especially women, may go to them initially with concerns and problems. *Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husband, so that the word of God will not be dishonored,* Titus 2: 3 – 5.

▶ They are to be spiritually minded so they can give spiritual guidance rather than worldly advice. *Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things,* I Tim. 3: 11.

▶ They can help temper a leaders reaction. *A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,* Prov. 1:5.



QUESTIONS



1. What does it mean to be approachable?
2. Why is approachability important for a spiritual leader?
3. How can leaders make themselves approachable for those they lead? Col. 3:12
4. Give practical examples of how wives can influence husbands as they serve as leader.

Know the Truth: Possess Conviction

Lesson 18

Conviction: strong beliefs

“I have sworn on the altar of God, eternal hostility on every form of tyranny over the mind of man,” Thomas Jefferson.

- *How do you know if you or someone else has conviction?*
- *Give an example of a Spiritual Leader knowing the truth and demonstrating conviction about it.*

Δ *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,’* John 8: 31 – 32.

God only has one thing that will liberate man from sin – THE TRUTH.

Jesus is the embodiment of TRUTH (John 14: 6).

Jesus is the Great Emancipator.

His word is TRUTH, John 1:17.

You must understand this and believe it or you are in bondage and will not be capable of helping anyone else become truly free.

Δ *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness,* Rom. 6: 16 – 18.

TRUTH is doctrine – doctrine is truth – this is what frees.

Jesus is the embodiment of TRUTH; therefore, He is the embodiment of freedom.

You must know and believe with all your heart what Jesus and His inspired teaching says.

Your job as a spiritual Leader is to feed Christ’s Church the Truth with “strong belief.”

Δ Setting: Peter and John are arrested after addressing the Sanhedrin regarding the healing of a man (Acts 3: 6-10).

So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,’ Acts 4: 18 – 20

And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you, Gal. 2: 4-5.

Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? Gal. 4:16



A shepherd with conviction stands guard over the flock no matter the circumstances. He is neither a quitter nor a bully.

● Gatekeeper for the Flock

Observe the connections made in the following passages between conviction and being a gatekeeper.

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock, I Peter 5: 2 – 3.

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, ... to shepherd the church of God ... savage wolves will come in among you ... from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things ... watch ... I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified, Acts 20: 28 – 32.

... 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. 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, Titus 1: 9 – 11

The only ways to be a successful spiritual gatekeeper is to know the Word and USE IT!

● Knowledgeable: Current Issues

Shepherds should not be ignorant of Satan's devices because what is now happening in other areas will arrived in your location soon enough (II Cor. 2:11). Elders listen to members of other congregations, read publications, attend area gospel meetings, and use other means to stay current. They should not alarm the Church on hearsay, facts are gathered, and rumor confirmed.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you, I Cor. 1:11.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world, Rom. 1:8. Good news is spread as well as bad.

Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name, Acts. 9: 13 -14.

● Familiar: Issues Church is Encountering

Some issues facing the church today are: instrumental music, A.D. 70 Doctrine, baptism non-essential to salvation or church membership, homosexuality, social drinking, gender orientation – basically anything the bible is for or against, God’s people somewhere are deliberating. So, what do spiritual leaders do about these issues? **Teach! Teach! Teach!**

Remind them of these things, charging 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. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have started concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some, II Tim. 2: 14 – 18.

● Expert: The Plan of Salvation

An elder should know how to teach the person who is not a member of the Church of Christ and says, “I was baptized for the remission of sins.”

But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, 'When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.' So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him. And after some day, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'God away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you,' Acts 24: 22 - 24 How hard do you think this was for Paul? Why did he do it?

Read and meditate on the conviction of Paul in Acts 20: 17 – 25.

All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household, Phil. 4:22. Knowing the truth is not enough. Surround truth with conviction and the Lord is glorified and people are freed from sin.



QUESTIONS



1. What is learned from John 8:31 and Romans 6: 16 – 17?
2. Explain conviction in your own words, giving specific examples.
3. What connection can be made from the following passages between conviction and being a gatekeeper? Explain why it is important for a gatekeeper to have conviction. I Peter 5: 2-3, Acts 20: 28 – 32, Titus 1: 9 -11
4. Explain the importance of having knowledge of current issues among the brotherhood.
5. Discuss ramifications of an elder's weakness in explaining the plan of salvation to those lost.

Self-discipline Lesson 19

Discipline: train, teach, or instruct

Self-discipline: to apply learning and instruction to self

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline, II Tim 1: 7
The Greek word translated “discipline” is *sophronismou*, and means soundness of mind and self-control. It is the only time this word is used in the N.T. consequently, Paul enjoined Timothy to exercise discipline and use the spiritual gift he (Paul) had given him (Timothy) with restraint, self-control and sound judgment (v.6). We must train our minds to conform to the Lord’s will and teaching so we will control our bodies, behaviors, and emotions to follow.




⚠ the target on your back

Destruction of the shepherd/leader may make it easier to lead astray the sheep/followers. Satan schemes to have all of us, especially leaders and we should never weaken our guard to resist temptation or distraction.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen, I Peter 5: 6 – 11.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears, Acts 20: 28 – 31

If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation, John 11: 48.

 managing your Occupation

A spiritual leader must discipline himself to focus on locality and allegiance to God. Do not allow your occupation to manage you.


But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you, Matt. 6:33.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?' Matt. 16: 24 – 26

Creating wealth should never replace serving God. People work to pay necessary bills and debts. However, often we create excess bills and debts not necessary to serving our basic needs. When we allow our occupation to overtake and interfere with our service to God then wealth has become our guide and we no longer seek Him first.

Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry, Col 3:5.

Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where you treasure is there your heart will be also, Matt. 6: 19 – 21.

 your role as husband and father

Read and meditate on Ephesians 5: 22 – 33. Love like Christ. Your love will serve your wife's needs and her love will serve your needs. Do not allow sin to destroy your family. Protect your family and make sure every decision you make is in your family's best spiritual interest. Marriage and child rearing is hard work, give it maximum effort. This important role serves as an example to the flock. As a spiritual leader, you must discipline yourself to keep your family focused on their loyalty and allegiance to God.

 your public image

Your public image, or reputation, is vitally important. It will reflect onto the local church as well as the Lord. *And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil,* I Tim. 3:7.

Thus, an elder should live circumspectly. Consider the use of social media, raising children and extracurricular activities and their effect on your reputation. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is,* Eph. 5: 15 – 17.



QUESTIONS



1. Explain self-discipline in your own words. Why is it important?
2. How does Paul's instruction to Timothy (II Tim. 1:7) influence the spiritual leader in a practical way?
3. Which is more important to you: creating wealth or serving God? How can you tell?
4. Explain how man's role as husband and father can affect his role as elder.
5. Why is it important for the spiritual leader to protect his public image?
6. List some ways a spiritual leader's behavior might adversely affect his influence.

Time Management Lesson 20



First, allow me to address your potential disappointment. This lesson is not about teaching time management strategies. It is about helping you understand the concept “you can do it” and you better; sooner rather than later. This is a Bible study pointing to self-improvement. It is not a self-help lesson with some Bible sprinkled in to solicit God’s approval.

All things that pertain to life and godliness have been given, II Peter 1:3. It is our duty to find the command, example, or principal to guide us in whatever matter is before us. The two most popular “excuses” used by men who refuse to do the Lord’s work:

I don’t have time because

I can’t do it.

Excuse: to try to free a person of blame, to try to minimize a fault or apologize or give reason for it; to release one from an obligation or promise

“An excuse is worse and
more terrible than a lie,
for an excuse is
a lie guarded”
Agree? Disagree?

In most cases men should be honest and say, “I don’t want to ...” They are both miserable offerings to the Lord who died for them. Preface the excuses with, “Lord, I know you died for me but” And see how it sounds.

Better “reasons” might be:

I’ve gotten myself in a predicament where I cannot give this the time it deserves today but I will make adjustments as soon as possible to do so.

I’m not qualified to do it today but I want the help and resources so I can get on the fast track to fulfilling this responsibility.

In Luke 14: 15 – 24, the parable of the great supper, we learn the Lord does not accept excuses as an exemption certificate for doing His work, whatever the call to duty may be.

★ The Kingdom First

The Kingdom comes before personal sustenance such as food, drink, and clothing that is why the Lord takes care of those things. Not that God’s children have ever been in need of some of these necessities but the idea is not to forfeit your spiritual sustenance in pursuit of physical sustenance. You cannot use physical sustenance as an excuse not to do the Lord’s work. You can allow your career to manage you or you can manage your career – motive matters.

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘what shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble, Matt. 6: 31 – 34.

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Matt. 4: 18 – 20.

★ The Kingdom before Life

There is nothing stronger than the will to live or self-preservation. In essence, Jesus is saying, rid yourself of that notion.” To die in/for Jesus is to truly live. The idea that the Lord approves of the live-for-self, look out for number 1, or grab all the gusto mentality is damnable delusion mentality.

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, Luke 9: 23 – 26

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God," Luke 9: 57 – 62

For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's, Rom. 14: 7 – 8.

★ Priorities

It is easy to place the Lord and His objectives as your top priority. However, it may be difficult to follow through with your commitments to Him. Practically speaking, how do you do it? What resources are available?

- √ Put into writing a priority list and develop an action plan; revisit frequently making adjustments as needed.
- √ Be honest with yourself about progress and outcomes. *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap, Gal. 6:7.*
- √ Enlist your wife, the elders, friends who are Christians to be honest with you. Have someone hold you accountable for your action plan.
- √ Ask God for the wisdom and strength needed to reach your goals. *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him, James 1:5.*
- √ Study, study, study. *Study to show thyself approved unto God, and workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, II Tim. 2:15.*

★ Qualifications

The qualifications for spiritual leaders are demands the Lord has placed on all men. Provided a man is married and has children, other qualifications are not options. If a man possesses all the qualifications, the Lord says he is qualified. He is qualified, not experienced, because experience comes with the job – on-the-job-training. Moses was qualified yet tried to spurn the responsibility God was giving him to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Hebrews. *So the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?'* Ex. 3: 11 – 4: 14.

★ 168 Hours per Week

Everyone has the same 168 hours per week. If your schedule is too busy to be the spiritual leader the Lord demands; then you overbooked your schedule. Will you short change the Lord, or reprioritize your life? It is not the Lord's fault you have overbooked your flight. You can make Him pay for it now but you will pay for it later. Several excuses are offered to sidestep serving in an official capacity; jobs, children, family. You need to look carefully at the voice telling you one of these excuses is acceptable. It is not the voice of the Lord.

★ Judgment

Forsaking a responsibility the Lord has commanded is a sin for which He will assign many to torment. Meditate on the story of the one talent man. *For everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* Matt. 25: 29 – 30.

Conclusion:

What happens when you allow anything to replace seeking first the Kingdom? You are postponing, if not forfeiting your ability to be a spiritual leader. You lose and so does the Lord's cause. The job of spiritual leader demands time; whatever time is needed. It is the highest office in the land and every qualified man has the time to serve. Sacrifices may be required however, remember the Lord made one for you. It is like being a Christian, if the Lord commands us to do it, and then we can. At the end of the day, having done all you can do, you can be assured you have stood for the Lord. *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* Eph. 6:13.

Delegation of Responsibility Lesson 21

By the Lord

The Lord has delegated to us to make disciples, baptize, and teach.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, Matt. 28: 19 – 20

And He said to them, 'go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation', Mark 16:15.

Share

Just as Christ has delegated responsibility to us, He expects us to delegate responsibility to others. Delegation allows leaders to share responsibilities and burdens as well as the joys of serving.

Read and meditate on Exodus 18: 13 – 27

Doing too much will burn out a good leader (v.18). Delegating allows leaders to focus on their specific work and primary responsibility (v. 19 – 20). When leaders fill their time with work that should be conferred on others, they leave their specific tasks and primary responsibilities undone (v.2). Delegation of responsibility confers authority to the delegate (v. 3 – 6).

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them, Acts 6: 1 -6

Shepherd's Primary Responsibilities

Prayer – Acts 6:4

Teach – Acts 6:4

Shepherd – Acts 20: 28 – 32; I Peter 5: 1- 4

Be an example to the sheep – I Peter 5: 1 - 4

Equip the sheep – Eph. 4: 11 – 13

Build up the body – Eph. 4: 11 - 13

Developing for the future

Leaders must help develop others to whom they may delegate responsibility – to develop their spiritual leadership skills and learn responsibility and judgment in spiritual matters. Men should acquire good reputations, wisdom, the fear of God, and become men of truth who hate dishonest gain – as described in Ex. 18 and Acts 6. They learn these traits from their mothers and fathers, study of scripture, and mentors and other Christians. They are learned behaviors.

➔ *The things which you have heard from them in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also, II Tim. 2:2.*

The principle Paul espoused in this passage is that Timothy was to perpetuate the gospel and doctrine Paul had taught him by teaching it to others, who would in turn teach others and pass it to the generation after them. Jesus did the same thing by teaching and preparing the twelve apostles to spread the gospel to the whole world following His death. Paul following Christ's appearance to him on the Damascus road is another example.

➔ *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ, I Cor. 11:1.*

Paul taught the principle to the church at Corinth, although we can see a much broader application in this passage.

➔ *Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, Ex. 18:21.*

Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task, Acts 6:3.

Leaders should utilize the strengths of others to find those suited to the task. Moses did this while leading the Israelites in the wilderness. Another example is from the apostles. The Lord demonstrates this with elders and deacons in I Tim. 3: 1 – 13 and Titus 1: 5 – 9.

The Lords' leaders are not necessarily to be those who are wealthy and wildly successful in worldly matters – those the world recognizes as great leaders. He chooses the kind of men who love and can lead souls, spiritually minded men, not perfect men but men who love Him.

Accountability

Delegates must do the job assigned them in a timely manner and completely. Moses did not assign men to serve as judges who never did their jobs of deciding cases. Seven men, assigned by the apostles and church at Jerusalem, feed the Grecian widows as instructed. Leaders must address the issues of responsibilities not being met or not completed as directed. Additional training may be required, assistance or necessary tools and resources. Providing constructive criticism to help a man improve is more valuable than hurtful words that tear him down. Provide encouragement and wise advice.

➡ *The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times, Luke 22: 61 & John 21.*

When Peter failed or stumbled, Jesus did not condemn him. He instructed and encouraged. Ultimately, the goal is for all of us to get to heaven. Leaders have the responsibility to help even those who do not complete a task as they should. In the big picture, the delegate's soul is more important than the task given to complete.



QUESTIONS



1. List responsibilities God has delegated to us.
2. How does delegation of responsibilities improve leaders' effectiveness?
3. What does delegation of responsibility confer to the delegate?
4. What are the shepherds' primary responsibilities?
5. How do men acquire good reputations, wisdom, and the fear of God?
6. What does II Tim. 2:2 teach us about delegating responsibility.
7. What does the bible teach about leaders utilizing the strengths of others?
8. What should leaders do if a delegate does not fulfill his responsibility?