

Studying, Preaching, and Teaching the Word of God

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—
-with great patience and careful instruction.**

2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:2 (NIV)

We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God...

1 Peter 4:10-11a

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.

Nehemiah 8:8

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About Phil Benedict

I (Phil Benedict) grew up in a godly Christian home and was saved as a young child. I was active in our church youth group in Boise, Idaho, where I met my wife, Linda. We married when we were young and God has blessed our marriage. We have now been married for over fifty-four years (as of January 2021). We have four children, all of whom are actively serving the Lord.

I began teaching Sunday School when I was a junior in high school and I thoroughly enjoyed it, and the Lord used the class to bring at least two young boys to Himself. One of them became a pastor who started a church and then served as its pastor for over thirty-five years. I have been teaching in one way or another ever since.

My wife and I both graduated from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and from Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. I have also taken classes in secondary school administration at the College of Idaho in Caldwell, Idaho, as well as classes in Cherokee heritage from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and classes in drug and alcohol counseling at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma. We have served as “full time” Christian workers for over thirty-five years. We have been members of UIM International (United Indian Missions) for over twenty-five years.

Thanks to My Wife

God has given me an exceptional wife. She is a very talented person and she chose to be a stay-at-home mom and to be a ministry partner with me. She has been a huge blessing in my life. She has been my co-worker and partner throughout life. Without exaggerating, she has spent many hundreds of hours editing, checking for mistakes, making suggestions, printing, and binding this and other study guides that we have put together. Without her, these study guides would not exist.

My Prayer

It is my prayer and my desire that the Lord Jesus Christ will be honored and glorified through this study. I pray that there will be some who, empowered by the Spirit of God, will be committed to living a transformed life of obedience and faithful service to our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that the Spirit of God will draw some closer to Himself and commit themselves to serving the Lord and then accurately teaching the Word of God.

The Purpose of This Study

This study was written primarily for those who are serving the Lord in some capacity as a Bible teacher or pastor. It is geared for those who are laymen and who have not had seminary training, although those who have had some of this kind of training may learn and benefit from this study as well.

This study is not written for those who are satisfied with a casual walk with the Lord. It is for those who desire to draw near to God and to walk closely with Him and serve Him in some form in a teaching capacity. I (Phil Benedict) will freely admit that in some ways I feel totally inadequate to put this study together. I have often been frustrated with my own shallow walk, but I am committed to growing in my own walk with the Lord. It is my prayer that this study may be helpful to some who want to draw near to God and serve Him by teaching others.

This study is written in simple to understand language. This is not written for scholars and theologians, but instead for ordinary laymen who want to understand what the Word teaches about studying, preaching, and teaching and to put it into practice.

How to Get the Most from This Study

These study guides are designed to help you to learn, to understand, and to live what God teaches us in His Word, the Bible. God gave us the Bible to teach us how to know and to walk with Him.

Take time to carefully read the Scriptures in this study, and then take time think about and to meditate on them. Meditate on them and the truths they teach. Absorb them. Regularly ask God for a right understanding of Scriptural truths and then make them part of you. Commit yourself to making Biblical truths the foundation of your life and to putting them into practice every day of your life. Learn to love God and His Word.

Take your time as you go through these studies. If you go over the material too quickly without much thought, it will have little or no lasting impact on your life.

Translations used in this Study

There are five different translations used throughout these studies. The translations used are the King James Version (KJV), the New King James Version (NKJV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New International Version (NIV), and the English Standard Version (ESV).

The purpose of these studies is to help ordinary people understand fundamental Biblical truth. When quoting Scripture, I have tried to use the translation which most clearly states the Biblical truth being covered in that part of the study. Therefore, no particular translation has been favored.

King James Version of the Bible.

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Chapter One

A Bible Pastor -Teacher Must Personally be a Committed Disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Before one can effectively teach the Word of God, there are at least three fundamental things that must be true of a person.

- 1. He must personally be committed to being a dedicated follower or disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 2. He must personally be a dedicated student of the Word of God who is committed to accurately understanding and teaching the Word.*
- 3. A pastor-teacher must have a passion to lead others to be committed followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The importance of these three principles in the life a preacher or teacher can hardly be overstated. If any of these three fundamental principles are weak in an individual's life, then that person's teaching or preaching ministry will not be as productive as it could and should be. A ministry can appear productive from a human standpoint, but if any of these three points are weak, a ministry will be hindered. It may not reflect the Spirit of God at work, rather it may well be a result of one's own self at work.

We recognize that none of us are perfect. As long as we are on earth, we will certainly have our faults and shortcomings. However, that is not an excuse for a lack of commitment. We can be grateful that God does use imperfect people. That means that He can use us. Again however, this does not mean that we can excuse allowing ourselves to be weak in our commitments.

This chapter will primarily focus on the first of the three fundamentals stated above. The second and third issues will each be covered in following chapters in this study.

In spite of our weaknesses God has given us all we need to be a godly person.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

We must be committed to growing in our walk with God.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18 (KJV)

Paul, the veteran apostle, very clearly and specifically instructs Timothy, the young pastor-teacher what to actively pursue.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which

you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
1 Timothy 6:11-12 (NIV)

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)

What Is A Disciple?

To begin this study, we must understand what a genuine disciple is. Following are definitions given by several Biblical scholars:

- A. *“Imitators of their teacher”*. An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vine, page 316
- B. *“Willing to be trained, a learner”*. Making Disciples, John MacArthur, page 11
- C. *“A follower”*. Theological Wordbook, Charles Swindoll, General Editor, pages 94-95
- D. *“...not only to learn, but to become attached to one’s teacher and to become his follower in doctrine and in conduct of life”*. The Complete Wordstudy Dictionary–New Testament, Zodhiates, page 936

A disciple is one who loves our Lord, who absorbs His Word and who puts it into practice in his day-to-day life, and who actively commits himself to being like Him. This is not a casual commitment. It is completely giving up our own will and giving ourselves completely to knowing and doing His will. We die to our own selfish desires and live to glorify Him.

Before creation, God planned for us to be like Him. This is a major theme in the New Testament.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29 (NKJV)

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21 (ESV)

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40 (ESV)

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB)

How are you doing? Are you genuinely committed to following our Lord and being like Him? How much of your commitment is real, and how much is just passive compliance with general Christian principles? Are we committed to pleasing God or are we seeking to impress people?

Reading the Word of God, learning Biblical patterns of prayer, and fellowshiping with fellow Christians are all hollow activities if we do not have the gut level commitment to be a dedicated follower of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Teaches About Discipleship

Matthew 10:24-42

In the first part of Matthew 10, Jesus is preparing His twelve disciples for their first preaching assignment. As the chapter progresses, His teaching broadens to include all future disciples, and He even goes on into the tribulation period. This part of the chapter that we are looking at (Matthew 10:24-42) applies to all disciples now. However, pastors and other church leaders need to give careful attention to these verses since they were given by Jesus to prepare His disciples for their ministry of preaching the gospel.

The purpose of this section is to take a good look at this passage of Scripture (Matthew 10:24-42) and to be challenged to deepen our commitment to seeking Him with all our hearts, to drawing near to Him, and to being profitable servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage of Scripture is not for wimps or pansies. It calls for total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage teaches us that His followers, and especially those who are church leaders, we must not expect popularity, but rather expect rejection, in fact we cannot even fear dying for our faith. Our love for the Lord must even come before our love for our own human families. (This is not an excuse for neglecting our families.) In fact, we die to all our own selfish desires and commit ourselves completely and totally to following and being like our Lord. If this is too high a price to pay for being a pastor or other church leader, then don't be one because you will hinder the Holy Spirit from working, and you will not be leading others to be good disciples of our Lord.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. Matthew 10:24 (NIV)

A committed disciple seeks to be like his teacher.

"A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40 (NASB)

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; Romans 8:29 (NASB)

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21 (ESV)

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; Romans 8:29 (NASB)

A disciple must expect some rejection. Jesus was rejected by most and He was accused of casting out demons by the power of Satan. If they called Jesus “Beelzebul”, or Satan, then we too must not expect popularity or widespread acceptance as a follower of Christ.

If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! Matthew 10:25 (NASB)

But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Matthew 9:34 (NKJV)

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. John 15:20 (NASB)

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Matthew 10:16 (NIV)

Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Matthew 10:26 (NASB)

A disciple must not be afraid of accurately and authoritatively preaching and teaching the Word of God. Three times in these verses Jesus tells us not to be afraid. The first reason that we are not to be afraid is that God will, at some point, reveal the truth about us and about all those who oppose us. If we are good servants and innocent of wrong doing, it will be known by all. Those who are guilty of rejecting the message and of persecuting His followers will be openly exposed and will publically face the consequences of their actions, their rejection, and their attitudes.

For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Luke 8:17 (NASB)

But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Luke 12:2 (NASB)

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. 1 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)

Notice the last phrase of this verse. Each person will receive their just recognition from God. Disciples who are rejected on earth will be openly commended and rewarded by God.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27 (NASB)

Jesus privately taught His disciples many things. Now they were to publicly teach and preach what

they had learned. Today a disciple is to publicly tell or teach/preach the Word of God as He gave to us in the Bible.

...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. Acts 1:8 (NASB)

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (ESV)

Obviously pastors and preachers are to preach and teach the Word of God. However, even laymen must teach what they have learned. Parents and grandparents must teach their children and grandchildren. All Christians are to teach and admonish one another.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom,... Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up,... 1 Thessalonians 5:11a (ESV)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV)

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. Romans 15:14 (NASB)

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28 (NASB)

A disciple must not be afraid to die if necessary. We are not to fear those who can kill our bodies. We do not fear Satan and all those who are doing his bidding. All they can do is kill us and that will never happen unless it is God's will and purpose. The moment we die, we will be with the Lord forever. That is nothing to fear. Rather than fearing for ourselves or our lives, we fear for those whom God will judge by sending their body and soul into an eternal hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. Matthew 10:29-30 (NIV)

A disciple is secure in the care of God. We do not need to fear lack of provision or protection. God is

totally aware of what individual sparrows are doing, and He provides for them, but we are far more valuable than birds. He is totally aware of our needs and He will provide for us. He is totally aware of everything about us, even numbering the hairs on our head. If He knows that much about us, He is certainly aware of all our needs.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Matthew 6:25-30 (ESV)

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Matthew 10:32-33 (NKJV)

Genuine disciples publicly confess their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by faith in the death of Jesus Christ as the payment for our sin, and turning away from that lifestyle of sin. People who are genuinely saved make it known to other people.

...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Romans 10:9-10 (ESV)

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:34-37 (ESV)

A genuine disciple loves God more than his own human family members. Worldwide and even here in America, many many times when one commits to being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, he/she faces the opposition and sometimes even the total rejection of their own family. If we are unwilling to accept this, then don't pretend to be a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. Matthew 10:38-39 (NKJV)

The cross is a symbol of death. A genuine disciple is willing to die to every other desire and be totally committed to being a follower of our Lord. We die to self.

Those who focus on the pleasures and desires of life now will, in eternity, lose everything. Their life separated from God in an eternal hell is described as death. Those who lose their life now for the sake

of our Lord Jesus Christ will enjoy an abundant life with Him forever.

He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Matthew 10:40-41 (NKJV)

Not everyone will reject the message given by the disciples of Christ. Some will receive the message and the messenger. Those who receive and help provide for the prophet or messenger will share in the messenger's reward. Those who receive and provide for a fellow Christian layman who is not a prophet, will also share in his reward.

Those who receive our message become our brothers and sisters in the Lord and they become disciples together with us. There is little in life that compares with the joy of being used by God to lead someone to become a fellow disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." Matthew 10:42 (NASB)

Most of the commentators agree that the little ones spoken of here are not children, but rather one who is simply a follower or disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even a cup of cold water given to a disciple who is thirsty will result in an eternal reward.

Review – What are the characteristics of a disciple from Matthew 10:24-42?

1. A disciple is to be like his teacher.
2. A disciple must expect rejection.
3. A disciple is to publicly tell what he has learned.
4. A disciple must not be afraid of those who reject Christ.
5. A disciple must not fear dying because of his faith.
6. A disciple does not fear lack of provision or protection.
7. A genuine disciple publicly confesses his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. A genuine disciple loves God more than his own human family members.
9. A genuine disciple is willing to die to every other human desire and be totally committed to being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Superficial Discipleship -- from John Chapter Six

Before one can appreciate this section, you need to read through John chapter six at least a couple of times. Think about what you read. It is a long chapter, seventy-one verses, but you will enjoy absorbing the Word of God.

This chapter begins with a huge crowd of people following Jesus. Jesus fed a crowd of about five

thousand men. When you add women and children, it is likely that there was a crowd of fifteen to twenty thousand people. Some have suggested that there were even more.

And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. John 6:2 (KJV)

Notice here that the “great multitude” followed Him because they saw Him perform miracles. It says nothing about them believing His message or believing that He was the Son of God as He so distinctly claimed.

And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. John 6:10 (KJV)

Jesus created food for this entire crowd of people. The crowd loved it and they even tried by force to make Jesus their king. The next morning the crowd again came to Jesus, expecting more food and expecting Him to heal their sick.

At the beginning of the day Jesus was very popular. However, by the end of the day the crowd had become disillusioned, and apparently only a handful of them continued to follow Him.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” John 6:66-67 (KJV)

Why did most of this crowd, who were identified as His disciples, turn away from Him?

We find in this chapter that Jesus clearly states that He is from God and that He is the only source of eternal life. In this chapter there is also a call to a deep level of commitment to Him.

Since Jesus had just fed them bread the day before, He uses bread as an illustration to teach about Himself. As bread (food) is necessary for physical life, so He, Jesus, is the bread of life or the source of eternal spiritual life.

Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal. John 6:27 (NASB)

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6:35 (KJV)

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:51 (NIV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. John 14:6 (NASB)

At this point Jesus calls them to a much deeper level of dependency, commitment, and closeness to Him.

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. John 6:53-57 (NKJV)

Jesus is the only source of eternal life. In a spiritual sense we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood. It is because of His death and shed blood that we can know and walk with God. This call to spiritually eat His flesh and drink His blood is a call to complete and total dependence on Him. *It is a call to a deep level of commitment to following His teachings and putting them into practice.*

After hearing this from Jesus, the crowd had had all they could take. Most of them left and no longer walked with Him. Their actions showed that they were not genuine disciples of Jesus.

The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven". John 6:41 (NKJV)

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" John 6:60 (NIV)

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. John 6:66 (KJV)

Later the Apostle John gave the reason that many people stop following the Lord.

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 1 John 2:19 (NIV)

Jesus knows what a person's motivations are. He knew what was in their heart or what they were thinking. He did not commit Himself to coming into the life of a shallow, less than genuine, believer.

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. John 2:23-25 (NKJV)

Characteristics of Shallow Discipleship

In this section we will look at some characteristics of the crowd that left Him, as recorded in John 6. In a more general sense, these are characteristics of many shallow or false disciples. These characteristics are still descriptive of many "disciples" today.

1. They followed the crowd.

People love a show. This large crowd of less than genuine disciples followed Jesus to watch Him do miracles. They were not interested in His message; instead, they came to be entertained or to be fed. Today it is not so different. People still go along with the crowd. Many false teachers put on a good show and the crowds come. Many will also come to see a legitimate ministry if there is a crowd. However, being part of a crowd does not make one a genuine follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. They were fascinated by the supernatural.

A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. John 6:2 (NASB)

Still today, people are attracted to what at least appears to be supernatural. In the tribulation period the anti-Christ will deceive many by doing miracles. Today, we need to be very discerning. Even Satan can do “miracles”.

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

3. They wanted Jesus to provide physical blessings. They were not interested in His teaching.

The crowd wanted Jesus to make their life easier for them. They wanted deliverance from Rome. They wanted more food. They wanted Jesus to heal their sick. They wanted Jesus to put on a show and to entertain them. But they were not listening to what He taught. There is no indication that they accepted, believed, or wanted to put His teaching into practice. Instead of submitting to the will of God, they wanted Jesus to fulfill their self-centered desires.

Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." John 6:41 (NASB)

Still today many want and expect Jesus to do their own will. The Bible clearly teaches that God will care for His people, but God does not promise that He will give every Christian a life of ease or wealth if they just have enough faith, give enough money, or speak the right words. In some circles it is taught that if you give enough money, God will make you rich. God will give you everything you want--large elaborate homes, expensive luxury cars, the most elaborate showy wardrobes, and so on.

This “prosperity doctrine” is the idea that God's favor is expressed mainly through physical health and material prosperity, and that these blessings are available for the claiming by anyone who has sufficient faith. In this teaching, discipleship, repentance, and living a Godly obedient life is not

important. Faith and giving money alone are all that is required to be rich beyond anything we can imagine.

This doctrine is known by several different titles -- the Prosperity Doctrine, the Word of Faith Movement, the Faith Formula, Positive Confession, or Name It and Claim It. They all essentially teach that "faith" can be used to influence God for their own selfish gain whenever and for whatever they want. This doctrine is totally false.

The heart of genuine discipleship is to commit to doing His will and to following His example. We submit to His teaching and follow Him rather than demanding that God submit to our will.

Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:9-10 (NASB)

4. They were religious, but they had no hunger for genuine Biblical truth. Instead, they clearly rejected it.

This crowd in John chapter six was a crowd of religious people. They were committed to following the Old Testament law and the traditions of their elders; however, it was a ritualistic obedience rather than an expression of faith in God who gave the law.

It is likely that this crowd was on its way to observe the Passover feast since in the fourth verse of this chapter it states:

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. John 6:4 (NASB)

It is ironic that a religious crowd of people, who are on their way to observe the God-given Passover feast, hear the truth being taught from the Passover Lamb of God Himself; yet they reject it in stubbornness and unbelief. They murmured, grumbled and even mocked what Jesus taught.

At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." John 6:41 (NIV)

On hearing it, many of His disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" John 6:60 (NIV)

Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" John 6:52 (NASB)

Today there are still millions, even billions, of religious people, even so-called Christians, who have no interest in hearing or in believing what the Word of God teaches. A genuine disciple loves the Word of God and the God-given truths it contains. He studies and seeks to genuinely understand and apply its teaching. A false disciple will distort and twist the truths of the Bible. He will teach what he wants to teach and what people want to hear. There is no genuine desire to know, to teach, or to apply genuine biblical truths taught in the Word of God.

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. Mark 7:6-7 (NIV)

5. *Even though they “followed” Jesus, they did not put their faith in Him.*

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" John 6:51-52 (NKJV)

Jesus taught that they should eat His flesh and drink His blood. Those hearing Him knew that Jesus was speaking in a spiritual sense. They understood what He was claiming, yet, even after seeing evidence that He was the Son of God, instead of putting their faith in Jesus and receiving eternal life, they rejected Him. Today many call Jesus a good man, a prophet, or a good moral teacher, but they reject Him as the Son of God and the only source of eternal life.

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. Mark 7:6-7 (NIV)

6. *They justified, rationalized, and defended their unbelief.*

Those who rejected Jesus ignored the evidence. Jesus often claimed to be the Son of God, equal with the Father. He backed up His claims with many miracles that they all had seen. John the Baptist had identified Him as the “Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”. When Jesus was baptized, God Himself publicly announced that Jesus was His own Son. However, they ignored the abundant evidence and rationalized their unbelief.

They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?" John 6:42 (NASB)

It is no different today. Men still refuse to believe the evidence such as creation itself and the resurrection of Jesus. The whole theory of evolution is an attempt to rationalize and justify their rejection of God.

7. *There was no evidence of repentance of sin.*

Throughout this whole chapter (John 6) there is not the slightest evidence or hint of any conviction of sin or of a desire to turn from sin. They loved their sin and rejected the Savior.

8. *There was no desire for true worship.*

This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:8-9 (ESV)

More Biblical Teaching on Discipleship

1. There are false disciples. Not everyone who claims to be a follower of Christ is a genuine disciple.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

This is a frightening truth. Many who think they are saved and who even call Jesus “Lord” are not genuinely saved. Jesus will tell them, *“I never knew you, Away from Me you evildoers.”*

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. John 2:23-25 (NASB)

Here there were many who believed in Jesus’ name, but Jesus would not *“entrust Himself to them”* because He knew their hearts. Their belief was shallow and did not result in genuine salvation.

These people honor me (Jesus) with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. Matthew 15:8-9 (NIV)

...having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.
2 Timothy 3:5 (NIV)

After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. John 6:66 (ESV)

Carefully read **John 6:60-71**. In this passage there are disciples who are genuine disciples, and there are “disciples” who followed Jesus for a while but deserted Him when they did not like what Jesus taught. There was even one individual who was identified as a disciple but who later betrayed Jesus. Again, this is a frightening truth. There are apparently many who believe they are genuine followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet they have never known Him. It would be well for each of us to examine our own heart to be sure that we are a genuine disciple of the Lord.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves... 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

2. A genuine disciple continually grows in his knowledge and practice of the Word of God.

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine. John 8:31 (NASB)

This verse clearly indicates that a true disciple is one who abides in the Word. To abide in the Word is to continually be in the Word. Abiding is to consistently read, to study, to absorb, and to practice the Word of God. Abiding is an on-going continual process, not an occasional activity.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

To be equipped to do the work of God one must be continually learning the Word, letting the Word rebuke and correct wrong sinful behavior, and letting the Word train him in the right way to live.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.

Psalm 119:9 (NASB)

Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. Psalm 119:11 (NASB)

Any individual who does not regularly read, study, absorb, and live the Word of God cannot claim to be a genuine disciple. This is true if the individual is a pastor, elder, deacon, teacher, or lay person. Nobody can separate discipleship from abiding in the Word of God.

3. There is intensity in a Biblical commitment to discipleship.

The following Scripture passages describe an intense search for God and for spiritual understanding and wisdom. There is an intensity to discipleship. It requires work and self-discipline. Overall, most Christians are passive in their commitment to being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not what God asks. He expects us to have a zeal and to be diligent in our commitment to being His disciple.

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,

...then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

...then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Proverbs 2:1-11 (NIV)

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8 (NASB)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

1 Timothy 4:15 (ESV)

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Psalm 63:1 (ESV)

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV)

4. There are costs involved in discipleship.

There are blessings waiting for those who commit to walking close to our Lord. However, from a human viewpoint, there are also costs and sacrifices involved in total commitment. In Luke 9:23, we are told to “*take up our cross daily*”. The cross is a symbol of death. In Romans 12:1, we are told to offer our bodies as living sacrifices.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24 (KJV)

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Matthew 10:38 (NKJV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, Philippians 3:8 (NASB)

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their

own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
 Luke 9:57-62 (NKJV)

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37 (KJV)

In comparison to our commitment to Christ, even our human families take second place.

In the Bible, the word "hate" is sometimes used in a comparative sense. In the following verses (Luke 14:25-27) we are not being taught that all disciples are to have animosity or "hatred" for our families, but rather we are being taught that we are to have a much greater love for our Lord than for our families. In other passages of Scripture, it is clear that we are to "*love one another deeply from the heart*". Remember, Biblical "agape" is foundationally a choice to act; it is not necessarily an emotion. We choose to give obedience to God a higher priority in life, even over our own families. If we obey God, we will have a deep love and respect for our families even though they are second place to our commitment to our Lord.

Christians are told in Scripture to hate what is evil. We hate the evil in ourselves and the evil in our families. Genuine disciples hate evil.

Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:25-27 (NKJV)

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.
 Luke 14:33 (NKJV)

An individual who commits to being a disciple must be willing to pay the cost. Again, a cross is a symbol of death. A genuine disciple must be willing to die to all his selfish desires in order to focus on his commitment to following the Lord Jesus Christ.

In many, many Christian churches today, there is an attempt to make Christianity appealing to the world. In doing so, the truth is watered down. The costs of following the Lord Jesus Christ are seldom, if ever, mentioned. This is a dangerous trend and can result in many people thinking that they are saved and heaven bound when, in fact, they never had a genuine salvation experience.

Many Christians consider the price and the demands of commitment to be too high. They appreciate being saved and having the hope of eternal life with God, but the cost of total commitment here on earth is more than they are willing to pay. People with this kind of an attitude need to get their focus off of themselves and on the Lord Jesus Christ. When we consider how much He suffered so that we can have eternal life, it makes our trials and our so-called sacrifices seem awfully small.

At the end of this chapter there is a is an e-mail that we received from friends – Bob and Carol Janecke

– who were serving as missionaries in India. The Janeckes paid a high price for following the Lord Jesus Christ. Their nine-year-old son died as a direct result of their following God's leading to India. In this e-mail you will find out if they considered the cost to be too high.

5. Love and unity characterize a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, Romans 15:5 (ESV)

Genuine disciples love each other and are unified in their overall goal of following and honoring the Lord Jesus Christ. When there are fights or quarrels and disunity among followers of the Lord, something is drastically wrong. Pride and selfishness have become more important than being a disciple of Jesus. The Spirit of God is hindered and the world is repulsed by our actions. Unity is more than just the absence of hostility. Unity is when we are one in our desire to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what God desires and what He can bless and use.

6. There are consequences to a lack of commitment.

Carefully read the following verses several times. In this passage there are serious warnings against ignoring our pursuit of spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech: "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you.

...But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you-- when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.

...Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm." Proverbs 1:20-33 (NIV)

From this passage, notice the consequences of ignoring Godly wisdom, which is essentially the same as ignoring God Himself. These consequences are serious. Carefully read and think about them.

Consequence one... *then they will call to me but I will not answer;*

Consequence two... *they will look for me but will not find me.*

Consequence three... *they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.*

Consequence four... *the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;*

Now carefully read each of the following Scriptures:

Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

Proverbs 28:14 (NIV)

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8 (NASB)

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

Revelation 3:15-16 (NKJV)

Christians who do not choose to grow in their walk with God bring on themselves multitudes of problems and troubles. Walking with the Lord helps us avoid many of the heartaches and pain that carnal Christians bring on themselves. This writer has been amazed at the amount of trouble and pain Christians can bring on themselves as a direct result of their disobedience. It is also amazing that those same Christians just do not seem to get it. Serving our Lord will save us from multitudes of trouble pain and hurt.

To conclude this chapter, here is a copy of an e-mail that was received by Phil and Linda Benedict from friends, Bob and Carol Janecke, who were missionaries in India. This e-mail was sent on April 30, 2004.

From the Janeckes:

It is difficult to know how to write about Luke. He was with us on Sunday. Monday, he woke up itching. Toward evening he had a fever of drinking. We took him to the hospital Tuesday morning. By Wednesday evening he was gone. It happened so quickly, yet went on too long. It's hard to watch your son die.

Luke loved to play on our wooded mountain slopes. He had names for all the stray dogs and wandering cows. One of his dog friends must have gotten rabies. Luke never got bit. Most likely a lick on the face.

Our neighbor drove us to Delhi on Tuesday, looking for hope. It's a difficult, hot, 6 hour trip on

dangerous roads. A/C cooling, or open windows, made Luke panic. He talked the whole way there. His personality had started to change. He was sure that he just had sunstroke. Before we found the recommended hospital, I had to hold him down physically. They wouldn't take him. We had to find the Infectious Disease Hospital in evening Delhi traffic. It was near 9 when we finally got there. They were afraid of him. Their option was to put him in a dark room with an iron bar door, and lock it. We could watch him die from outside. "He will die soon. Decide quickly if you want the room because it's time for us to go home." We started on the long trip back home.

They gave Luke a shot to help calm him down. It didn't seem to do much. He was still talking continuously. Now in more random sentences. Usually he spoke about family members, or the neighbor's dog. Sometimes in Hindi. I had to hold him down the whole way. I knew it could be the last time that I got to hold my son. He was already leaving.

We got back to our small Christian hospital at 4 a.m. Everything was quiet. By the time I carried him up to a room, our doctor was there. Nurses got an I.V. drip going. Luke was soon resting calmly. Our doctor, and the whole staff, had been praying all day long for Luke. They all showed such love and compassion as they took care of him that day. He consciously rested, without pain. We could still talk to him.

Our neighbor brought Sam, Rebekah, and Hannah to the hospital at 7. Soon others started to arrive to visit and pray. All day long people kept coming with food, prayers, love. One lady sat outside his room all day praying. All over town people were praying. Others sent messages to prayer groups around India and the world. So much prayer. The hospital gave us an adjoining room for food and guests. Most were staying, filling the hall, waiting with us. We could still be alone with Luke when we wanted to be. I had that chance before he died...to talk, cry, pray. Finally, exhausted, at 6 p.m., I laid down to sleep. The doctors came back shortly after. Luke had gone.

Luke is with Jesus. He took him home. I had a chance to talk with him alone before we left for Delhi. He had made Jesus his Savior sometime earlier in his young life. On our trip home from Delhi I talked with him about going to heaven. What would it be like? Luke only knew that Jesus would be there. It would be a good place.

We had his funeral the following morning (yesterday). Swami arranged to have a casket built for Luke that night. Three of the older boys from Lancer Lodge orphanage dug his grave in the Christian cemetery...a beautiful quiet spot on a wooded mountain ridge close to our house. We all helped to cover the hole...put flowers and candles on top, and sang.

Thank you for your love and prayers. I'm sorry that we couldn't let you know about Luke earlier. It all happened too quickly. Luke was only 9 years old. None of us has the promise of life tomorrow, but we all have God's offer of life eternal. *He had to watch His Son die to give us this gift.* Luke had taken it. He was ready to go.

Bob, for the Janecke Family

*This e-mail used with the permission of the Janeckes.

Today the Janeckes are still actively following the Lord Jesus Christ. Following Him cost them the life of their son, Luke; yet in my conversations with them I did not detect any bitterness or anger. I will always remember the second to the last sentence in this e-mail, "*He had to watch His Son die to give us this gift.*" God gave the life of His Son so that we can have eternal life. I, for one, make the commitment to be a genuine follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

What Are Biblical Preaching and Teaching and How Important are They?

As pastors and teachers of the Word of God, we need to have a good understanding of what Biblical preaching and teaching are. The purpose of this lesson is to help us understand what Biblical teaching and preaching are and to understand how important they are in fulfilling the purpose of God here on earth.

While there is some overlap, Scriptural preaching emphasizes going to the unsaved and preaching the good news of the gospel and bringing them to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Teaching emphasizes giving instruction to saved people and encouraging growth in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Understanding Preaching

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth to die so that we can have eternal life. All of the Old Testament looks forward to Jesus, the final sacrifice for sin. All of the New Testament centers on the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord. The good news of the gospel emphasizes the death, burial, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This good news is the heart and soul of the Word of God.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,... 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

It is God's will that all men repent of their sin and believe the gospel.

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

This good news is to be spread to all the earth. A primary method God has chosen to give out the gospel is through preaching.

How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? Romans 10:14

This lesson will emphasize the importance of preaching the gospel; however, we must not forget the importance of every individual believer sharing the gospel with those around him who are unsaved. In the New Testament, preaching is referred to over 100 times. By far, the greatest majority of the

times when individuals preached, they were preaching to those who did not have a saving faith in God.

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Luke 8:1a

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, Romans 15:20a

Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went. Acts 8:4

Use of the Word “Preaching” in the New Testament

In the New Testament there are two Greek words that are translated “preach”.

1. *Euaggelizo* Strong’s number 2097 It is used 52 times in the New Testament.

Euaggelizo means: ...to evangelize, ...to proclaim the Gospel, ...to preach the Gospel, ...to announce good news.

“Euaggelizo” nearly always refers to the preaching of the good news of the gospel. Following are some examples of how it is used:

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, *proclaiming* and preaching the kingdom of God; Luke 8:1a (NASB)

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Matthew 11:5

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Acts 8:4

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12

Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. Acts 11:20-21

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, Romans 15:20a

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

2. *Kerusso* Strong’s number 2784 It is used 60 times in the New Testament.

Kerusso means: ...to proclaim, ...to announce publically, ...to herald.

Again, the majority of times that *kerusso* is used, it is speaking of preaching the good news of the gospel.

Following are examples of verses using *kerusso*: Overall, there is very little difference in how *kerusso* is used and how *euaggelizo* is used.

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Matthew 3:1-2

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and *preaching* the kingdom of God; Luke 8:1a (NASB)

...and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47

...if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Colossians 1:23

To preach the gospel is to preach the good news of salvation and Biblical teaching that closely accompanies salvation.

It needs to be noted that with only two or three exceptions, when the words *euaggelizo* and *kerusso* are used in the New Testament, it is referring to taking the gospel to those who do not know God. The good news of salvation is to be preached to unsaved people wherever they are. The Biblical pattern of preaching the gospel is to preach to unsaved people, not to saved people in the church.

The gospel needs to be preached to unsaved people. Unfortunately, many pastors and churches have fallen into the habit of repeatedly preaching the gospel to Christians. While, from time to time, Christians need to be reminded of how we come to know Him, overall, hearing the gospel repeatedly preached does not result in much growth in the lives of those who are already Christians.

An evangelist is one who preaches the gospel to unsaved people. Again, the Biblical pattern seems to be that we are to go to where the unsaved people are in order to preach the gospel, rather than expecting unsaved people to come to church to hear the gospel.

Understanding Teaching

After a person has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, he needs to be taught how to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. We are instructed to make disciples and to teach them all of what God teaches

in His Word. Without this instruction most Christians will stagnate and be ineffective and unproductive in their walk with God.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

The Purpose of Teaching

The goal of teaching is to lead Christians to maturity and holy living in their walk with God. Untaught Christians will remain weak, immature, baby Christians. Good teaching leads to maturity, stability, and productivity in our Christian life. Most of the Bible is written to teach us how to walk with God, and all of the Bible needs to be taught to those who have come to know Him.

In the following verse, "perfect" has the idea of maturity or being complete:

We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. Colossians 1:28

...rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. Hebrews 5:12-6:3

What Is Teaching?

Nehemiah 8:8 gives an excellent description of teaching. There is no better definition of Biblical teaching than this.

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:8

You will find that following this passage in Nehemiah there was one of the greatest revivals of all time. When people understood the Word, they committed themselves to obeying it.

Exodus 18:20 is another verse that helps us to understand what teaching is.

them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.
Exodus 18:20

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. Luke 24:27

Use of the Words “Teach”, “Teaching”, and “Teacher” in the New Testament

There are several Greek words that, in one way or another, refer to teaching in the New Testament. Following is a list of some, but not all, of these words. Teaching, in one way or another, is referred to well over 250 times in the New Testament.

1. *Didasko* Strong’s number 1321 *Didasko* is used 91 times in the New Testament.

Didasko means: to teach, or, to instruct by word of mouth, or, to demonstrate.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you *teach* and admonish one another with all wisdom, Colossians 3:16

The people were amazed at His teaching, because He *taught* them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Mark 1:22

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching* them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matthew 28:19-20

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and *teaches* others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and *teaches* these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19

They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules *taught* by men. Matthew 15:9

So Paul stayed for a year and a half, *teaching* them the Word of God. Acts 18:11

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to *teach* others. 2 Timothy 2:2

They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by *teaching* things they ought not to *teach* -- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Titus 1:11

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to *teach* you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!
Hebrews 5:1

2. Didaskalos Strong's number 1320 *Didaskalos* is used 57 times in the New Testament.

Didaskalos means: a teacher.

Note: The KJV often translates *didaskalos* as “master”. While there are other words correctly translated “master”, *didaskalos* is more accurately translated “teacher” as it is in the NASB and the NIV. (Zodhiates, pages 449-450) (Wuest, volume 3, page 46)

When Jesus was here on earth, about 50 times He was addressed as “Teacher”. In fact, He was addressed as “Teacher” more than by any other title.

Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"
Matthew 19:16

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.
Luke 6:40

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 2 Timothy 1:11

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

3. Didaskalia Strong's number 1319 *Didaskalia* is used 21 times in the New Testament.

Didaskalia means: what is being taught, or, it can also refer to the act of teaching.

Didaskalia can be translated either “teaching” or “doctrine”. They (teaching and doctrine) are exactly the same word. *Didaskalia* is often used to warn against the false teaching of men and even to warn about Satan's teachings.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for *teaching*, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. 1 Timothy 4:16 (NASB)

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound *doctrine* and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

They worship Me in vain; their *teachings* are but rules taught by men. Matthew 15:9

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and *things taught* by demons. 1 Timothy 4:1

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of *teaching* and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Ephesians 4:14

These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and *teachings*. Colossians 2:22

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

Not only are we to teach sound doctrine but also what is in accord with sound doctrine. To teach what is in accord with sound doctrine is to teach how to apply sound doctrine to our lives.

...for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers – and for whatever else is contrary to the sound *doctrine* that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which He entrusted to me. 1 Timothy 1:10-11

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7-8

4. *Didache* Strong's number 1322 *Didache* is used 29 times in the New Testament.

Didache means: the act of teaching, instructing or tutoring, or, the content of what was being taught.

He taught them many things by parables, and in His teaching said:... Mark 4:2

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful *instruction*. 2 Timothy 4:2

5. *Katecheo* Strong's number 2727 *Katecheo* is used 7 times in the New Testament.

Katecheo means: to teach, or, to instruct orally.

He had been *instructed* in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately,... Acts 18:25a

6. *Didaktikos* Strong's number 1317 *Didaktikos* is used 2 times in the New Testament.

Didaktikos means: to be skilled in teaching, or skilled in communicating Christian teaching. Both times that this word is used it is used of a pastor.

Now the overseer (a pastor) must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to *teach*, 1 Timothy 3:2

And the Lord's servant (a pastor) must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to *teach*, not resentful. 2 Timothy 2:24

Overlap Between Teaching and Preaching

As we have already seen, Scriptural preaching emphasizes preaching the good news of the gospel to unsaved people and bringing them to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Teaching emphasizes giving instruction to saved people and encouraging growth in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. While teaching and preaching are clearly not the same, there are times when they overlap. There is not always a clear cut line between them.

We need to recognize that Jesus and the apostles were both preachers and teachers.

One day as He was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to Him.

Luke 20:1

After Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. Matthew 11:1

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. Matthew 9:35

The early church leaders were active in both preaching and teaching.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:41-42

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 1 Timothy 5:17

The older veteran pastor, Paul, instructed the younger pastor, Timothy, to preach and to teach.

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

1 Timothy 4:13

It seems clear that pastors are to both preach and to teach. A pastor needs to be able to preach the good news of the gospel to unsaved people, and he clearly needs to teach and encourage his congregation to

grow in their walk with God.

Teachers also need to be able to proclaim the good news of the gospel to unsaved people as well as teaching Christians. They have a responsibility to explain the gospel whenever they get the chance.

If there is any doubt about whether a preacher is to be a teacher, our passage in 2 Timothy should make it very clear.

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage --with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2

In this passage to “**Preach the Word**” is to “**correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction**”.

It is very clear in this passage – to preach the Word is to teach with careful instruction!!!

But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the Word of the Lord. Acts 15:35

Is Teaching Really All That Important?

We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. The man who says, "I know Him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys His Word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:4-6

We have already covered much of what is in this section of study. Here it is again in a little bit more organized presentation. This section is designed to answer the question, “Why is Biblical teaching important?”.

1. Teaching is stressed throughout the Bible. Instruction about teaching permeates the Bible – in both the Old and New Testaments.

For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:27-28

For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 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. Acts 20:27-28

We have looked at many New Testament passages relating to teaching. Now let’s look at some Old Testament passages. In the Old Testament there are many rich references to teaching.

Following are verses relating to teaching from the Old Testament. Take some time to digest them. They are rich in content.

Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. Exodus 18:20

and you *must* teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses. Leviticus 10:11

Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you... ...Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. Deuteronomy 4:1a-2

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Deuteronomy 4:9

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Deuteronomy 6:1-2

Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates,... Deuteronomy 11:19-20

As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. 1 Samuel 12:23

So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the LORD. 2 Kings 17:28

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. Ezra 7:10

The Levites -- Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah -- instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:7-8

Show me Your ways, O LORD, teach me Your paths; guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long. Psalm 25:4-5

Come, my children, listen to Me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Psalm 34:11

Teach me Your way, O LORD, and I will walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name. Psalm 86:11

Let me understand the teaching of Your precepts; then I will meditate on Your wonders.
Psalm 119:27

May my lips overflow with praise, for You teach me Your decrees. Psalm 119:171

Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.
Psalm 143:10

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
Proverbs 1:8

Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
Proverbs 8:10-11

Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. Proverbs 9:9

He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.
Proverbs 13:13

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.
Proverbs 13:14

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.
Proverbs 22:6

The Lord says: "These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men. Isaiah 29:13

"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction - because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 2:7-8

2. Jesus was a master teacher and spent most of His time teaching.

Jesus was a skilled teacher and He taught often. He was called "teacher" more than any other title.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because

He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Matthew 7:28-29

Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Luke 24:45

He taught them many things by parables, and in His teaching said:... Mark 4:2a

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Mark 6:6b

...because He was teaching His disciples.... Mark 9:31a

Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, Luke 21:37a

3. It is clear from Scripture that we are to teach. In the 'great commission' and in many other places, we are commanded to teach. Making disciples and teaching is the heart of the 'great commission'.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

The church's commission as Jesus instructed in these verses is to go and...

Make disciples

....Baptize the disciples

....Teach the disciples (everything I have commanded you)

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to *teach* others. 2 Timothy 2:2

You *must* teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

1 Timothy 4:11-16

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2

In the following verse, when Jesus was talking to His disciples, He told His disciples that if people obeyed His (Jesus) teaching, they would also obey their (disciples) teaching.

If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours also. John 15:20b

Fathers (and also mothers) are commanded to teach their children.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

Sometimes a pastor or teacher will make a statement something like, “I don’t preach doctrine; I just preach Jesus”. They want to appear so spiritual that they just want to focus on Jesus, and Jesus alone, and not bother with other “less important” parts of the God’s revealed truth, the Bible. This kind of an attitude is not an indication of spiritual maturity but instead it shows spiritual immaturity or even a rebellious attitude. Anyone who has this attitude either does not understand the Bible very well or he doesn’t care what the Bible teaches. Jesus, as God, is the author of all the Word of God, and He clearly instructs us to teach “*all*” that He commanded us. We have no right to ignore most of God’s instruction and revelation of truth in the Bible so that we can supposedly “just preach Jesus”.

While we concentrate much of our teaching in the New Testament, we must not ignore the Old Testament.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

4. One of the qualifications of a pastor (bishop or overseer) is that he must be “able to teach”.

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 1 Timothy 3:1-2

Kenneth S. Wuest in Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament describes this as not just given to teaching, but the pastor is to be “able and skilled at teaching”. A pastor is not just willing to teach but should be eager to teach.

God intended for pastors to teach. If a pastor cannot teach or is unwilling to learn to teach, he is not qualified to be a pastor.

5. Teaching the Word of God equips Christians to do the work of God.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17

If we want God’s people to be equipped to do God’s work, then we must teach them solid Biblical doctrine.

6. *In Ephesians 4:11-16, we find that right teaching leads to a mature unified church.*

The job of evangelists and pastor/teachers is to prepare God's people for works of service. In 2 Timothy 3:17 we found that this is done by teaching the Word of God. As this is done, the church grows into a mature unified church.

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:11-16

7. *Lack of solid Biblical knowledge leads to spiritual defeat.*

You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother -- my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Hosea 4:5-6a

In this verse, "mother" is referring to the nation of Israel, not to their human birth mother. When Israel's spiritual leaders did not teach the people, it resulted in the destruction of the nation.

8. *Man's wisdom leads to unproductivity and empty worship and service.*

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4

They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' Mark 7:7

9. *In Ephesians 6:17, the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.*

The Spirit does not promise to use our talents and wisdom; He uses the Word of God. If, in our preaching, we have very little of the Word, then the Spirit is unable to do His work.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
Ephesians 6:17

If we want the Spirit of God to work in and through us, we will actively teach the Word of God. The Word of God is the offensive weapon of the Spirit of God.

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

When we teach or preach with little or no study or preparation, we tend to do a lot more rambling rather than giving good Bible teaching. We rely on our own abilities rather than on the Lord. Without preparation, our messages tend to be shallow --- a "mile wide and an inch deep". Shallow messages basically say the same things over and over again and do not lead people to grow in their walk with God.

Some feel that if they preach very loud, the Spirit of God will move people. Loud preaching is not an indication the Spirit is at work. The Spirit of God will use the Word of God if it is preached loudly or if it is preached softly. Loud preaching may stir people's emotions, but it does not mean the Spirit of God is at work.

10. Holding fast to what Jesus taught is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus. Not abiding in the teaching of Jesus is an indication that we do not really love Him.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me.
John 14:23-24

Who Should Do What?

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service,...
Ephesians 4:11-12a

An evangelist preaches the gospel to unsaved people. Before a person can serve the Lord, he must be saved. Since an evangelist takes the gospel to unsaved people, he must be a gifted preacher of the gospel. As things have developed in our modern culture, evangelists often preach to Christians far more than they preach to the unsaved. In this way of operation, the evangelist should also be a teacher since he ministers primarily to saved people in the church.

A pastor is a shepherd to God's people. A pastor needs to be able to preach the gospel to unsaved people, but his primary function is to be a skilled teacher to promote the growth of God's people in their walk with Him.

A teacher's role is to teach the Word of God. The teacher, like every Christian, should be an active witness and seek to lead unsaved people to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; however, his primary ministry is to teach Christians. He is not necessarily gifted as a preacher of the gospel.

Chapter Three

Absorbing the Word of God in Preparation to Teach or Preach

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16- 4:2

Every Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the message, be ready whether it is convenient or not, reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16- 4:2

This passage of Scripture is the foundation of teaching and preaching. These verses are God's solemn command to preachers and teachers. I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus,... Paul gives this command to the young preacher Timothy, as if he were standing in the very presence of God and Jesus (which he really was). Paul's command to Timothy was to preach the Word.

Paul did not command Timothy to preach *about* the Word, or to give his thoughts and opinions about various issues; he told Timothy to "preach the Word"!!!

Preach the Word!!! That's what this study is all about.

Are preachers to be teachers? Yes!!!

This saying is trustworthy: "If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work." The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, *an able teacher*,... 1 Timothy 3:1-2

Apparently "an able teacher" does not simply mean just "able to teach", but rather the pastor is to be a skilled teacher. From this passage, *one of the qualifications of a pastor is that he be a good teacher!* More about this later.

He must hold firm to the trustworthy Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Titus 1:9

Five Kinds of Teaching and Preaching

There are at least five distinct kinds of messages. While each of them is distinct, each of them can overlap with the others.

1. Expository

In expository preaching you take a passage of Scripture and read, study, and absorb it. Then, using 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2 as a guide, you prepare and then preach that passage. This way of preaching should follow the instructions given in 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2.

In expository preaching, you begin at the beginning of a passage and end at the end.

In expository preaching, you limit the number of “rabbit trails” and stick with the passage being taught.

Expository teaching and preaching should be the heart and soul of the preaching-teaching ministry in a church.

Expository preaching leads to a greater understanding and application of the Word of God for both the preacher/teacher and for those who are being taught.

This way of preaching can be used to preach/teach through a single passage or an entire book.

Expository preaching/teaching requires study and preparation. It cannot be done without these two things.

2. Topical

In topical preaching, the message is based on a particular topic rather than on a specific passage of Scripture.

Topical messages are often given on special days such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc. or when the pastor/teacher feels that a certain subjects need to be dealt with.

This is a valid way to teach and preach, but should not be the heart of a church’s preaching ministry.

It may be based on a single passage of Scripture or on numerous passages.

It may be a single message or a series of messages.

To be done right, topical preaching needs study and preparation. There are times when a

pastor/teacher may be tempted to “wing it” since he may not be dealing with teaching a particular passage of Scripture.

3. *Biographical*

Biographical preaching centers on the life and example of an individual(s) in the Bible.

When prepared and properly presented, it can be a very good way of teaching and encouraging those who listen.

Biographical sketches can be used to illustrate truths taught in expository or topical preaching.

4. *Impulsive, Unprepared Preaching*

This form of preaching has no structure or organization. The preacher/teacher simply says whatever comes to mind as he preaches. He may start with a Bible verse but may seldom, if ever, come back to it. Many will quote a verse and then say that it means something that is simply not taught in that verse. That is wrong!!! Other verses may be referred to, but little or no real teaching is done. Those listening soon put down their Bibles. They are not needed.

When preaching in this way a speaker can claim that he is being led by the Spirit in what he says. We certainly do not in any way want to discount being led by the Spirit, however this can at times be an excuse for lack of preparation and lack of study by the speaker.

This kind of preaching often does not start anywhere and does not go anywhere.

It requires little or no preparation.

While it may have bits of teaching, it generally has little or no sound teaching of the Word of God. It is often built almost entirely on rebuke. (“You oughta” preaching)

It often appeals to people’s emotions and feelings rather than building on the Word of God.

It often depends on the speaker’s speaking ability rather than the truth of the Word of God.

The speaker may claim to be being led by the Spirit, when, in reality, he simply does not know the Scripture well enough to teach it, or he has not studied the Word and prepared a message.

The desired result may be a particular public response rather than the genuine spiritual growth of those who are listening.

It leads to little or no long-lasting spiritual growth.

Over time it may cause people to lose interest and/or become hardened to the genuine work of the Spirit of God.

5. *Evangelistic -- Salvation Messages*

There are times when we need to preach the gospel to unsaved people. Most messages in the church need to be geared to God's people -- teaching the Word of God and giving instruction in right living (2 Timothy 3:16-4:2). However, there are times when messages to unsaved people are needed. Many unsaved people have come to know God through a message designed to draw the unsaved to God.

However, a major problem arises when most or essentially all the messages in a church are evangelistic in nature. Evangelistic messages generally do not feed or encourage much growth in the life of a Christian. A Christian who continually hears evangelistic messages and very little teaching from the Word of God is going to remain a baby Christian. Churches that hear only salvation messages will remain immature churches, even if there are a large number of people attending. Evangelistic messages need to be preached to the lost, while the saved need to be taught the Word of God. This is made very clear in 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2. The plan of salvation can certainly be made clear in a message that is geared to teaching saved people; however, salvation is not the major thrust of the message.

A major misunderstanding is that in salvation messages, one does not need to teach the Word of God. Just the opposite is true. A salvation message needs to be based squarely on the Word of God. A sinner needs to know what God says, not what the preacher says. A good salvation message is based squarely on a passage of Scripture that teaches the plan of salvation.

Absorbing a Passage of Scripture in Preparation to Teach or Preach

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

Make every effort to present yourself before God as a proven worker who does not need to be ashamed, teaching the message of truth accurately. 2 Timothy 2:15 NET

“Accurately” is a figure of speech that literally means something like “cutting a straight road.” In regard to the message of truth, it means “correctly handling” or “imparting it without deviation.”

If a pastor or teacher does not regularly study and absorb the Word of God, he will never be an effective pastor. If he does not spend time absorbing and being blessed by a particular passage of Scripture, he will not likely be able to pass on a blessing from that passage to those who hear him.

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned,

so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.
Titus 2:7b-8

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound *doctrine* and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. I Corinthians 2:4-5

Here are some suggestions for absorbing a passage of Scripture:

1. As you begin your study time, think back over the last few hours or days. Confess any known sin that you have not already confessed.
2. Read and pray Psalm 139:23-24. **Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**
3. Now carefully and thoughtfully read the passage of Scripture several times. Keep reading it until you have a good grasp of what is in this passage. You should plan on carefully reading the passage at least 15-20 times. Begin this reading several days before you expect to teach or preach it.
4. As you read, ask the Spirit of God for understanding of the passage.
5. Spend time meditating on what you have read. *Pray through the passage with thanksgiving and commitment.* Worship and praise God in relation to the truths you learn. This time of meditation can be a precious time of allowing God to speak to you, and of deepening your love for Him, and giving you understanding and insights that will sustain and strengthen you.

What is Scriptural meditation?

To quietly and unhurriedly think about or to ponder Biblical truths, asking God for understanding and submitting to His direction in your life.

6. Ask yourself the following questions about the passage. Write out the answers.
 - a. What are the major truths taught in this Scripture passage?
 - b. What are the instructions or principles for living taught in this passage?
 - c. Are there any direct or implied promises or warnings?
 - d. What can I learn about God?
7. Now, seeking the Spirit's direction, determine what actions or attitudes in your life need to be changed and brought into line with what you have learned from His Word. Then determine that, with His strengthening, you will make those changes.

Once you have come this far in your study it is helpful to consult good solid reference material. You will be given some very good study helps and will learn to use them as we through this class.

Making Disciples

Previously we looked at the necessity of being a personal disciple. We must be committed to being a dedicated follower of the Lord Jesus Christ before we can teach others to be genuine followers of our Lord.

Again, let's look at the command that Jesus gave to make disciples.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore *go and make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them* to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

As this verse was originally written in the Greek language, there is only one command. That command is to "***make disciples***". *This is the primary responsibility of the church.* Since the command to make disciples is the focus of these verses, it is obviously an important command that we must obey if we wish to do what God instructs us to do.

These verses not only command us to make disciples; they also give us insight in ***how*** to make disciples. Following are three fundamental steps from these verses that we must follow in the process of disciple making:

Making Disciples -- Step One: Evangelism

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

The central theme of all Scripture is that Jesus, the Son of God, died to save lost people. God loved us so much that He died and rose again so that we can know and walk with Him and then spend eternity with Him. He died and rose again so that we can be His followers and be His disciples.

The first step in making disciples is to lead an individual to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. An unsaved person is not and cannot be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The command in these verses is to make disciples. While witnessing or preaching the gospel is not directly mentioned in these verses, it is clearly the first step in the process of making disciples. Again, an unsaved person is not and cannot be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even if he is a baptized active church member, an unsaved person cannot be a disciple of Christ.

It is the responsibility of every Christian to be a personal witness. It is also the responsibility of

evangelists and others to publicly preach the gospel to unsaved people. Both of these are vitally important. The Word of God teaches us that individual Christians are to be a witness and it also gives us a pattern of publicly preaching the gospel.

It is the responsibility of every Christian to seek to lead others to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

For some, witnessing is a very natural thing to do, but for most it is a struggle. For all of us it should be a major topic in our prayers. We can pray that God will open up the opportunities for us to tell the gospel to unsaved people.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Colossians 4:2-4

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Ephesians 6:19-20

Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 Thessalonians 3:1

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Philemon 1:6

We must also publicly preach the gospel to unsaved people.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ... 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? Romans 10:14

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Luke 8:1a

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known,
Romans 15:20a

Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went. Acts 8:4

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

...and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47

...if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Colossians 1:23

It is a Biblical pattern to preach the gospel to unsaved people. Unfortunately, some have fallen into a pattern of repeatedly preaching the fundamentals of the gospel to saved people. It is of questionable value to repeatedly preach about salvation to those who already know Him.

There needs to be some creative thinking as to how we can put Biblical principles of evangelism into practice. We desperately need to see new converts coming into our churches and growing in their walk with God. If this does not happen, many of our churches will sooner or later die.

Making Disciples -- Step Two: Baptism

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

After a person has been saved, he needs to be baptized. When an individual is baptized, he is publicly identifying himself as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This pattern of baptism after salvation is followed throughout the New Testament.

Those who accepted His message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12

Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8

Baptism is one of the first steps of obedience after a person has been saved. If an individual is not willing to be baptized, he is not being obedient and could hardly be identified as a committed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important that the individual being baptized clearly understands that baptism has nothing to do with salvation.

New Christians also need to understand that there is a difference between water baptism and being baptized by the Spirit. Spirit baptism is being placed into the body of Christ. This happens the moment we are saved. It is not something we feel or see happening. It is simply part of salvation and has nothing to do with water baptism.

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink
1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Making Disciples -- Step Three: Teaching Them "All That I Have Commanded You"

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them *to obey everything I have commanded you.* And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

The third step in the process of making disciples is to teach them to be obedient to "**all that I have commanded you**".

Jesus, being God, through the Holy Spirit, is the author of all the Bible. The words "**all that I have commanded you**" refer to all of Scripture, not just the words of Christ while He was on earth. Disciples need to be taught the whole counsel of God, not just a part of it.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

The heart and soul of disciple-making is teaching an individual to know and obey the Word of God.

They must be taught and they must be encouraged to keep on putting it into practice. The command is to teach all of Scripture, not just the parts we are familiar with or our favorite parts of Scripture.

Without sound teaching, many Christians wind up living lives that have little lasting spiritual fruit. And churches are weak, even if there are many activities and there are a good number of people attending.

The emphasis of the “great commission” is clearly on teaching. Many Christians believe and preach and teach that the heart of these verses is evangelism. However, that is simply not the case. The heart of these verses is teaching. *Leading people to a saving faith does not fulfill the great commission. It is, in fact, just the beginning.* The great commission clearly instructs us to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach individuals who are saved. To be obedient to the great commission, we must actively do all three.

When someone makes a profession of faith and is baptized but is not clearly taught the Word of God, the great commission has not been fulfilled. That person has not been taught, and the great commission clearly instructs us to teach “**all that I have commanded you**”.

When a person comes to church and hears only salvation messages, he is not being taught “**all that I have commanded you**”, and the great commission is not being fulfilled. The great commission is a lifelong process that is never completely finished.

To be obedient to this instruction will require regular study and preparation by pastors and teachers. That is the basic purpose of this class: to help us to more effectively study, teach and preach the Word of God.

No church will be any stronger than its ministry of making disciples and teaching!!! If a church does not emphasize making disciples and teaching, it is not fulfilling the great commission and it will be a weak church, even though it may have all the appearances of a strong church.

More About Teaching “All That I Have Commanded You”

A. Young and immature disciples need to be fed milk and they need regular encouragement.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,
1 Peter 2:2

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you

milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Scripture likens a new or immature Christian to a baby. When a human baby is born into the world, the process of feeding, nurturing, and training is just starting. We do not leave a newborn baby to grow by himself and we do not feed him adult food. Without special care and food, a newborn baby will not grow. In fact, he will die. In the same way, a newborn Christian will most likely never grow to spiritual maturity unless he is given baby spiritual food and care. He needs spiritual milk.

It is vitally important that the church as a whole and also individual Christians be there to teach and encourage new Christians.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. Romans 15:1-2

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7

Every new Christian will face some difficult problems and trials. Often, after an initial period of joy and rejoicing, there will come a difficult time for the new believer. He will face many new situations and his faith will be tested. He desperately needs a more mature Christian to come along beside him, to pray with him, to keep encouraging him. If new Christians do not have this kind of encouragement, many will get discouraged and turn away from their new walk with God.

An older more mature Christian needs to walk beside a newborn Christian for a period of time (several months? a year?) giving him special attention, encouragement, and support and instruction as he goes through the beginning steps of his walk with God. The individual who takes on the role of encouraging and teaching a new Christian is very important in the new believer's life. He/she loves the new Christian with a healthy Godly love. He/she gives the new Christian good Biblical counsel. He/she sets the right example for the new Christian to follow. He/she teaches the new Christian. He/she encourages the new Christian through the hard times. He/she admonishes or warns about the

consequences of wrong behavior. He/she is there to give all kinds of help when needed. He/she takes on the role of a spiritual parent to the new Christian.

B. More mature disciples need meat.

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. Hebrews 5:11–6:3

The writer of this passage of Scripture in Hebrews states that these people should have been mature Christians, even teachers; however, they still needed milk. They were still spiritual infants.

A sad fact is that many people who have been Christians for many years are still immature in their faith. They are still baby Christians.

As we have stated, we cannot expect spiritual babies to digest adult spiritual food. It is also true that when a baby becomes an adult, we do not keep feeding them baby food. He needs adult food and nutrition. Many Christians are never fed anything but spiritual milk and they never mature into spiritual adults. If they are never given more in-depth teaching, their spiritual growth is stunted and they may never grow to maturity in their walk with God.

In Hebrews 5:11–6:3 we are instructed to leave elementary teaching and go on to the meat of Scripture. It even lists some doctrines that we are to get past. These are teachings about repentance, saving faith, baptism, resurrection, and eternal judgment. These are all very important foundational truths; but they are milk, not meat.

*A church will never mature if Christians are taught only the milk of the Word. We must begin the process of teaching “**all that I have commanded you**”.*

Too often in our churches we continue to feed our people milk. And often it is not even fresh milk. Week after week we simply get out the same old bottle of milk, heat it to a boiling point, and feed it to our people, when they need and want more mature teaching from the Word. We feed people hot stale milk and then wonder why they are spiritually immature.

Carefully read, think about, and absorb the following Scriptures:

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. John 17:17

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:8-11

All of these verses and many others in Scripture describe the power and effectiveness of the Word of God. Pastors and teachers need to learn to teach and preach directly from the Bible. Often it seems that week after week a church is fed unprepared, disorganized lessons that may be little more than random thoughts. Each week we may start out with a different passage of Scripture, but what is said is essentially the same thing as what was said last week, and the week before, and the week before that. We need to teach the Word, not just give our random thoughts about the Word. We also need to guard against teaching or repeating what another pastor or teacher has said, unless we are absolutely certain it is Biblically accurate.

In teaching and preaching we need to pick out a passage of Scripture, absorb it and be blessed by it ourselves, and then stay with it as we teach. Teaching and preaching the Word of God has the power of God behind it. Our own random thoughts do not.

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

C. Who should teach?

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom,... Colossians 3:16a

Teaching is the responsibility of all Christians including each of the following people:

1. Pastors

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up,... Ephesians 4:11-12

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, *able to teach*; 1 Timothy 3:1-2 (NKJV)

Paul, the veteran pastor, gives the following charge to Timothy, the young pastor.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and *careful instruction*. 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Without question, the number one teacher in the church is the pastor. He teaches the Word in his messages, and he teaches by the way he lives. “Able to teach” is one of the qualifications of being a pastor. Apparently in the Greek this phrase not only indicates a pastor not only must be able to teach, but he must be “*skilled at teaching*”.

In his commentary on 1 Timothy, John MacArthur (pages 108-110) makes the following statements about a pastor and his responsibility to teach.

1. A pastor-teacher must have the spiritual gift of teaching.
2. A pastor-teacher must have a deep understanding of Biblical teaching.
3. A pastor-teacher must have an attitude of humility.
4. A pastor-teacher must live a holy life.
5. A pastor-teacher must be a diligent student who studies the Word.
6. A pastor-teacher must be careful to avoid teaching incorrect doctrine.
7. A pastor-teacher must have courage and strong Biblical convictions.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Hebrews 13:17 (NASB)

2. Teachers

God has called out and gifted certain individuals as teachers in the body of Christ which is the church.

And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, 1 Corinthians 12:28

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, Ephesians 4:11-12

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; Romans 12:6-7

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

Teaching is one of the gifts of the “spiritual gifts” given by the Spirit of God. In Ephesians 4:11-12 the teacher, like the pastor, is to prepare God’s people for works of service.

There is a great variety in this and all gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). One with the ability (gift) to teach adults may not be good at teaching pre-school. One may not be a good classroom teacher but may be a good teacher in more informal settings. Each one has an important role to fulfill.

In James there is a warning against taking teaching lightly. Anyone who takes the role of a teacher will be judged more strictly than others. God holds teachers accountable for what they teach. Teaching untruth is very serious in the eyes of God. We must be careful to teach the Word, not just what we hear.

3. Evangelists

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, ... Ephesians 4:11-12

The job description of the evangelist in Ephesians 4:11-12 is to “prepare God’s people for works of service”. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, equipping God’s people to do the work of God is done by teaching them the Word of God.

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17

4. Mature Christians and Elders

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 1 Timothy 5:17

5. Fathers

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4 (NASB)

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the

doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. Proverbs 4:1-2

Fathers are clearly told to teach their families. Many Scriptures indicate this. The whole book of Proverbs could accurately be described as a father teaching his children. A father who does not teach his family is not walking in obedience to the Lord.

6. Mothers

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Proverbs 1:8

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Proverbs 6:20

Also read Deuteronomy 11:18-21 from the previous section on fathers responsibilities to teach.

Mothers are to teach their children the Word of God.

7. Older Women

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Titus 2:3-5

The older women are instructed to teach the younger women. This is a very important teaching ministry that is often neglected in the church.

8. Grandparents and Other Relatives

While there may not be a Scripture specifically telling grandparents to teach their grandchildren, it is certainly a clear Scriptural principle that the older generation is to teach the younger generation. Grandparents and other relatives can have, and should have, a major positive influence on the spiritual life of children.

9. *All Christians*

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom,... Colossians 3:16a

Every Christian is responsible to teach and encourage fellow Christians. No one is excused from this responsibility.

D. From Paul to Timothy to Others to Others

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2

In 2 Timothy 2:2 we see the practical effects of this kind of discipleship. There are four generations of discipleship in this verse. Paul taught Timothy who was to teach others, who were then to teach others. The process was not to stop with four generations but was to continue on and on.

A Healthy Biblical Church

The church is very important in the lives of those who know and serve God. Except for our own family activities, our church is the center of our lives. Many of our closest friends come from our church family. It is at church that we are taught to know God better. Most of our service to the Lord involves our church. Many of the activities that mean the most to us center around our church. We love our church.

This is as God planned it. God planned for His people to work and serve Him together as a unified group, or “body”. He called that body of saved people the “church”.

Since the church is so important to God and to His people, it is very important that pastors and teachers have a correct understanding of the basic Biblical teaching and purposes for the church. In our teaching and preaching we must be in line with Biblical teaching about the church if we expect our people to be healthy disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ and if we expect our church to be a healthy Biblical church.

In the New Testament, the Greek word most frequently translated as “*church*” means the “*called out ones*”. The “called out ones” are individuals who know Him as their Savior and Lord. All saved people are the church. The church is not a building. All people, worldwide, who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and are genuinely saved, are the church.

Only genuinely saved people are part of the church. Others may attend church meetings and even “join a church”, but joining a local church does not make one part of the “body of Christ”, or of the true church. Again, only genuine believers are part of the family of God -- the church.

At times the word “church” is used of all genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It makes no difference where they live; they are all part of the body of Christ which is identified as the church.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. Colossians 1:24

And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, Ephesians 1:22

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25

Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 1 Corinthians 10:32

...to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:21

And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. Colossians 1:18

When the word “church” is used to refer to a group of believers who live fairly close to each other and regularly meet together, we sometimes identify them as a “local” church. Most of the references to the church in Scripture refer to a local group of believers.

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours: 1 Corinthians 1:2

Greet also the church that meets at their house. Romans 16:5a

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Colossians 4:16

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Thessalonians 1:1

In the rest of this study, when the word “church” is used, it will refer to the local group of believers who make up a “local church”.

It is important to understand that the New Testament church and the Old Testament Israel are not the same. In the Old Testament, Israel was the nation that God established and chose as His own people, but they were not the church. The church had its origins in New Testament times and it will continue to exist until God calls us home at the rapture. Teachings, promises, and warnings given specifically to the nation Israel cannot be directly applied to the church. They are not the same. After the rapture, God will again deal with Israel. When that happens, the church will be in heaven with Him.

The Importance of the Church

The Lord Jesus Christ loved us so much to that He suffered and died so that we can be clean and holy, radiant, without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any other blame. He loved us, his church, so much that He even identified us as His own future bride.

The word “church” is referred to about 115 times in the Bible. Most of the New Testament is made up of letters which are written to local churches. The church has tremendous value to God. If we, His people, are going to walk with Him, we need to understand how important the church is to God. God gives clear instructions to His people that they are to regularly meet together.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

In the Word of God there are also many examples of the church meeting together.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, Acts 2:46

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

In these verses we are instructed to meet together and to encourage one another. We need each other. Determine that you will help build up and encourage people in your church. You should never be a source of trouble, disunity, or discouragement to others. One sin that is a stench to God is being a source of disunity, or sowing discord, among Christian people.

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. Titus 3:10-11

The church is very important in God's plan for His people; however, often many professing Christians, in ignorance or rebellion, do not put much value in it. They value many other things more highly than the church. They show this by their sporadic attendance and participation. Some attend only the more entertaining activities. They may not say the church is unimportant, but their actions show how they think.

Many do not feel they need to be active in a church. They say something like, "I can live a good life, and be a good person without going to church." Others will make statements like, "I will worship God at home", or "I can worship God in nature better than I can at church". All of this indicates that they think they really do not need to be active in church.

The excuses given for not participating are many. "Do I really need to sit through long dull sermons?" "I'm really tired on Sundays." "It's my only day off." "Sunday is the only day I have to go to the lake." "I have to work on Sunday." "I think the kids ought to go to Sunday School, but I need to stay home and clean the garage." "There are too many hypocrites in church." "All they want is money." "I don't have anything to wear." And the list of excuses goes on and on and on and on....

For a person to say or think that he can do God's will or purpose without being involved with the rest of God's body is like a human hand saying, "I don't need the rest of this body. Why do I need the heart or the legs? I think I will leave this body. I can do better on my own." We all know that if you separate a hand from the rest of the body, it is helpless and it quickly dies. And so it is with the church. God designed us to be part of His body (the church) and we are to work together to accomplish His will and purpose. *He did not design us to be spiritual hermits.*

People criticize the church for many different reasons and in many cases they are right. There is no perfect church. We are all a bunch of sinners who have been saved by the grace and mercy of God. At

times we all let our old sinful nature control us. However, together we can all grow in our walk with God. Instead of criticizing the church we need to let it help us grow, and we need to help others grow. That is what God intended.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:13-14

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. Romans 15:1-2

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

Ephesians 4:11-16

A description of a mature church is found in Ephesians 4. In it we find God's purpose for evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and we find what the results will be when they do their job. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers need to thoroughly know and understand this passage.

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking

the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Notice that evangelists, pastors, and teachers are to prepare God's people to serve the Lord. As this is done, the church becomes a mature unified church with each member actively serving and doing his part.

2 Timothy 3:15-17- 4:2 tells how this training is to be done.

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 3:15-4:2

Every pastor and teacher needs to thoroughly digest these two passages. Read them several times and think about what they say. Ask God for a good understanding of these passages.

Characteristics of a Healthy Biblical Church

1. A healthy church accurately teaches and preaches the Word of God.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:41-42

This passage gives us a description of what was done when the New Testament church gathered together. Notice that the first thing they did was to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching.

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

Here the older veteran pastor, Paul, is giving instructions to the younger pastor, Timothy. Notice that Timothy is to preach the Word, correct, rebuke, and encourage, –with great patience and careful instruction. Notice the result of this kind of preaching/teaching. The man of God is thoroughly equipped for every good work. Often, we, as pastors, expect our people to be good workers, but we neglect the training part, which is to teach/preach the Word, correct, rebuke, and encourage, –with great patience and careful instruction. We cannot expect them to be good workers if they are not properly prepared.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God... 1 Peter 4:10

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7-8

1 Timothy 4, Galatians 1, 2 Peter 2, and Ephesians 4:1-6 and many other passages, in one way or another, show the need for the careful teaching of the Word of Truth.

2. A healthy Biblical church develops Biblical patterns of prayer.

God deeply wants us to pray. It is amazing and satisfying to realize that God chooses to do so much through our prayers. *To move the hand of God through prayer is a high calling. We dare not take that calling lightly.*

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16b

Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Jeremiah 33:3 (KJV)

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer,...
1 Peter 3:12a

One of the greatest weaknesses and dangers facing the church in America is that few people and few of our leaders seem to be given to consistent earnest Biblical prayer. Many leaders claim to be led by the Spirit, many are gifted speakers, many are excellent organizers, many are good

promoters, many are good at developing strategies, many have written books and many are good musicians, but few seem to be given to consistent earnest Biblical prayer.

God, through His Word, has given us instructions in how to pray; yet few individuals or churches bother to listen. In spite of God's clear instructions, ninety plus percent of our prayers have to do with physical health. In the Word of God there are well over a thousand references to prayer and only a very few of them have to do with physical health. Throughout the Bible there are prayers of worship and praise and in the New Testament especially almost all prayers have to do with spiritual health. Yet pastors and teachers who claim to love God and His Word seldom bother to pray or teach people to pray as He instructs us to pray. God help us. No wonder churches and individuals are so spiritually weak. Yes, we do need to pray for physical health but that is only the beginning.

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation." Luke 11:1-4

This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Matthew 6:9-13

It is a sobering truth that if God's people do not pray as He instructed us, He cannot bless as He would like to bless. If God's people do not pray, family members will not be as fully blessed. If we fail to pray, pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and other leaders will not see as much spiritual fruit in their ministries. Your fellow Christians will not be as fully blessed and you yourself will not be as fully blessed if you fail to pray. This is an awesome responsibility that must not be taken lightly. If we expect to see God work, we must pray. There are no shortcuts or alternatives.

Churches, as well as individual Christians, need to develop healthy patterns of prayer. *Churches who devote little time to prayer will always be weak churches.* It makes no difference whether that church is large or small. Churches may appear to be healthy; but if there is little prayer, it is, in reality, a castle being built by man, not by God.

Both large and small churches can be God-blessed churches. In many small churches people feel like they are second rate. There just doesn't seem to be much happening like there is in the "big" churches. That attitude will change if that small church will devote itself to prayer. A church that prays as God instructs us to pray will be a blessed productive church. Over time, they will see God work in thrilling ways. This does not mean that a "small" church will grow to be a "big" church. Being big is not necessarily evidence that God is at work. God can use small churches and He can use big churches. *Through prayer, God will work, whether the church is large or small.*

Like all aspects of our walk with God, developing good patterns of prayer is a growing experience. It takes time to learn and to develop good patterns of prayer. It is something we work on throughout our entire life. However, it is deeply satisfying to know that even as we are learning and growing, God still answers our prayers.

3. A healthy Biblical church brings genuine praise and worship to God.

God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

To correctly understand Biblical worship, we need to think of worship as a total way of life. We must not simply associate worship with our church's music program or their time of "praise and worship". While music can be a very legitimate part of worship, *genuine Biblical worship extends to every part of our lives, not just our music.* Hebrew and Greek words for worship are used about seventy times in the Bible. In only a couple of Biblical references do music and worship occur at the same time.

Each of the following is used in various Biblical word studies or dictionaries to define or to describe worship. *To bow down, to kneel down, to prostrate oneself, to revere, to praise, to serve, to glorify, to honor, to have awe, to adore, to respect, to love and to give devotion.* Each of these definitions helps us to begin to grasp the depth of the Biblical concept of worshipping God.

Putting all of this together, we can, in simple terms, define worship as "bowing down before God in reverence and in awe, and with love, devotion, and submission".

One of the best examples of pure worship is given in Luke 7:37-38. Here a "sinful" woman bows in repentance at Jesus' feet and demonstrates a deep appreciation, love, and devotion for our Lord Jesus Christ.

When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. Luke 7:37-38

A simple definition of Biblical praise is *to speak, or to sing, or to think words or thoughts that exalt the wonderful characteristics and the acts of God.*

Biblical praise involves three basic elements.

- A. *Exalting God because of His attributes (characteristics).*
- B. *Exalting God because of what He does or has done.*
- C. *Giving thanks for who He is and what He has done.*

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Psalm 103:1

Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious! Psalm 66:2

Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts. 1 Chronicles 16:9

Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. Psalm 47:6

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise,... Psalm 48:1a

In the mind of many Christians, praise and worship are essentially the same thing; however, while both are fundamental to our walk with God, they are not the same. Worship is much broader than praise. Worship may be described as bowing before God in our spirits in reverence, awe, devotion and submission. Worship involves every part of our life. Worship is living a life that continually glorifies Him. Praising God is to speak, or to sing, or to think words or thoughts that exalt the wonderful characteristics and the acts of God. While worship is much broader than praise, praising God is a very significant part of worship. If we are not regularly giving God praise, it doubtful that we are genuinely living a lifestyle of worship.

Much of our praise is expressed through music. God loves music. There are about five hundred references to some kind of music in the Bible. Before creation, there was music in heaven. Beginning early in the Old Testament, there was music. Godly kings and leaders promoted music, praise, and worship. Jesus and His disciples sang. In the early church, there was music. And we find in the book of Revelation that there will be music in eternity to come.

In the Bible there is a lot of variety in music. There are solos, duets, women's choirs, men's choirs, small choirs, and choirs numbering in the thousands. In heaven, over one hundred million angels sing together. There are many musical instruments mentioned. There are harps, flutes, lyres, stringed instruments, trumpets, ram's horns, tambourines, cymbals, lutes, pipes, and zithers. The song of a Christian is a new song. In the book of Psalms in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the New Testament, we sing a "new song". A "new song" does not mean a newly written song but a song that is a new kind of a song. It is new in character and quality. In other words, our song is not the same as the world's song, but is a totally different kind of a song.

Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints. Psalm 149:1

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Psalm 40:3

In studying and preparing to write this study, this writer looked up and read about five hundred Biblical references to music and I did not find any indication that God created music for our entertainment. Nor is there any place that music was used to draw a crowd or as a tool for evangelism. These are simply not the reasons God gave us music.

We find that God does not accept all music that is offered to Him in so-called praise or worship. God has some very strong words for music that comes from an insincere heart. God does not accept music and praise from a heart that is not living righteously and justly.

"I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.... Away with the noise of

your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! Amos 5:21, 23-24

I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping.

Amos 8:10

I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more.

Ezekiel 26:13

God loves music. He has called us to praise Him and, for most of us, music is the primary way we express our praise to God. Praising and worshiping God is a high calling. It glorifies and pleases our God. What a privilege and what a joy we have. Let us do everything we can to fulfill our calling and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ through our worship, our praise, and our music.

There is variety in Biblical music, praise, and worship. However, this variety does not allow us to ignore Biblical standards and teaching and do whatever we like. Variety in Biblical praise and music does not mean that anything goes. As we have seen, God does not accept all music that is offered in His name, and if we use God's name in a light or frivolous way, it takes God's name in vain and it is a violation of the third commandment.

The ultimate question we should honestly ask ourselves when we plan or participate in music, praise, and worship, is not, "What do I like"?, or "What do the people like"?, or "What will draw a crowd"?, or "What will attract young people"?, but rather, "**What does God teach in His Word**"?. If we plan a service to please ourselves or to please other people, then it is not genuine praise or worship. Genuine praise or worship focuses on God, not on what pleases people.

Worship, praise, and music are all extremely important to God. Following are some suggestions for evaluating a church's music, praise, and worship services.

The quality and tone of the music program of a church is primarily determined by those in leadership positions. Since this is the case, many of the following questions and evaluations focus on those who lead in praise and worship. These questions may help to determine if our church's praise, worship, and music ministry is pleasing and honoring to God.

A. Are those who are leading in praise and worship consistently walking with God? Does their lifestyle reflect the Lord Jesus Christ?

B. Does the music and worship service promote an awe and reverence of our holy God? Do the worship leaders understand God's holiness?

As we have seen, worship is often associated with God's holiness. Music leaders need to have at least a basic understanding of God's holiness. They must also be committed to living a holy life.

Worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness;... Psalm 29:2, Psalm 96:9, and 1 Chronicles 16:29

Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool; He is holy. Psalm 99:5

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 12:28-29

C. Do those who are leading worship genuinely focus the attention of those listening on the Lord Jesus Christ, or are they, in reality, drawing attention to themselves?

I am the LORD; that is My name! I will not give My glory to another... Isaiah 42:8a

D. Do the words of a song being used rightly reflect God's thoughts and attitudes? Are the words Biblically accurate and true?

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. John 4:23

Genuine worship is always based on truth. Singing a song that is not Biblically sound is not genuine praise or worship. Untruth does not please or honor God and does not come from the Spirit of Truth (the Holy Spirit).

Many praise and worship songs are shallow and designed to appeal to a person's emotions. Sometimes such songs may make a person feel good or even have spiritual goose bumps but that does not mean it is worship. God created us with emotions and feelings, and it is good to put feeling into our praise and worship. It is a joy to sing praises to God. However, stirred feelings alone do not mean that we have bowed before Him in love, submission, reverence and awe. Truth, not feelings, is the basis of praise and worship.

E. Can the words of the song be understood by those listening?

All of us have heard beautiful music without words that has lifted our spirits and encouraged us to worship God in our spirits. However, when there are words being sung and those words cannot be understood by those who are listening, it hinders praise and worship. It begins to take on the appearance of a performance or entertainment, especially when those listening are not familiar with the words of the song. People may enjoy the music and it can move them in one way or another, but that does not meet the Biblical criteria for genuine praise and worship.

Often there is little or no attempt to make the words of a song understood. In some cases the accompaniment is so loud the words can hardly be heard, let alone understood. If all one can hear is loud music without focusing on a Biblical truth about God, then little praise or worship is being offered to God. Feelings may be stirred, but that is probably about all that is happening. When the musical accompaniment overshadows the words or the message, then it is most likely simply a performance drawing attention to the performers.

F. Does the style of music or the manner in which the music is performed appeal to the listeners' spiritual Godly nature or does it appeal to the listeners' fleshly human nature?

Christians can be stimulated and tempted by the flesh. When we are not allowing the Spirit of God to fill us, our old nature can still give us temporary pleasure and satisfaction. Without question, much of the world's music is designed to stimulate or move the sinful nature. When we bring that music into the church, it can and will appeal to the Christian's old nature. Using music that appeals to the old nature does not give praise and worship to God, even if it does have Christian words to it.

Today, many churches feel that the church's music should be as close to the world's music as possible in order to attract the world to church. Those who believe and promote this idea need to understand God's purpose for music and they also need to understand God's purpose for His church.

G. Does the music reflect the new song of the believer or the music of the world?

Remember the song of a Christian is a new song. It is different from the world's song. Does our music reflect the new song of the Christian or does it more closely reflect the music of the world?

For a moment, I (Phil Benedict) would like to step out of my role as a teacher/writer and express my heart. It appears to me that there are many musicians who get up front and claim to give God all the glory, but then proceed to draw attention to themselves throughout the service. I am glad that God did not make me the judge; however, I know that God is displeased when we use praising Him as a means of glorifying ourselves. This is serious. We will not only have to give account of our own actions, but also for those in the audience who may be spiritually stunted by our hypocrisy and lack of sincerity.

4. A healthy Biblical church encourages each other and builds each other up.

Living a Godly life is not always easy. At times we will experience difficult times and we will have trouble and trials. We know that the Spirit of God is with us and gives us strength to face these trials; however, God has also planned for us to encourage and build up one another. The encouragement of our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord can be very helpful and comforting.

God expects us to encourage and set examples for our fellow Christians. This kind of influence can have a major impact on the lives of fellow Christians. God uses us to encourage growth in the lives of His own people.

There are times when we admonish, or even rebuke, our fellow Christians. This is done in love to encourage them to be faithful and to grow in their walk with God.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "today", so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Hebrews 3:13

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
Colossians 3:16

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
Romans 15:7

5. A healthy Biblical Church reaches its community with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and baptizes new believers.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

6. A healthy Biblical Church teaches (disciples) and encourages new believers to begin a healthy walk with God.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
Matthew 28:19-20

Notice that in this there are two teaching related words. “Make disciples” and “teach”. Teaching is that life-long process that is the heart of the church. “Make disciples” refers to the early stages of growth. To be a disciple, one must be brought to faith in Christ and he must be taught the fundamentals of walking with God.

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Acts 14:21-22

This is an example of this principle at work. Before Paul went on to new fields, he strengthened the new believers.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,
1 Peter 2:2

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.
1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Scripture likens a new or immature Christian to a baby. When a human baby is born into the world, the process of feeding, nurturing, and training is just starting. We do not leave a newborn baby to grow by himself and we do not feed him adult food. Without special care and food, a newborn baby will not grow. In fact, he will die. In the same way, a newborn Christian will most likely never grow to spiritual maturity unless he is given baby spiritual food and care. He needs spiritual milk.

It is vitally important that the church as a whole and also individual Christians be there to teach and encourage new Christians.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. Romans 15:1-2

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Every new Christian will face some difficult problems and trials. Often, after an initial period of joy and rejoicing, there will come a difficult time for the new believer. He will face many new situations and his faith will be tested. He desperately needs a more mature Christian to come along beside him,

to pray with him, to keep encouraging him. If new Christians do not have this kind of encouragement, many will get discouraged and turn away from their new walk with God.

An older more mature Christian needs to walk beside a newborn Christian for a period of time (several months? a year?) giving him special attention, encouragement, and support and instruction as he goes through the beginning steps of his walk with God. The individual who takes on the role of encouraging and teaching a new Christian is very important in the new believer's life. He/she loves the new Christian with a healthy Godly love. He/she gives the new Christian good Biblical counsel. He/she sets the right example for the new Christian to follow. He/she teaches the new Christian. He/she encourages the new Christian through the hard times. He/she admonishes or warns about the consequences of wrong behavior. He/she is there to give all kinds of help when needed. He/she takes on the role of a spiritual parent to the new Christian.

7. It teaches and encourages each member to use his spiritual gifts to serve the Lord and to fulfill his God-given role as a member of the body of Christ (the church).

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

God used the human body to illustrate how the church functions. (I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12) Each part of our body has a function and when one part does not function properly, the whole body suffers. God gives each person certain abilities and talents (spiritual gifts), and He expects us to use those abilities to serve Him and other saved people who form the church. When we each do our part, the whole body is built up and blessed. If we do not do our part, the whole body suffers. This is a fundamental Biblical truth.

There is a major difference between "attending" church and serving as God designed us to do. You can attend church and still be an unsaved person. You can attend church and never grow in your walk with God. Millions "attend" church but never actively serve the Lord Jesus Christ as God expects. Simply "attending church" does not fulfill God's purpose for the church or for the saved individuals who form the church.

All of 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:3-8 describe how a church should function as each member uses his spiritual gift to serve the Lord by serving other members of the body of Christ.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

I Corinthians 12:4-7

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service,... Ephesians 4:11-12a

8. It provides opportunities for believers to meet together for prayer, to give praise and thanksgiving, to worship, to observe communion, and to fellowship with fellow believers.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42 and 2:47b

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:3-4

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:19-20

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

9. It holds each member accountable for the way he lives, both to the church leaders and to other members.

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2

"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. Luke 17:3b

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. Romans 16:17

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. Titus 3:10

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Titus 2:15

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11

10. It raises up, trains, sends, and supports missionaries to serve throughout the world.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:45-47

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:1-3

Also carefully read John 17 and Psalm 96.

Why Be Involved in Church?

Following are some Biblical reasons why Christians should meet together and work together as a unified body, or as a church:

1. The first reason is that God commands it. (Hebrews 10:25) To ignore this command is to rebel against God.
2. Throughout Scripture, God's people regularly met together for worship, instruction, fellowship, and service. This is the pattern that God gave for us to follow.
3. To hear the Word of God accurately preached and taught. As we grow in our knowledge of the Word, we learn more about God and how He expects us to live.
4. To encourage and build up others and to be encouraged and built up ourselves.
5. To enjoy fellowship with Christian brothers and sisters.
6. To observe the Lord's Supper.
7. To join in prayer with fellow believers.
8. To promote healthy families who have solid foundations in Biblical teachings.
9. To use our spiritual gifts to serve our fellow Christians.
10. To be unified and effective in our service to God.
11. To be effective in carrying out the great commission, reaching our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ, starting other local churches, and raising up, training, sending, and supporting missionaries to serve throughout the world.
12. To be held accountable, both to the church leaders and to other members.

Chapter Six

The Power and Effectiveness of the Word of God

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.
1 Timothy 4:13

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. Hebrew 6:1-3

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:8

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
2 Timothy 3:16- 4:2 (NASB)

The Word of God is powerful and effective. Pastors and teachers are instructed to preach and teach the Word. They are not told to preach about the Word or to occasionally refer to a Bible verse; they are told to *“preach the Word”*.

Most preachers and teachers would verbally agree, but, in reality, many churches, pastors and teachers do not take this seriously. They give little time to serious study of the Word and they get up time after time with little study or preparation, expecting the “Spirit will lead them”. The result is often shallow platitudes that result in little or no spiritual growth. One goal in preaching seems to be to stir emotions and make people feel guilty, and some speakers are quite good at it. Another goal is to make people think that if they come to that church and financially support it, God will make them successful and prosperous and that He will do whatever they want Him to do for them. Often essentially the same

message is preached or taught time after time and church members, young and old, stagnate for lack of sound Biblical teaching.

Many Christians are hungry, even starving, not for physical food but for spiritual food that comes from the Word of God. Many often come to the altar seeking spiritual strength and growth, but they go home the very same person because their souls have not been fed, only stirred.

Many churches rely on programs, methods or entertaining music programs to build their church. Methods and implementing programs can be helpful. They have their place. However, a church that does not have a ministry of preaching and teaching solid Biblical truth will always be a spiritually weak and ineffective church. Churches may be successful in drawing large numbers of people and even baptizing a lot of people; however, if they do not have a solid Biblical preaching and teaching ministry, they will be a weak and immature church no matter how many methods and programs they have in place.

There is power in the Word of God. There are many Scriptures that teach this. When we preach and teach the Word of God, it has the power of God behind it. When we simply preach *about* the Word, we lose much of the power. When we preach the Word of God under the control of the Spirit of God, the will and purpose of God will be done.

Following are Scripture passages that teach us about the power and effectiveness of the Word of God:

1. The Bible is the Word of God.

We often forget just what the Word of God is. *This is God's Word!!!* This is not man's word or just a "good book"! This is from God. Our attitudes and our actions show how quickly we can forget this. We become casual in our treatment of the Word. We neglect it. We treat it with contempt when we regularly get up to teach or preach with little or no preparation or prayer and we habitually arrive late to our class. God help us to love and to reverence His Word.

... for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke [as they were] moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21

All Scripture is God breathed... 2 Timothy 3:16

...words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.
I Corinthians 2:13

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
Proverbs 1:7

Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth. John 17:17

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:11-12

"Every Word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
Proverbs 30:5

Over 400 times in the Old Testament there is a statement such as “thus saith the Lord”, or “the Word of the Lord came unto me saying”, or “declares the Lord”, or “the Lord has spoken”, or some other similar phrase. If God said it 400 times He must want us to know that this is His Word and we are to believe it.

2. The Word of God is the source of truth.

Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth. John 17:17

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

He chose to give us birth through the Word of Truth, James 1:18a

"Every Word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
Proverbs 30:5

All Your words are true; all Your righteous laws are eternal. Psalm 119:160

And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. Psalm 12:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. John 14:6

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; *we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God.* On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2

The Word of God is true. It is absolute truth, not relative truth. It is true whether we believe it or not. It has always been true and it always will be true.

3. *Psalm 19:7-11*

In this Scripture passage the Word of God is referred to in each verse. The words law, statutes, precepts, commands, ordinances, and even the word fear all refer, in one way or another, to the Word of God. From this passage look at what the Word of God does.

**The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.
 The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.
 The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.
 The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.
 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;
 they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
 By them is your servant warned; *in keeping them there is great reward.*
 Psalm 19:7-11**

4. *The Word of God is powerful and effective.*

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 KJV

For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NIV

For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NASB

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire. Isaiah 55:10-11

Is not My word like fire," declares the LORD, " and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? Jeremiah 23:29

Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says: "Because the people have spoken these words, I will make My words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes. Jeremiah 5:14

By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made... Psalm 33:6

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 1:23

...because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. 1 Thessalonians 1:5a

5. The Word of God brings spiritual growth.

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. John 17:17

The root meaning of the word ‘sanctify’ is the same as for the word ‘holy’. To be sanctified is to be holy or set apart from the world unto God. Sanctify also carries with it the idea of growth. As we become more sanctified, we become more holy. We become more and more separate from the world and become more and more like God.

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- Titus 1:1

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. Colossians 1:28-29

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 1 Peter 2:1-2

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. Hebrew 6:1-3

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3-4

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 2 Timothy 2:15-16

6. The Word of God enables us to be productive and to bear spiritual fruit.

Most of us want to be more effective servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. The following verses tell us how to bear genuine spiritual fruit in our life:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.
John 15:5-8

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Psalm 1:1-3

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire. Isaiah 55:10-11

7. Remaining in the Word of God leads to answered prayer.

If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. John 15:7

8. The Word of God equips us to do the work of God.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB

9. Obeying the Word of God gives strength and stability in difficult times.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But

everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Matthew 7:24-27

10. The Word of God brings peace and joy.

Great peace have they who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

Psalm 119:165

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. Psalm 19:8

When Your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear Your name, O LORD God Almighty. Jeremiah 15:16

We write this to make our joy complete. 1 John 1:4

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Luke 11:28

Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.... ...And their joy was very great. Nehemiah 8:12 and 17b

11. The Word of God gives victory over sin.

I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You. Psalm 119:11

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word.

Psalm 119:9

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth (the Word of God) so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 1 Peter 1:22

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. John 15:3

12. The Word of God gives victory over Satan.

Carefully read the following Scriptures which deal with Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert 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 does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*"

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.'*" Matthew 4:1-10

Now carefully read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 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. Stand firm then, with the *belt of truth* buckled around your waist, with the *breastplate of righteousness* in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the *gospel of peace*. In addition to all this, take up the *shield of faith*, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the *helmet of salvation* and the *sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*. And *pray in the Spirit* on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Ephesians 6:10-18.

When we put on the armor of God, we have victory over Satan. Without the armor, we are defeated. This is a very important passage of Scripture. Very carefully note how each of the pieces of armor is from the Word of God.

belt of truth: *Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.* John 17:17

breastplate of righteousness: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* 2 Timothy 3:16

gospel of peace: *Great peace have they who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*
Psalm 119:165

shield of faith: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
Romans 10:17 KJV

helmet of salvation: *...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* 2 Timothy 3:15

the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God.* Ephesians 6:17

pray in the Spirit: *If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.* John 15:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:7-8a

13. The Word of God teaches us how to be saved.

...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15

You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you. John 15:3

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God. I Peter 1:23

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created. James 1:18

14. Teaching the Word can lead to revival.

In Nehemiah 8, after people had been taught the Word of God, one of the greatest revivals of all time took place.

Following are some verses from Nehemiah 8. If you read the whole passage you will see that once they understood the law, they obeyed. One result was great joy.

The Levites -- Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah – instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:7-8

Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

Nehemiah 8:12

And their joy was very great. Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly. Nehemiah 8:17b-18

15. The Word of God is the source of faith.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Romans 10:17 KJV

16. The Word is eternal and unchanging.

Man's word, his ideas, and his teachings change as time passes, as knowledge is gained, and as circumstances change. Today's beliefs may, in fact, be tomorrow's joke. What one culture accepts as true is not believed by others. Not so with the Word of God. It is eternal, unchanging and true in all generations.

Your word is eternal, it stands firm in the heavens. Psalm 119:89

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. Mark 13:31

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:23-25

Chapter Seven

A Closer Look at 2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:2

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16- 4:2 (NASB)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:2 (NIV)

In all the Bible, this passage gives the clearest instructions on how we are to teach and preach the Word. If we are to be a Spirit-led pastor/teacher, we must put into practice what is taught in this passage.

This passage begins by teaching us what the Word of God does in the life of a Christian. We all need to understand this very clearly.

1. Teaching---doctrine: (Strong's number 1319) The Word of God gives us instruction in right doctrine. Or it is teaching the authoritative body of Scripture. (Vine and Zondervan)

The word "teaching" is the same word that is translated "doctrine" in many other parts of Scripture and in some other Bible translations.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

Right doctrine leads to right living. A correct Biblical understanding of doctrine and a commitment to obedience are the foundation for a lifetime of solid growth. It leads us to greater faith in God, to productive service, to freedom from the bondage to sin, to strength, to encouragement, to assurance of salvation, to fruitfulness, and to peace.

Incorrect teaching can come from many different sources. Friends, family, churches, and, yes, even teachers and ministers can mislead people with wrong teaching. If an individual or a preacher or teacher does not regularly study the Word, or if his motives are not in tune with God's purpose, then he

will very likely be a source of false teaching.

Most of us are in a position to teach someone. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, and pastors are all in a position to teach. You do not have to be a theologian to be a teacher, but you do need to be regularly absorbing the Word of God.

When explaining the purpose of the Word of God, the very first purpose is teaching. The Word of God is to be taught!!! That is why God gave it to us. As we saw in the last chapter, teaching is stressed throughout the Bible. If churches are to be the kind of churches God wants them to be, they must give themselves to accurately teaching the Word of God. This is to start with the pastor and permeate the rest of the church. Anything less is to profane God and His Word.

2. Reproof : (Strong's number 1649a) (Sometimes translated rebuke) Convincing of error in behavior or doctrine. Showing the truth of a charge. The desired result is the acknowledgment of wrong on the part of the accused. (Zodhiates)

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Titus 1:9

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Titus 2:15

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Matthew 18:15

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. 1 Timothy 5:20

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Titus 2:15

All Christians, pastors and laymen, have the responsibility to reprove our fellow Christians when there is on-going sin in their life. This may be tough, but there are times when we need to have wrong behavior pointed out to us.

Reproving a brother must be done with tact and love. If a rebuke is done with any other motive other than love, it will not result in growth of either the one doing the rebuking or the one being rebuked. It will only lead to anger and division.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Reproving must be done by one whose heart and actions are right with the Lord.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Matthew 7:3-5

God will also rebuke and discipline Christians.

**...And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:
"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you..." Hebrews 12:5**

3. Correction: (Strong's number 1882) Setting up straight again. A restoration to an upright or right state. (Zodhiates, Vine)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Galatians 6:1

Rebuke and correction go hand-in-hand. The Word of God not only points out the wrong behavior, it also tells us how to correct the wrong behavior.

If we rebuke a person, the motive must be to lead them to the right way to live and act.

Pastors and others must not continually rebuke without teaching the right way to live. This involves on-going teaching, not just saying, "Get right with God."

This negative-positive (rebuke-correction) pattern is common in Scripture.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18

Do not profane My holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Leviticus 22:32

The books of First and Second Corinthians have very strong rebukes in them. However, Paul does not leave it there. He tells the Corinthian people what must be done to get back to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Training in righteousness: (Strong's number 3809) To instruct, to discipline. (Zodhiates)

Scripture gives training or instruction in right living. Righteousness simply means what is right in God's eyes. If we, as pastors and teachers, want our people to live right, we teach them the Word of God.

If churches or individuals have any desire to be Biblical churches or individuals, they will commit

themselves to developing solid, God-honoring teaching ministries.

Look again at the results of the Word of God at work teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, in the life of the Christian.

“so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”

If we want to equip our people to do the work of God, we must teach them the Word of God.

Preach the Word!!!

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:1-2

It is difficult to express the seriousness of these verses. Paul states that “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus”, he is giving these instructions. It is as if God and Jesus are both there telling Paul to give these instructions. There is no more serious way to express the importance and value of a teaching than to claim to be giving these instructions in the presence of the almighty God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Teaching and preaching the Word of God is serious business. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are both present stressing the importance of what Paul is writing.

“Who will judge the living and the dead”. God will judge all saved and unsaved people. It is a sobering reality that our preaching/teaching can affect people for eternity. Those of us who are in a position to teach need to remember that those whom we teach will be judged by God. Let’s make sure that we teach them right.

“And in view of His appearing and His kingdom”. Jesus is coming back. Will He find us faithfully obeying Him? After He returns there will be no more opportunity to teach or preach and be used by God to teach His people or bring the unsaved into the kingdom of God.

After stating that the Word of God was given by God Himself, and explaining the purpose of the Word of God, and explaining the seriousness of teaching/preaching, Paul then gives the young pastor, Timothy, this charge (command):

“Preach the Word: be prepared in season and out of season”. Not only are pastors and teachers to preach the Word, they are to be ready or prepared to preach or teach at all times. They are to be continually studying and learning the Word of God. They can never relax their vigil. If they are not learning and growing, their preaching/teaching will not be very effective and it will not result in much spiritual fruit. Not only must they be learning and growing, they must continually put into

practice what they are learning. If they are not living holy, Godly lives, their preaching and teaching will be ineffective.

Not only are they to be ready and prepared, they are to be ready at all times. They must be prepared, learning and growing at all times, even when it is not convenient. They must maintain their walk with God and their preparedness even when they are busy with many things and they are tired.

Pastors and teachers must preach/teach the Word of God. As we have seen, the Word teaches, rebukes, corrects, and gives instruction in right living. And as we have already learned, there is power in the Word. Messages and lessons should be solidly based in the Word rather than on random thoughts and opinions. Growth comes from the Word of God, not from man's wisdom.

After instructing Timothy to "Preach the Word", Paul goes on to give more specific instructions in how to preach the Word. He tells him to "**correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction**". Notice the close correlation between these instructions and the purposes of the Word of God in 2 Timothy 3:16, which are "**teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**".

When we teach and preach, we must follow the instructions given by Paul in these verses and stay in line with the purposes of the Word of God.

Paul tells Timothy to:

1. & 2. Reprove (Strong's number 1651) (NIV-- correct) and **Rebuke** (Strong's number 2008)

These words are very similar in meaning. They both have to do with pointing out sin; however, rebuke is stronger than reprove. The pastor/teacher is to reprove and rebuke wrong behavior and wrong doctrine. The aim for the one being reprovved is for him to recognize the error of his ways, to repent and to be brought back into fellowship with God.

3. Encourage – Exhort

To call to one's side, to aid, to help, to comfort (Zodhiates)

To call near, to invite (Strong)

To strengthen, call to renewed commitment (Richards)

Give consolation (Mounce)

The pastors and teachers are to have compassion, calling one to their side and giving the help and comfort the individual needs. They encourage that one to be strong in the Lord and to commit himself to faithful service to the Lord.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority.
Titus 2:15

We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, 1 Thessalonians 3:2

All Christians are to encourage each other. They, along with the pastor and teachers, are to have compassion, calling fellow Christians to their side and giving the help and comfort they need. They encourage one another to be strong in the Lord and to commit themselves to faithful service to the Lord.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. Psalm 19:7a

With Great Patience

Patience means long suffering, endurance, not quick to act, not quickly agitated, having the ability to act (avenge) but choosing not to do so.

When teaching others, we do not become impatient or agitated quickly. Just as in our own life it has taken time to grow in our walk with Him, so we cannot expect those we teach to have quick growth. Solid growth takes time.

Love is patient,... 1 Corinthians 13:4a

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

And Careful Instruction

It is the pastor's and teacher's role to give careful instruction (teach/train) in the Word and how to live right.

Once again, we are told to teach or instruct. We are to do it carefully and accurately.

If we, as pastors and teachers, want to be used by God to accomplish His will and purpose, we must give urgent attention to what God and Jesus so emphatically taught in these verses. God help us to be effective preachers and teachers of the Word of God.

Chapter Eight

Obeying 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 in Preaching and Teaching

This chapter picks up where chapter two in this manual left off. Chapter two covered how to absorb the Word of God in preparation to teach or to preach it. The importance of this as covered in chapter two can hardly be overemphasized.

If a pastor or teacher has not personally absorbed and been blessed by a passage of Scripture, he is not likely to pass on a blessing to those who listen to him preach or teach. Also, if a pastor/teacher does not correctly understand a passage, he will certainly not be able to accurately teach it. One cannot correctly put the teaching in this chapter into practice unless he has absorbed the passage of Scripture to be taught as was described in chapter two of this study guide.

Finding Time to Prepare

A major issue is where do we find time to do this kind of preparation? Pastors are busy people, especially bi-vocational pastors who have a 40 hour a week job, and must also care for their own families as well as their church family. With these responsibilities, how does one find the time to prepare two or three or even four messages every week?

Pastors will have to establish priorities. What is important? Where should they be spending their time? Both their family and their church family are important. They must also have some time for relaxation. However, if a pastor or teacher is spending little or no time studying, but spending a lot of time doing something else such as watching TV or spending time in other non-productive activities, he needs to rethink his use of time.

If God calls a man to preach or teach, He will also enable that person to be obedient and spend time absorbing and meditating on the Word of God. When an individual accepts the call to teach or preach, he also accepts the responsibility to prepare messages and to serve in a way that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything less is disobedience and rebellion.

Pastors and churches need to be realistic. Bi-vocational pastors simply do not have the time or often the mental energy to properly prepare three or four messages a week. Churches must not expect so much from their pastor that he does not have the time for his own family or have time to prepare to teach and preach.

Here are a couple of suggestions for churches that would help to give the pastor more time:

1. If your church meets Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night, then make either Sunday night or Wednesday night a genuine prayer meeting. Spend the whole evening in prayer. Go

through this writer's "A Biblical Study of Prayer" and start putting it into practice on one of those evenings. Your church will be immensely blessed by developing a more Biblical pattern of prayer and it will take some pressure off your pastor.

2. Let Godly laymen from your church teach on one of those nights. It will give you the opportunity to train another teacher for the church and it will give the pastor some relief.

Putting 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 into Practice

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

2 Timothy 3:16-4:2 (ESV)

After absorbing and meditating on the passage of Scripture to be preached (as described in chapter two), the pastor/teacher needs to consider each of the following as he puts the message together.

*A. The Word of God is profitable for... **teaching.***

For people to more fully understand a passage of Scripture, it must be taught.

The pastor/teacher must determine what he needs to teach so that the passage is clearly understood by those who are listening.

This is not just a shallow superficial understanding of the passage. Pastors/teachers must study the passage enough so that they can genuinely explain and teach the passage. We recognize that few of us are Bible scholars and we also recognize that we will never understand all there is to know about Scripture; however, this must not be an excuse for shallow teaching.

For people to more fully understand a passage of Scripture, it must be taught.

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:8

Again, before a pastor/teacher gets up to speak, he needs to determine what should be taught, so that those who listen will understand the passage of Scripture.

*B. I give you this charge... **preach the Word.***

This is a strong command to *preach the Word!!!* We do not just preach about the Word; we preach

the Word itself. We stay with the passage of Scripture and preach and teach it.

We do not just begin a message by referring to a Bible verse and then just go on impulsive rabbit trails for the majority of the message; instead, we stay with the passage of Scripture and preach and teach it. We do not just occasionally refer to a Bible verse; instead, we stay with the passage of Scripture and preach and teach it.

We do not rely on our gift of speaking and appealing to people's emotions; instead, we stay with the passage of Scripture and preach and teach it.

We do not rely on own wisdom; we stay with the passage of Scripture and preach and teach it.

*C. I give you this charge... **be ready or be prepared.***

A pastor/ teacher must keep himself spiritually fit and always be ready to teach and preach the Word.

A pastor/teacher must be regularly studying and absorbing the Word and be prepared to teach it.

A pastor/teacher must continually pray. A pastor that is sporadic in his prayer life will bear little or no genuine spiritual fruit.

A pastor/teacher must not resist or rebel against any genuine Biblical truth. This is sin.

A pastor/teacher must continually confess sin. Not doing so will hinder the Spirit from working.

*D. I give you this charge... **reprove – rebuke.***

After you have absorbed a passage from the Word of God and you are preparing to teach it, you need to decide if there is need for reproof or rebuke based on what is taught in this passage of Scripture.

There will not be reproof or rebuke needed in every message. There needs to be a good reason for the rebuke. When someone or a group of individuals are resisting Biblical truth or right doctrine, or if they are resisting or rebelling against a Biblical standard of conduct, then a reproof or rebuke may well be needed. *A pastor/teacher needs to know his people well and he himself needs to be walking with and filled with the Spirit of God as he makes decisions about reproofing or rebuking.*

Reproofing or rebuking must be done in love. If it is not done in love, we cannot expect good to come from it. If a pastor/teacher is not being genuinely led by the Spirit of God and if his motive is not love, he must not give any reproof or rebuke. The results could be a disaster rather than a work of the Spirit in the life of those being reproofed or rebuked.

There are some pastor/teachers who spend most of their time rebuking. This is not generally a good idea. People also need to be encouraged and taught. People who are continually rebuked without being encouraged or taught may well become hardened to the working of the Spirit in their lives.

*E. The Word of God is profitable for... **correction.***

Wrong behavior and wrong doctrine need to be corrected. If a reproof or rebuke is given, then one needs to explain correct Biblical truth or the right way to act according to the Word of God.

An individual may not be rebelling against or resisting Biblical truth, but may misunderstand what the Bible is teaching. Again, the pastor/teacher has the responsibility to correct that misunderstanding. This is important since a right understanding of Scripture leads to right behavior. A correct understanding of Scripture and correctly putting it into practice fulfills our fundamental purpose in life--to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

*F. I give you this charge... **exhort or encourage.***

The Word of God has many references to encouragement. Christians are often instructed to encourage one another. Many people do not need to be rebuked; they need to be encouraged. They need somebody to come along beside them and encourage them to be faithful.

A pastor/teacher needs to determine what truths in the passage of Scripture he is teaching will encourage those who hear. Again, a *pastor/teacher needs to know his people well and he himself needs to be walking with and filled with the Spirit of God so that he can encourage his people.*

*G. I give you this charge... **with great patience.***

Pastors and teachers need to be patient. Solid spiritual growth takes time. We, as pastors and teachers, need to remember how long it has taken us to grow and mature in our walk with God. Don't get impatient and don't get discouraged. Faithfully preach and teach the Word of God.

*H. The Word of God is profitable for... **training in righteousness.***

We must teach and train our people how to live righteous lives. Teaching is to give knowledge and understanding. Training is similar but is more "practical" teaching. We show them how to live a righteousness life. We set an example of living as God instructs us to live.

The only way we know how to live right and train others to live right is to know and absorb the Word of God and then teach others what we have learned.

*I. I give you this charge... **with careful instruction** (NIV-NASB) **...teaching** (ESV)*

This whole passage begins and ends with teaching or with giving "careful instruction". The importance of right teaching can hardly be overemphasized. If we want the Spirit of God to use our teaching, we must teach it accurately.

Immediately following 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2 is the following warning which stresses the need to correctly teach the Word of God.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

*Chapter Nine***Biblical Warnings Against False Teaching**

In our classes we have seen that in the Word of God we are instructed over and over again to teach and preach the Word and to teach it accurately. In the New Testament there are well over one hundred verses that in one way or another warn us about wrong doctrine. There are many Scriptures warning us against false teaching and false teachers. This is evidently very important to God, since He warned us so many times. Wrong teaching can and does lead to lack of growth, lack of fruit, lack of joy, and to frustration in our walk with God. In the unsaved, it can lead to an eternity in hell, separated from God forever.

In this chapter we are going to take a glimpse at some of these Scriptures.

The kinds of false teaching are endless. There are world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and many more that are false to the core. There are many cults such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, and many others that claim to believe the Bible, but again, they are false to the core. Roman Catholicism is a false system that has enough Biblical truth that it deceives many honest seekers. There are many "Christian" denominations that claim to teach and follow the Bible, but they deny that it is absolute truth or that it is the inerrant Word of God. As a result, they can teach a social and political gospel that has little resemblance to the Biblical truth.

One example of mixed truth and error is the so called "prosperity doctrine". In some Christian circles today, there is a prominent teaching that if you give, God will make you rich. They teach that God wants every Christian to be wealthy. Just have faith and God will give you everything you want---large elaborate homes, expensive luxury cars, the most elaborate showy wardrobes, and so on. This is a greed-driven "prosperity gospel" that is taught in many sectors of Christianity today. This doctrine most often appears in the modern charismatic movement and is known by several different titles---the Word of Faith movement, the Faith Formula, Positive Confession, or Name It and Claim It. They all essentially teach that "faith" can be used to influence God for their own selfish gain whenever they want. The movement claims to be able to teach you what to do in order to get God to deliver all the money and possessions imaginable. Often what you supposedly need to do is give a big offering to the person doing the preaching and then God will supposedly give us everything we could possibly want. In reality, the only ones getting rich are the ones receiving all the offerings.

Don't be taken in by this movement. It is a gross distortion of Biblical truth. It is a distortion of many Old Testament promises that teach that we will be blessed and will prosper if we will honor God in the way we live our lives.

Individuals such as Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuler claim to believe the Bible but only preach the so called "positive" parts of Scripture. They completely deny or ignore things such as sin, hell, and the shed blood of Christ.

Within Baptist circles there is a tendency to be careless with Scripture and teach what we think Scripture says rather than taking time to dig out the truth. Often, we simply teach what we have heard someone else say, rather than teaching the Bible itself.

Much of false teaching seems to center around two important topics—salvation and our Lord Jesus Christ. It seems that only a few teach that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. Many things are added to faith. Works, sacraments, baptism, speaking in tongues, and many other things are added to salvation. It is all an attempt to make man and his own effort responsible for salvation. Many cults deny that Jesus is God. Jehovah's Witnesses say He was the highest created angel. Mormons say He was a man (the brother of Satan) who became a god. We can identify false teachers as those who distort fundamental teachings of Scripture such as:

- A. the inspiration and inerrancy of all of the Word of God
- B. who the Lord Jesus Christ is
- C. the trinity
- D. the way of salvation
- E. the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, the death and resurrection of Christ
- F. the accuracy of the Biblical record of creation and the flood as recorded in Genesis
- G. the authority of the Word of God

We can also identify false teachers as those who:

- A. handle Scripture in such a careless manner as to distort its teaching.
- B. make untrue statements (either intentionally or unintentionally) about what the Bible teaches.

We know that Satan is a liar. There is no truth in him. It seems that his most effective tool is deception. If Satan can undermine our confidence in the authority of the Word of God, then he has made a major step in destroying the foundation of the church.

In modern thinking, there are so many shades of teaching that undercut the Word of God that it is hard to understand them all. Following are some kinds of thinking that are present in many Christian churches today:

- A. Many in Christian circles believe that human reason, not the Bible, is the way to discover truth.
- B. Others say that there is no absolute authoritative truth, in the Bible or anywhere else.
- C. Many teach that appealing to unchurched people is more important than teaching right doctrine.
- D. Some teach that we must modify Biblical truth to make it relevant to unbelievers.
- E. Others emphasize teaching what is practical. If it accomplishes what you want, then teach it. If it doesn't work, don't teach it.
- F. Others teach that the Bible was not written to be understood, just to be read for inspiration. It is not necessary or important to teach it or understand it as authoritative truth.
- G. Many teach that my experience or the experience of others is equal to or more authoritative than what the Bible teaches.
- H. Many feel that programs, techniques, and entertaining music programs are more important than teaching sound doctrine.
- I. Many feel that in order to win the world we should become like the world, so the world will be drawn to the church. We must not offend the world with sound doctrine.
- J. Many believe that tolerance is a higher principle than Biblical teaching.

It is not the cults who are teaching these kinds of thinking; it is mainstream Christianity. If we want our churches to be based solidly on the foundation of authoritative solid Biblical truth, we need to tenaciously commit ourselves to rightly dividing and teaching the Word of Truth.

It is very true that we need to be very alert in protecting our churches against falling for every wind of doctrine. However, we must also recognize that there are times when solid Bible believing and teaching groups will have some disagreements over some teachings of Scripture. There are some solid Bible teachers who disagree with us over the timing of the rapture. This does not make them false teachers.

Revelation 1:9-3:22 * Messages to Seven Churches

Following are outlines of the message given to each church. These outlines do not replace your careful reading and absorbing the truths given in each message. To get lasting value from these messages, you must carefully read, think about, and absorb these truths out of the Bible itself.

Revelation 2:1-7 * Message to the Church at Ephesus

A. Positives about this church

- ...They worked hard.
- ...They persevered.
- ...They did not tolerate wicked men.
- ...They tested those who claimed to be apostles.
- ...They endured hardship.
- ...They hated the practices of the Nicolaitans. (The Nicolaitans denied the fundamentals of Scripture and they practiced a loose immoral lifestyle.)

B. Negatives about this church

- ...They had lost their first love.

C. God's instructions to them

- ...Remember from where you have fallen.
- ...Repent.
- ...Do the things you did at first.

D. Warning to church

- ...Failure to repent will result in the church being removed.

Revelation 2:8-11 * Message to the Church at Smyrna

A. Positives about this church

- ...They suffered afflictions and poverty; yet they were rich.
- ...They had been slandered.

...They would suffer continued persecution, prison and even death.

B. Negatives about this church—**None**

C. God's instructions to them

...Be faithful, even to the point of death.

D. Warning to church—**None**

Revelation 2:12-17 * Message to the Church at Pergamum

A. Positives about this church

...They remained true to God's name.

...They did not renounce their faith even when one of them (Antipas) was put to death.

B. Negatives about this church

...They tolerated the teachings of Balaam (free living and immorality).

...They tolerated the teaching of the Nicolaitans. (The Nicolaitans denied the fundamentals of Scripture and they practiced a loose immoral lifestyle.)

C. God's instructions to them

...Repent.

D. Warning to church

...If you do not repent, I will come and fight against you with the sword out of My mouth.

Revelation 2:18-28 * Message to the Church at Thyatira

A. Positives about this church

...They practiced right deeds.

...They had love and faith.

...They served and they persevered.

...They were doing more than they did at first.

B. Negatives about this church

...They tolerated a false teacher (the false prophetess, Jezebel).

...They tolerated immorality.

...They tolerated eating of food offered to idols.

C. God's instructions to them

...To those who tolerate Jezebel---repent.

...To those who do not tolerate Jezebel—hold on to what you have until I come.

D. Warning to church

...I will cast Jezebel on a bed of suffering.

...I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer intensely.

...I will strike her children dead.

Revelation 3:1-6 * Message to the Church at Sardis

A. Positives about this church

...They had a few people who have not soiled their clothes (by sin).

B. Negatives about this church

...They had a reputation for being alive, but they were dead.

C. God's instructions to them

...Wake up.

...Strengthen what remains, what is about to die.

...Remember what you receive.

...Obey.

...Repent.

D. Warning to church

...(Jesus) will come like a thief.

Revelation 3:7-13 * Message to the Church at Philadelphia

A. Positives about this church

...God had given them an open door that no one could shut.

...They had a little strength.

...They had kept God's Word.

...They had not denied the name of God.

...They had kept God's command to patiently endure.

B. Negatives about this church---None

C. God's instructions to them

...Hold on to what you have.

D. Warning to church---None

Revelation 3:14-22 * Message to the Church at Laodicea

A. Positives about this church---None

B. Negatives about this church

...You are neither hot nor cold.

...You are lukewarm.

...They thought themselves rich and had acquired wealth, but they were wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

C. God's instructions to them

...Buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

...Be earnest and repent.

...Invite Him to come in and eat with them.

D. Warning to church--- "I am about to spit you out of My mouth..."

Biblical Texts and False Teaching

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3

Hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Matthew 24:10-11

Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. Hebrews 13:9

Some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

1 Timothy 4:1

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! Acts 20:29-31a

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'

Matthew 7:21-23

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy

interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. 1 Timothy 6:3-5

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 1 John 2:18

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 2 John 1:7

Godless chatter --- 2 Timothy 2:16

Godless myths --- 1 Timothy 4:7

Let no one deceive you with empty words... Ephesians 5:6

Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have labored at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror. All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame...Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you.

Isaiah 47:12-15

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Isaiah 8:19

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, ...

Colossians 2:18-19

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. Colossians 2:20-23

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are

not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Romans 16:17-18

The Fruit, or Results, of Teaching Biblical Truth (Right Doctrine)

equips people to do the work of God --- 2 Timothy 3:17

builds a solid church --- Ephesians 4:12-16

builds a solid foundation for life --- Matthew 7:24-27

Sound doctrine encourages. --- Titus 1:9

truth that leads to godliness --- Titus 1:1

You will save both yourself and your hearers. (Note: In this context, “save” is not referring to salvation but to being saved from wrong teaching.) 1 Timothy 4:16

Whoever continues in the right teaching has both the Father and the Son. 2 John 1:9

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7b-8

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. I Corinthians 2:4-5

If you point these things out (false teaching), you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 4:6

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 4:2

**The Fruit, or Results, of Not Teaching Sound Doctrine,
or of Not Teaching the Whole Counsel of God,
or of Teaching False Doctrine,
or of Teaching Mixed Doctrine (Truth Mixed With Untruth)**

(The opposite of everything that is the fruit of truth or right teaching [doctrine])

In 1 Timothy 1:9-10 there is a list of things given which are “contrary to sound doctrine”. In other words, these are the fruit of wrong teaching. This list includes lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, those who kill their fathers or mothers, murderers, adulterers and perverts, slave traders and liars and perjurers.

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
1 Corinthians 2:14

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30

change the grace of God into a license for immorality --- Jude 1:4

God destroyed those who did not believe. Jude 1:5

people thrown into confusion --- Galatians 1:7

ruins those who listen --- 2 Timothy 2:14

become more and more ungodly --- 2 Timothy 2:16

teaching will spread like gangrene --- 2 Timothy 2:17

destroy the faith of some --- 2 Timothy 2:18

ruining whole households --- Titus 1:11

Honor God with their talk, but their heart is far from God. Their worship is in vain.
Matthew 15:8-9

Whoever continues in wrong teaching does not have the Father or the Son. 2 John 1:9

Wrong teaching promotes controversies rather than God’s work. 1 Timothy 1:4

meaningless talk --- 1 Timothy 1:6

abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons --- 1 Timothy 4:1

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Ephesians 5:6

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'
Matthew 7:21-23

Methods Used By False Teachers

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. Jude 1:4

shepherds who feed only themselves --- Jude 1:12

In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. 2 Peter 2:3

Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand... Jude 1:10

They flatter others for their own advantage. Jude 1:16

men who divide you... Jude 1:19

quarreling about words --- 2 Timothy 2:14

worm their way into homes and gain control over weak willed women --- 2 Timothy 3:6

wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming
Ephesians 4:14

rules taught by men --- Matthew 15:9

pervert the Gospel of Christ --- Galatians 1:7

They will secretly introduce destructive teaching. 2 Peter 2:1

blaspheme in matters they do not understand --- 2 Peter 2:12

They seduce the unstable. 2 Peter 2:14

They appeal to the lustful desires of the sinful nature. 2 Peter 2:18

They entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. (new Christians)
2 Peter 2:18

They promise freedom. 2 Peter 2:19

Don't let anyone deceive you. 2 Thessalonians 2:3

They deliberately forget. 2 Peter 3:5

I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine sounding arguments. Colossians 2:4

By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Romans 16:18

Descriptions of Those Who Do Not Teach Sound Doctrine (Truth) or Who Do Not Teach the Whole Truth

They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. 1 Timothy 1:7

savage wolves who will not spare the flock --- Acts 20:29

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. Matthew 7:15

men whose condemnation was written about long ago --- Jude 1:4

Godless men --- Jude 1:4

dreamers, reject authority --- Jude 1:8

Woe to them! unreasoning animals --- Jude 1:10, 11

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm -- shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted -- twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.
Jude 1:12-13

These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. Jude 1:16

scoffers, do not have the Spirit --- Jude 1:18, 19

having a form of godliness but denying its power --- 2 Timothy 3:5

loaded down with sin, swayed by evil desires --- 2 Timothy 3:6

always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth --- 2 Timothy 3:7

men of depraved minds --- 2 Timothy 3:8

deceivers --- Titus 1:10

for the sake of dishonest gain --- Titus 1:11

Their minds and consciences are corrupted. Titus 1:15

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. Titus 1:16

detestable, disobedient, unfit --- Titus 1:16

Let them be eternally condemned. Galatians 1:8-9

denying the sovereign Lord who bought them --- 2 Peter 2:1

bold and arrogant --- 2 Peter 2:10

Eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning. 2 Peter 2:14

They have left the straight way. 2 Peter 2:15

They are springs without water. 2 Peter 2:17

mists driven by a storm --- 2 Peter 2:17

empty boastful words --- 2 Peter 2:18

heart is not right before God --- Acts 8:21

hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron --- 1 Timothy 4:2

scoffers...following their own evil desires --- 2 Peter 3:3

He is conceited and understands nothing. 1 Timothy 6:4

unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels --- 1 Timothy 6:4

Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, ... Philippians 3:2

...his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, ... Colossians 2:18-19

Chapter *Ten***Correctly Understanding or “Interpreting” the Word of God**

When we talk about “interpreting” a passage in the Bible, we are simply talking about correctly understanding what that passage is teaching.

In the greatest majority of Biblical passages, the meaning is clear. It does not need to be “interpreted”. It simply means what it says. The way to understand the greatest majority of Scripture is to read and re-read a passage a number of times, to meditate, and to ask God to open up your understanding of that passage. We don’t need to become experts at “interpreting” Scripture in order to understand most of the Word of God.

There are times when “interpretation” has become a cop out for rebellion. There have been a number of times when I was explaining a passage of Scripture to a group when someone has said, “that’s just your interpretation”. They were not actually questioning my “interpretation”, they were just unwilling to accept what the Bible clearly taught. Sometimes I would reply, “No, that is not my interpretation; that’s just what the Bible says”.

One does not have to be a Bible scholar to correctly understand most of the Bible. There is a place for scholars who know the Hebrew and Greek and who spend their life studying and teaching the Word. They help us who are not scholars. He has also given us pastors to teach and encourage us to walk close to Him. He has given us teachers who help to explain the truths of Scripture. However, to correctly understand the Word of God, it is much more important to be a Godly, Spirit-filled individual than it is to be a Biblical scholar.

The uneducated lay person can know and correctly understand from the Word of God all that is needed to be a Godly individual who glorifies God, who is led by the Spirit of God, who walks close to God, who is a faithful productive servant of God, and who fulfills the will and purpose of God in his life.

Basic Principles of Good Bible Interpretation

While by far the greatest majority of Biblical passages are clear, there are a few basic rules of interpretation that will help us to stay on the right track as we study and seek to correctly understand the Word of God. Scholars, pastors, teachers and laymen all need to follow these basic rules.

There is a small paperback book written by R. A. Torrey entitled, The Importance and Value of Proper Bible Study, (1921). This is an excellent little book on correctly understanding the Bible. The outline and the wording of the following principles often reflects the outline given in this book.

1. Get absolutely right with God yourself by the absolute surrender of your will to God.

This is the most fundamental of all rules when it comes to correctly understanding the Word. The Spirit of God enables us to understand spiritual truth. A person who is not letting the Spirit of God lead and control him will never correctly understand even basic Biblical truths. And he and will certainly never understand the depths of the Word of God.

2. Be committed to finding out just what God intended to teach in a Biblical passage, rather than what you want that passage to teach.

We must be honest with the Word of God. Sometimes it is a temptation to slightly misrepresent or misinterpret what a passage of Scripture is teaching in order to make it appear to support what we are teaching. We are profaning the Word if we misrepresent it in even the smallest way.

Another temptation is to find a Bible translation that seems to say what we want it to say, and then use that translation to make our point. Sometimes one translation is more clear than others but we must be very careful to be honest in our teaching and understanding of the Word.

If we do not correctly understand and honestly teach a passage of Scripture, we lose the power and authority that comes from correctly teaching the Word of God.

3. Get the most accurate text.

It is interesting that Mr. Torrey mentions this when writing nearly one hundred years ago when there were only a few translations. He wanted people to read and study the Word from the most accurate texts (versions or translations) available.

This principle is still true today. Some good translations to use are the New King James Version, the New American Standard Bible, the English Standard Version, and the New International Version. There are times when a paraphrase such as the Amplified Bible or the New Testament Expanded Translation by Kenneth Wuest will help us to understand a passage. The New International Readers Version is written in very simple language and can be helpful at times.

Of these translations, the New American Standard Bible and the English Standard Version are generally recognized as being a very good, accurate translations. It would be a good idea for every pastor or teacher to have these and use them in his study of the Word of God.

4. Interpret the Bible literally.

Someone has said that “when the literal sense makes good sense, don’t look for any other sense, or you will wind up with nonsense”.

When we study the Bible, we should understand the Bible to mean exactly what it says unless the passage itself indicates otherwise. The Bible often uses teaching tools such as word pictures, illustrations, parables, and figurative language. The context will determine if the passage is literal or figurative.

In the following two sentences it is clear that “plowed” is used literally in the first sentence and it is used figuratively in the second sentence.

*The farmer plowed his field after the field had dried out from the heavy spring rains.
After returning from his vacation, John plowed through the paperwork on his desk.*

From the context, it is clear the second sentence uses “plowed” figuratively. The same principle applies to the Word of God. We take the meaning in its literal sense unless the context calls for a figurative use of the word.

When the Bible uses figurative language, its usage is normally clear and helps us to understand what is being taught. Following are some uses of figurative language in passages that teach about the Word of God itself.

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire. Isaiah 55:10-11

Is not My word like fire," declares the LORD, " and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? Jeremiah 23:29

The following is a quote from Richard W. De Haan’s book, You Can Understand the Bible, from pages 61 and 62 as he talks about Isaiah 11:6-10.

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious. Isaiah 11:6-10

“The context will immediately indicate that this refers to the time when Jesus will reign upon the earth and set up His kingdom. Those who are given to spiritualizing Scripture will make the wolf represent one thing, the lamb another, and the lion something else. Some will even tell us this passage means that the day is coming when the world, representing one sect or

denomination of Christianity, will make peace with and unite with some other religious sect or denomination. But when we begin to interpret in this manner, one guess is as good or as bad as another. If I were to use this method, I could claim that the wolf is the United States, the lion is Britain, the bear is Russia, and conclude that this passage teaches these three will ultimately make peace. Such are the vagaries of spiritualizing the Scriptures. How much easier it is to believe literally that when Jesus comes and the Kingdom is set up, even the animals will be at peace with one another, become docile, lose their carnivorous nature, and dwell together in safety.”

Mr. De Haan goes on to write,

“A Biblical expression or its immediate context will enable anyone with common sense to recognize when a passage must be interpreted figuratively. At one time Jesus denounced the Pharisees, saying, “For ye devour widows’ houses.” Now we would all agree that lumber and nails would be rather indigestible. There the Lord Jesus was speaking figuratively as He exposed these men for gaining wealth by taking advantage of widows. Interpret every passage literally unless the literal sense makes no sense.”

5. Accept what is said or taught without “spiritualizing” a passage.

Part of understanding the Scriptures literally is to avoid spiritualizing a text. Spiritualizing Scripture is to give “spiritual” meanings to passages that are not called for by the text or context itself. Spiritualizing makes “spiritual applications” of Biblical passages that have no foundation in the text or context. The Bible is full of genuine spiritual teaching and there is no need to make up spiritual teaching or application that is not actually taught in a passage of Scripture.

Following are some examples of “spiritualizing” a text.

There is a true story about a married couple who came into a church for counseling. Apparently they had originally decided not get married; however, they heard a sermon based on the Israelites walking around Jericho seven times and the walls collapsing. The preacher said that if a prospective husband would walk around his prospective bride seven times, that any future problems in their marriage would collapse like the walls of Jericho. Based on that, the future husband walked around his future bride seven times and then married her. He soon discovered that all the problems had not collapsed and, after years in a difficult marriage, they came to the church for counseling.

This sounds a little humorous and far-fetched; yet the story is true and it is an example of what can result from wrongly “spiritualizing” a passage of the Word of God.

In a Bible conference, a speaker spoke about Lazarus being raised from the dead. He said that Lazarus was a vivid picture of the church and that the resurrection of Lazarus was a picture of the rapture of the church. As Lazarus had suffered and died so the church would suffer and die in the tribulation, but God would raise them up again after the tribulation was over. This, of course, is silliness and this kind of teaching can lead to all kinds of nonsense and false teaching. There is no Biblical justification for saying that Lazarus is a picture of the church.

This kind of teaching easily leads to many kinds of false and inaccurate teaching. Much false teaching stems from wrongly spiritualizing a passage of Scripture.

Spiritualizing can lead to just about any kind of foolish and false teaching. In fact, you really don't even need Scripture for this kind of teaching. I can vividly remember a sermon based on a *Star Wars* episode, that had no Biblical truth to it whatsoever.

Just for the irony of it, let's see what kind of teaching we can do with the nursery rhyme, "Little Bo Peep".

*Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep
and doesn't know where to find them.
Leave them alone,
and they'll come home,
wagging their tails behind them.*

By spiritualizing this nursery rhyme, we can learn that many of God's people who were his sheep are now lost. They are lost and even God can't find them to bring them back. But if we will be patient, they will all eventually get saved again and return to the fold. When they return, they will all be happy again just like Little Bo Peep's happy sheep who all came home wagging their tails behind them.

This may sound far out and even a little offensive, but it is not such a far out example of what people can do by spiritualizing a text of Scripture. Most anything imaginable can be incorrectly taught by spiritualizing Scripture.

Some will even go so far as to teach that most of the stories of the Bible did not really happen but they were put in the Bible so that we could learn "spiritual" lessons from them. This, of course, is a rejection of the truthfulness of the Word of God, even though they claim that it teaches "spiritual" lessons.

6. Note the exact force of each word used.

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 5:15

All of the Scripture is inspired by God. Yet, we habitually pass over words and phrases that God put in His Word. No single word or phrase is in Scripture by accident. God has a purpose for every single word. Each word is part of the context. If we are going to correctly understand the Word of God, we will have to learn to look at every word and phrase to see why it is there and how it contributes to what God is teaching by a passage.

An excellent example of this is the Lord's prayer in Luke 11 and Matthew 6. Essentially every word of this model prayer is loaded with meaning; yet very few take time to look at it and, as a result, we miss out on many rich blessings of prayer. Understanding the words and phrases of this

prayer and putting them into practice would result in many spiritual blessings.

Another very good example of the importance of individual words is Psalm 23:1. One can go through this verse and, by focusing on each word, find important truths that come from that word.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1

7. Interpret the words used in any verse according to Bible usage.

There are times when we will not understand a particular word of Scripture. To understand what a Biblical word means, it is important to understand how it is used in the Bible, rather than how it is used in modern English. Looking a word up in an English dictionary (Webster) may help a little but most of the time it will not give a very good explanation of its Biblical usage.

A. To begin to understand what a Biblical word means, look at how it is used in the sentence. That will give an idea of what it means.

B. Look in Strong's Concordance to find where else the word is used. Then look at how it is used in other Bible passages. This is an excellent step in understanding the Biblical usage of a word.

C. A Bible dictionary, such as Wycliffe's Bible Dictionary, will often give a good explanation of Biblical words.

D. Often the most accurate source will be a good dictionary of Bible words such as Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words. Find the word number in Strong's Concordance and then simply look up that number in Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words.

8. Do not allow the world's way of thinking to influence your understanding of Biblical truth.

God's truth is seldom in harmony with the world's way of thinking. The Bible is in direct opposition to much of what the world believes and teaches. Ideas, concepts, and philosophies developed by men apart from God seldom agree with God's revealed truth in the Word of God. This is clear to anyone who is genuinely committed to correctly understanding the Word of Truth.

Yet in spite of this, there are those who will attempt to show that the Bible supports essentially every worldly concept that comes along. When the women's movement became strong, many writers tried to show that the Bible doesn't emphasize that wives are to submit to their husbands. They tried to soften the Bible's teaching in order to make it more compatible with the world's way of thinking. As psychology has gained predominance, hundreds of books have tried to integrate modern psychology and Biblical teaching. As the world tries to deal with guilt, it has emphasized forgiving oneself rather than seeking God's forgiveness. As this came to the forefront of human thinking, sure enough, many

Christians began to teach how to forgive oneself rather than emphasizing repentance and seeking God's forgiveness.

We must guard against interpreting the Bible in such a way as to make it compatible with man's thinking. Let God be God. He is the revealer of genuine truth. We must never subjugate God to man by manipulating His truth to make it conform to man.

Today in Christianity there is major disagreement as to whether the word "day" as used in Genesis 1 is to be understood as a literal 24-hour day or is "day" to be understood as a long period of time -- millions, even billions, of years long.

God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning -- the first day. Genesis 1:5

God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning -- the second day. Genesis 1:8

And there was evening, and there was morning -- the third day. Genesis 1:13

In Scripture, the vast majority of times when day is used, it is referring to a literal 24-hour day. If it means anything else other than a literal 24-hour day, the context or the rest of Scripture will determine the meaning. In the following verses "day" or "days" is used three times. Twice it refers to a longer period of time and once it refers to a literal day. The context makes the meaning clear.

As it was in the *days* of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the *days* before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the *day* Noah entered the ark; Matthew 24:37-38

In Genesis 1, how do we know if it is referring to a 24-hour day or a long period of time? The answer should be simple. We look at the context to determine if anything other than a 24-hour day is called for. The answer is no. There is nothing in the text that indicates that the seven days are anything other than literal 24-hour days.

However, many still interpret these day as long periods of time. The basic reason this is done is to accommodate man's theories of evolution. After Darwin wrote in the middle 1800's, most Christians accepted man's claims to have proven the theory of evolution, and then set about to reinterpret the Bible to try to make it compatible with evolution. They went through all kinds of theological gymnastics and rearranging of Scripture to do this.

Those who strive to make the Word of God in Genesis 1-3 compatible with the word of man also try to say that the flood was not a worldwide flood. Instead, they say it was just a local flood. Any individual honestly reading the Biblical account of the flood will conclude that it was a worldwide flood. Yet, in order to comply with man's teaching about evolution, they try to use theological gymnastics to show that the flood was only a local flood. This places a higher trust in man than in God. This cannot be, and we must not do it.

9. Interpret individual verses with a regard to the context.

The context of a Bible verse is the verses which come before and after the verse you are studying. If you ignore the verses which come before and after what you are studying, you may make a big mistake in correctly understanding a passage of Scripture.

If I heard the following sentence, “Bill and Monica played checkers and Monica beat Bill.”, but I only repeated part of it, I would be taking that part out of context. It could sound like this, “Monica beat Bill”. That is a totally different meaning than when it was in its context.

A fundamental rule of all Bible study and interpreting is to understand the context of a passage. One needs to read and understand the entire passage rather than a single word, phrase or verse by itself.

One good example of this is in Philippians 4:19 where God promises to supply all our needs. Most teach and apply this verse in a very broad way, but within the context Paul is thanking them for their financial support which was sacrificially given by the Philippians. Paul then assures them that God will supply all of their need. Rather than making a very broad application of this verse, it is more accurate to teach that if we will financially take care of missionaries, God will supply our needs.

Many people take Scripture passages out of context. They will quote just the part of the verse they want. By taking a Bible verse out of context, you can make it seem to say things it is not really saying.

10. Interpret individual passages in the light of parallel or related passages.

When a passage is not real clear, we should read other related passages to understand the Bible’s teaching on a given topic. The Bible never contradicts itself. We should understand what the Bible teaches on a particular topic before we teach the meaning of an individual passage.

11. Interpret obscure passages in the light of passages whose meanings are clear.

There are some passages that are not real clear as to their meaning. In 1 Corinthians 15:29 it talks about being “baptized for the dead”. Commentators are divided as to what this means and none seem to know for sure. While we may not know exactly what it does mean, we know that it is not saying that we can be baptized for the unsaved dead and they will be saved. Some teach this but it violates many clear passages of Scripture; so this is ruled out as a possible interpretation.

The whole teaching that a person can lose his salvation would evaporate if this principle of interpretation were correctly followed.

12. When studying the Bible, it is a good idea to recognize the style of writing that you are reading.

In the Bible there are many different kinds of writing, or “genre”, as it is often called. In the Bible there are many different kinds of writing such as narrative, history, law, discourses, sermons, poetry, parables, proverbs, and prophetic or apocalyptic. It would be a good idea to recognize the various kinds of writing and appreciate the various writing styles.

It is not the purpose of this lesson to digest each kind of writing and how to study it. Following is a very brief look at some of them and some principles of interpretation:

Narrative tells what happened. Most of the historical parts of the Bible are narrative. If the Bible says it happened, we accept it as truth and believe it.

A *discourse* is a sermon or teaching. Much of the four gospels and Paul’s letters are primarily teaching or doctrine. Some of these may be heavy, but they need to be studied and understood.

There is *poetic writing* throughout the Bible. An understanding of Hebrew poetry will help to understand what is being said in poetic writing. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastics are all poetic books. One needs to get acquainted with each book and understand who wrote it and why.

Poets do not tell stories but they teach truth with feelings. They stir our souls as they express much of what we ourselves often feel. There is much that can be learned from poetic passages of Scripture; however, heavy doctrine is best taught from doctrinal parts of Scripture.

A *parable* can be described as a story with a spiritual meaning. Jesus told many parables. It was one of his primary means of teaching. A parable is an illustration of a spiritual truth. They illustrate one central spiritual truth. That truth can be distorted or even covered up if we take every minor segment of the parable and assign a meaning to it. Don’t try to make it teach more than it was meant to teach. Use the parable to understand the major spiritual truth for which it is given.

There are some parables in the Old Testament but most parables are found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Most of the parables have three parts which are the setting, the story, and the application. It is important to remember that parables normally have one main point. Do not make the mistake of trying to find the spiritual lesson in the many details, but instead look for the central message. When interpreting a parable, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- A. Take note of the story’s natural lesson. The spiritual lesson will be based on that.
- B. Try to determine why the parable was given. In Luke 10:28 a question was asked of Jesus which caused Him to tell the parable of the good Samaritan. Taking note of the question will help you determine the main teaching of that parable.
- C. Find the main teaching of the parable. Sometimes Jesus will summarize the main thought Himself. At other times you will have to determine it from the story.

A *proverb* is short saying that expresses a general truth. A proverb is a truth that is true in the majority of times, but it is not a moral absolute law in which there will never be an exception.

Probably the hardest of all Scripture to accurately understand are the *prophetic* parts of Scripture. Good reliable commentaries can be a big help in understanding these parts of Scripture; however, any Christian can read these parts of Scripture and be greatly blessed. We may not understand all the details but we can get a general flow of what will happen and live in the light of Biblical prophecy and know that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming back and we will be with Him forever.

Chapter Eleven

Preparation To Teach or Preach and the Use of Illustrations and Questions

In his book, The Importance and Value of Proper Bible Study: (1921, Moody Press) R.A. Torrey gives the following guidelines for studying the Word of God:

1. Study the Bible itself.
2. Study the Bible – really study it.
3. Study the Bible daily.
4. Study the Bible to find out what it actually teaches.
5. Meditate long and profoundly on what you find taught in the Bible.
6. Store the Bible up in your memory.
7. Study the whole Bible.
8. Study the Bible as the Word of God.
9. Study the Bible with your will wholly surrendered to God.
10. Study the Bible to learn how to live your life, and then live your life that way.
11. Study your Bible under the Holy Spirit's direction.
12. Study your Bible with a child-like mind.
13. Study the Bible systematically.

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage --with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

The preaching and teaching of the Word of God is one of the most fundamental purposes of the church. No church will be any stronger than its ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God. It may be a large church with many programs, but if the preaching and teaching ministry is weak, it will be a weak and ineffective church.

The quality of our preaching and teaching depends in a large measure on five things.

1. Are we genuinely called and gifted by God to preach or teach?
2. Our own walk with God. If we ourselves are not deeply committed to walking close to God, we will never be able to teach others to be good disciples of our Lord.

3. How well we know the Word of God. If we are not committed to studying and continually growing in our knowledge and understanding of the Word, we will never lead others to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Word.
4. The quality of our preparation to teach and preach. Lack of preparation will lead to poor preaching and teaching, even if we are very knowledgeable about the Word.
5. A person's desire to be trained and to grow and develop as a pastor or teacher.

This lesson will focus on preparation, which is number four of these five very important qualities of an effective pastor or teacher. A pastor/teacher may be called by God, be committed to walking close to God, and have a good knowledge of the Word of God, but if he does not have a good pattern of preparation, he will not be a very effective teacher.

Pastors and teachers must discipline and commit themselves to regularly reading and studying the Word. They must develop a love and a hunger for the Word of God. Study motivated by necessity or guilt will not be very effective. However, even with a love for the Word, it still takes discipline.

It is very important that we study the Bible itself. There are times we need to read books about the Bible; however, studying the Bible itself must be the heart of our study.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the Spirit will lead; therefore study and preparation is not needed. All Godly pastors and teachers have known times when the Spirit has led them to preach or teach a message other than the one prepared, but this does not mean we don't need to study and prepare. The Spirit of God has given the instruction to study. There is no Biblical promise relating to the Spirit of God that overrules that command.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

As we seek to make disciples in obedience to the "great commission" and other Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ promises to be with us. All of us must continually be dependent on Him as we seek to do His work.

It is God who works through us, but that does not mean that we do not use our mental abilities. God gives wisdom and understanding. These are major themes in Scripture. Ask God for wisdom and direction, and then use the understanding and wisdom He gives you to make good decisions as you prepare to teach.

As teachers and preachers, we must strive to accurately preach and teach the Word of God. However, we must also have passion in our ministry. If we ourselves do not deeply love the truths we are teaching, we will not convince others that they need to love our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him. Psalm 126:6

Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long. Psalm 119:97

There is no question that this kind of preparation takes time. We are busy people. Many pastors have full time secular jobs to provide for their families. They must take time to be with their families and they must take time to be a pastor of those God has placed under their care. They must also take time to prepare. Where does one find the time to do it all? This writer does not have all the answers, but if God has called us to be pastors and teachers, He will also enable us to do the work. We must determine what is most important and put our time there.

If we have accepted a call to preach and teach, then we have also committed ourselves to preparation. We must re-arrange our schedule and probably stop some other less important activities. If we simply cannot do this, then it may be time to re-examine our call to preach or teach.

Suggestions for Preparing to Preach or Teach

Following are some practical guidelines that can be very helpful in preparing to preach and teach the Word of God:

Step One. Prepare your own heart to seek the leading of the Spirit of God.

As we have stated many times before, if you are not walking close to the Lord, you will never be effective in leading others to be good disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Step Two. Choose a Bible book or passage to teach.

Remember we, as preachers and teachers, are to ***Preach the Word***. The Word of God should not be like the national anthem which is heard at the beginning of a game (message) and not heard again until the beginning of the next game (message). The Word must be taught throughout the message, not just occasionally talked about or referred to. We must teach God's Word, not our word.

One of the most effective ways to teach the Word of God is to take one Bible book at a time and teach through that book, one section (verse or paragraph) at a time.

A pastor or teacher should pray and ask for wisdom and direction from the Spirit of God as they decide which book to go through. Generally speaking, it is best to cover an entire book.

There will be times when a pastor will sense the need to preach on a particular topic or he may want to preach or teach on a chapter or two from a book; however, as a general rule, it is best to preach

through an entire book.

A wise pastor or teacher will take into consideration the needs of his people as he makes this important decision.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

Step Three. Begin your study by reading the book or passage many times.

Once a person has decided on a book to teach, he/she needs to read the whole book through many times. One pastor said that he would not preach through a book of the Bible until he had read it at least forty times.

As you read, regularly ask God to give you a good understanding of the Word. Read the book carefully and thoughtfully. Meditate on truths you discover in the book. Pray through many of the passages. Give God praise and thanks for the truths as you go through the book.

Many Bible books can be read in less than an hour. Some can be read in just a few minutes. Some of the longer books will probably take several days. No matter whether the book is a short book or a long one, it needs to be read through several times and absorbed before beginning to teach the book.

In most cases it will be very helpful to read the book in two or three different translations of the Bible. The King James Version, the New King James Version, the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the New International Readers Version and the English Standard Version are all helpful translations. There are times that a paraphrase such as the Amplified Bible or the New Testament Expanded Translation by Kenneth Wuest will help us to understand a passage.

It is the opinion of this writer that some of the translations, such as The Message, simply take too much liberty with the language and should not be used for serious study.

If you are preparing to teach one of the longer books, you will need to get started with your preparation several weeks, or even months, before you start teaching it. Depending on the length of the book and how thorough a study of the book it will be, it will take this long to adequately prepare to teach through a book.

Step Four. Gather information about the book or passage.

Once a person has decided on a book to teach, he/she needs to not only read the book several times, he also needs to do some background reading on that book. Knowing this basic background material on a book will be a boost to your understanding of the book.

Following is some information you will want to learn:

1. Who wrote the book?
2. Who was it written to?
3. What prompted the author to write it, or what is the reason it was written?
4. What is the basic theme of the book?
5. What is the basic outline of the book?
6. What was the city or country like where they lived? For example, it is a help in understanding 1 and 2 Corinthians when we understand something about the city of Corinth.
7. Other pertinent information.

This kind of information can be found in resources such as:

1. Study Bibles - John MacArthur's NASB Study Bible is an excellent place to begin.
2. Bible dictionaries
3. Bible handbooks such as Halley's Bible Handbook
4. Bible survey books
5. Bible commentaries
6. Sunday School quarterlies
7. Listen to tapes or CD's of trusted Bible teachers such as Charles Swindoll, John MacArthur, David Jeremiah, or ???

Step Five. Decide how much to cover in one message.

After you have chosen a book or passage to teach, you will need to decide how many verses you will teach in each lesson or message. In the Old Testament, you may wish to cover about one chapter each time. In the New Testament, especially in doctrinal sections, it is more realistic to cover about one paragraph a week. This will vary depending on the kind of material being covered and how thoroughly the pastor or teacher wishes to teach the material.

Many of the more recent translations, such as the New International Version, are written in paragraph form rather than verse by verse as it is in the King James Version. It is helpful to have one of these Bibles to see how a chapter can be divided up into paragraphs. Often the paragraph divisions are natural guidelines in deciding how much to cover in one message. In the New Testament, teaching about one paragraph per message is a good guideline.

Step Six. Read the passage to be taught (chapter, paragraph, or verse) many times.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Psalm 1:1-3

Before you begin your study time, you need to be sure that there is not something that would interfere with the Spirit of God working in your life. Confess any known sin. Ask God to open your understanding as you study His Word.

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law. Psalm 119:18

After the channel between you and God is open, you are ready to begin your time of Bible study and lesson preparation. Following are steps that should form the foundation of essentially all Bible study. These steps can apply whether one is a layman or a pastor or a teacher.

1. Slowly and carefully read and re-read the passage (paragraph, chapter, or???) several times.
2. Regularly ask the Lord for understanding as you read and re-read the passage.
3. Spend time meditating and thinking about what you have read.

In the book, Enjoy Your Bible, by Irving Jensen (page 35 and following), Mr. Jensen gives the following suggestions for reading a passage of Scripture:

- A. Read the passage out loud. It may surprise you how much more you will grasp by reading a passage out loud.
- B. Read the passage carefully.
- C. Read the passage repeatedly.
- D. Read the entire context to avoid misunderstanding the passage.
- E. Read with reflection (meditation).
- F. Read the passage prayerfully.
- G. Read the passage with patience.

Don't wait until the last minute to begin preparing your next lesson. If you start early, you will have time to think and meditate on your lesson, and you are allowing God to direct your thoughts. This is very important. It can mean the difference between teaching a lesson that God has directed and teaching a lesson that you have hurriedly thrown together. If you wait until the last minute, it may leave you feeling rattled, frustrated, fearful, or insecure as you teach your lesson.

Step Seven. Ask yourself questions about the passage to be taught.

Now ask yourself some basic questions about what you have read. Writing down the answers will greatly help you to understand the Scripture and remember what you are learning.

Questions you can ask about the passage:

1. What are the basic truths in this passage?
2. What are some principles to live by from this passage?
3. What does this passage teach us about God?
4. What are the promises or warnings in this passage?
5. What truths are in this passage that should bring joy and praise to our hearts?
6. What changes do I need to make to be in line with what is taught in this passage?

7. What do I need to emphasize as I teach or preach this passage?

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:11

Step Eight. Read other Bible reference material.

Following are some suggestions that can increase your understanding of the passage you are preparing to teach:

1. It is helpful to look up other Scriptures that will shed light on a particular subject in the passage you are reading. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. Learn to explain Scripture with Scripture. Interpret a passage of Scripture in accordance with the rest of Scripture. You can use Nave's Topical Bible to help find related Scriptures.

2. Read about the passage in a Bible commentary that is known to be Biblically solid.

3. Use a sound Bible dictionary to look up any places or people you are not familiar with.

4. Look up key words in a good expository word dictionary such as Strong's Dictionary of Bible Words.

5. Read about key doctrines in Barackman's Practical Christian Theology.

As a pastor/teacher studies and prepares, he/she needs to think about what he needs to do to put what he is learning into practice. It is doubtful that one will be able to effectively encourage others to apply and put Scriptural principles into practice if he himself has not put them into practice.

Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

A wise pastor/teacher will know the needs of those he is teaching. Under the direction of the Spirit of God, he will need to decide what truths from the passage will need to be emphasized as he teaches. After going through this kind of preparation, the teacher will see much more in the passage that he will be able to teach in the one teaching/preaching session.

Remember, you are teaching people, not just teaching a lesson. Every person and every congregation is different. They come from different backgrounds; they have different levels of comprehension; they are at different levels of spiritual maturity, etc., etc., etc. As you prepare, gear your lesson to meet the needs of those you are teaching.

Step Nine. Using 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 as a guide, put together the message that you will be preaching/teaching.

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2

Following God's instructions in these verses, determine what you will teach from this passage in each of the following areas.

- A. Doctrine-teaching:** Determine what doctrines need to be taught from this passage.
- B. Rebuke- reprove:** Determine what rebukes or reproofs need to be given.
- C. Correction:** Determine what actions or attitudes need to be corrected.
- D. Encourage:** Determine how your listeners need to be encouraged from this passage.
- E. Instruction in righteousness:** Determine what instructions people need in order to put these teachings into practice.

Step Ten. Determine what illustrations or other teaching aids you will want to use to help people understand and remember what you teach.

It would be wise to have some key illustrations prepared to make teaching more effective. The next part of this lesson is geared toward helping in this area.

Step Eleven. Make the notes necessary to help you remember as you preach or teach.

It would be wise for a pastor or teacher to make some notes to follow as he teaches. The kind of notes will vary from teacher to teacher, but a pastor certainly needs to have the key points, applications, and illustrations written down. Having this information written down in note form will help the teacher to remember key points and it will help to keep him from wandering around the world and back as he preaches.

More Effective Preaching and Teaching Through Illustrations and Other Word Pictures

In the Word of God, there are many hundreds of illustrations or other word pictures that are used to

teach Biblical truth. Illustrations help us understand and remember what is taught. Following are a few examples of the hundreds of Scriptures that use illustrations or word pictures:

"Is not My word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" Jeremiah 23:29

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24

...but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:8

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. James 4:14

"I am the vine; you are the branches...." John 15:5a

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm -- shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted -- twice dead. Jude 12

..."Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:18b

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Matthew 5:6

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Psalm 1:3-4

A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out. Isaiah 42:3

You are the salt of the earth. Matthew 5:13

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

Yet, O LORD, You are our Father. We are the clay, You are the potter; we are all the work of Your hand. Isaiah 64:8

These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. 2 Peter 2:17

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Matthew 7:3

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. Matthew 13:25

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. Matthew 7:6

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. Matthew 7:15

He makes me lie down in green pastures, Psalm 23:2

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. Song of Solomon 2:1

Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. Song of Solomon 2:3

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 34:4

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? Psalm 8:3-4

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm -- shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted -- twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Jude 12-13

Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech: Proverbs 1:20-21

Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 1 Corinthians 12:14-21

In the Bible many things were used to illustrate spiritual truth. Salt, light, a stone, a hammer, fire, death, life, angels, lilies, roses, potter, clay, clay pots, darkness, lamp, hunger, thirst, a city, a heart, an eye, a hand, a foot, a human body, a building, doors, foundations, cornerstone, capstone, a temple, sand, teeth, clouds, rain, mist, snow, green, scarlet, crimson, money, coins, clouds, trumpets, closets, birds, thorns, thistles, vines, branches, shallow soil, bread, water, good soil, rocky soil, shield, breastplate, belt, helmet, sword, dagger, harvests, barren tree, fruitful tree, leaves, wood, hay, straw, chaff, pearls, narrow gates, wide gates, narrow roads, weddings, feast, banquet, garments, coats, children, sun, moon, stars, dogs, pigs, sawdust, planks, fish, snakes, sheep, rams, wool, wolves, roaring lions, bears, sparrows, eagles, turkeys (just kidding), oxen, grapes, poison, thorn bushes, figs, rain, storms, wind, builder, farmer, soldier, rivers, streams, mountains, lakes, still waters, paths, valleys, shadows, rod, staff, oil, shepherds, soldiers, runner, wells, dry wells, fire, a smelly dump, worms, fields, iron, iron mixed with clay, gold, silver, treasure, smoldering wick, bruised reed, shield, sword, breastplate, belt, helmet, mustard seed, shoes, winter, spring, summer, and many, many more are used to illustrate spiritual truth. God knew that these kinds of illustrations or word pictures were effective in teaching truth.

A good exercise is to go through the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5,6,7) and count the number of word pictures or illustrations Jesus used. In just in those three chapters alone there are some 25-30 uses of illustrations or word pictures that Jesus used to teach spiritual truth.

Illustrations help to:

1. clarify truth.
2. understand truth.
3. remember truth.
4. explain truth.
5. reinforce truth.
6. establish rapport.
7. capture interest.

Illustrations should:

1. be understandable.
2. relate to what you are teaching.
3. be believable.
4. be short -- they should not replace the message.
5. be fresh, not one that is used over and over.
6. be carefully selected and planned ahead of time.
7. be varied.

Sources of Illustrations:

1. Biblical illustrations and many kinds of word pictures are the primary sources for illustrating truth. Parables, Old Testament stories, New Testament stories, word pictures, and many others.
2. Our own life. Don't overdo this and don't make yourself the hero of all your illustrations. Personal testimony illustrations are effective; however, there is a big danger of using your testimony to glorify yourself or draw attention to yourself. Make sure your heart is right with the Lord and your motives are right before using yourself in illustrations. People will be turned off if we continually glorify ourselves.
3. Lives of great Christians. Reading good Christian biographies builds us up and is a source of good illustrations.
4. Missionary biographies
5. Newspapers
6. Commercials are good examples of giving false promises or false hope.
7. Science
8. Nature
9. Many other sources

Use stories that illustrate the truths you are teaching.

The Bible is full of stories. They were not included in the Bible just to entertain us. They were put there to help us understand spiritual truth. People remember stories and they also remember the truths they illustrate. Jesus was a master story teller. Telling stories, or parables, was the major teaching method used by Jesus. When people think of the prodigal son, they remember the love and forgiveness of our heavenly Father. When people remember the parable of the sower, they remember that some human hearts can be hard and unresponsive to the Word, and others will respond and bear fruit.

Preachers and teachers should cultivate the art of storytelling. Practice telling stories that illustrate the spiritual truths you are teaching. Your stories should be short and to the point. They can be Bible stories or they can be other stories that help teach truth.

Using Questions in Teaching

"How many loaves do you have?" Mark 6:38

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? John 14:10

"Who do people say I am?" Mark 8:27

"But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?" Mark 8:29

When He had gone indoors, the blind men came to Him, and He asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Matthew 9:28

"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. Matthew 13:15

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" Mark 3:4

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Mark 8:17

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, He asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Jesus): Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet". David himself calls Him 'Lord.' How then can He be his son?" Mark 12:35-37a

Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? Luke 13:18

Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." Luke 20:17-18

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for He already had in mind what He was going to do. John 6:5-6

When He had finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them. John 13:12

Jesus already knew the answer to all these questions. He asked the questions as part of His teaching/training process.

Ask questions that will get people to think.

Jesus also used questions as He taught. A good use of questions can encourage people to think. There are many kinds of questions that can be used.

Factual questions can be used to find out what people know or what they remember from previous lessons. Generally speaking, we want to ask questions that cause people to think rather than just give a factual answer.

How would you explain this truth to a young child?

How did a young man like David get enough faith in God to fight a giant like Goliath?

How do we keep our faith strong when it seems like God has abandoned us?

Does eternal security give us license to sin?

What are the results of sin in the life of a Christian?

How would you compare the amount of time we spend here on earth to eternity?

How can we “pray without ceasing” when we have to do other things just to survive on earth?

Encourage limited directed discussion.

Short discussions can be good in a classroom situation if they are limited to the topic of the lesson. Discussions can add interest and get people to thinking. However, discussions can be a major problem if they are allowed to go on and on and if people get off on topics that are not related to the lesson being taught. They can also be a problem if one or two people dominate the conversation and others are not able to contribute to the discussion. Discussions can be good, but the teacher needs to keep them short and on track.

Make or find some visual aids to enhance teaching.

It will enhance almost all lessons if we find some good visual aids to use in teaching. It doesn't have to be complicated. Often some very simple visual aids are very effective. Pictures, flannel graph, charts, anything to help focus attention and increase memory time can be very useful.

Reviewing Key Bible Teaching Principles

1. The Bible, including the Old Testament, the Gospels, and all of the rest of the New Testament, is filled with both instructions to teach and with examples of teaching. Jesus was a master teacher.

2. The heart of the Great Commission is to teach.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *and teaching them* to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

3. Holding fast to what Jesus taught is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus. Not abiding in the teaching of Jesus is an indication that we do not genuinely love Him.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me.

John 14:23-24

4. What is Biblical teaching?

They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Nehemiah 8:8

They read from the book of God's law, explaining it and imparting insight. Thus the people gained understanding from what was read. Nehemiah 8:8 (NET)

Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. Exodus 18:20

5. *What is the purpose of Biblical teaching?*

We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. Colossians 1:28

We proclaim Him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28 (NET)

...rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

6. *The way to reproduce our ministry is to teach others so they can teach others.*

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2

Jesus set this example by spending most of three years teaching twelve men.

7. *We are to preach and teach accurately.*

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2

For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed -- God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. 1 Thessalonians 2:2-6a

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Titus 2:7

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness – Titus 1:1

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

Right doctrine:

equips people to do the work of God --- 2 Timothy 3:17

builds a solid church --- Ephesians 4:12-16

builds a solid foundation for life --- Matthew 7:24-27

8. There are serious consequences to wrong teaching.

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 1 Timothy 1:8-10 (NASB)

In 1 Timothy 1:9-10 there is a whole list of things given which are “contrary to sound doctrine”. In other words, these are the fruit of wrong teaching.

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7b-8

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 4:2

Whoever continues in wrong teaching does not have the Father or the Son. 2 John 1:9

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Ephesians 5:6

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did

we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'
Matthew 7:21-23

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30

Honor God with their talk, but their heart is far from God. Their worship is in vain.
Matthew 15:8-9

Following are some results of wrong or sloppy teaching:

change the grace of God into a license for immorality --- Jude 1:4

people thrown into confusion and perverting the gospel--- Galatians 1:7

ruins those who listen --- 2 Timothy 2:14

become more and more ungodly --- 2 Timothy 2:16

destroy the faith of some --- 2 Timothy 2:18

ruining whole households --- Titus 1:11

Wrong teaching promotes controversies rather than God's work. 1 Timothy 1:4

meaningless talk --- 1 Timothy 1:6

9. Lack of solid Biblical knowledge leads to spiritual defeat.

You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother -- My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Hosea 4:5-6a

In this verse, "mother" is referring to the nation of Israel, not to their human birth mother. When Israel's spiritual leaders did not teach the people, it resulted in the destruction of the nation.

10. To teach the Word of God, the Word must dwell in us richly.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom,... Colossians 3:16a

11. To accurately understand the Word, we must give ourselves to diligent study.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 NASB

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; *be prepared in season and out of season*; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:1-2

In essentially all genuine Christians there is a desire to be a better disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must do all we can to encourage that growth.

If a person in a classroom or in a congregation is not listening to what is being said, he will obviously not learn much. If his mind is elsewhere, he will remember little or nothing of what was preached or taught. We can blame the individual and say that he is just not interested. This might well be the case. However, it could also be true that the message or the lesson has so little genuine Biblical content that it is hard for anyone to be very interested in what we are saying.

Shallow teaching does not stimulate growth. Lessons or sermons that are a “mile wide and an inch deep” do not encourage those listening to grow in their knowledge of the Word and it does not encourage growing in our walk with God.

You do not have to be a polished or talented speaker to be used by the Spirit of God, but we do need to prepare our own hearts and to study and prepare before we get up to teach or preach.

12. We can preach and teach with power.

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

13. In Ephesians 6:17, the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

The Spirit does not promise to use our talents and wisdom; He uses the Word of God. If, in our preaching, we have very little of the Word, then the Spirit is hindered in doing His work.

Take the helmet of salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
Ephesians 6:17

14. One of the qualifications of a pastor (bishop or overseer) is that he must be “able to teach”.

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 1 Timothy 3:1-2

15. A clay pot attitude---

But we have this treasure (knowledge of God) in jars of clay (us) to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

Paul, one of the greatest of all preachers, teachers, and writers of Scripture, considered himself nothing but a clay pot. However, the contents in the clay pot was the Gospel with all the power of God behind it. It was not the pot that was the power of God; it was the Gospel that was in the pot that was the power of God.

16. Remember that those you are teaching must make spiritual choices for themselves.

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live
Deuteronomy 30:19

Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, Proverbs 1:29

Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
Proverbs 8:10-11

We cannot make people choose to serve the Lord or to grow in their walk with God. Even God does not force them to make the right choices. It is our responsibility to do all we can to be a clean vessel to be used by God and to correctly teach the Word, but it is up to those we are teaching to respond. When we do not see people responding, it does not necessarily mean that we have failed.

The Holy Spirit lives in every genuine Christian. The Spirit is continually working to bring growth in the life of a Christian. If a Christian resists the leading of the Spirit, a teacher or pastor cannot force that person to submit to the Lord and begin to grow. We can pray, love, and set an example, but we cannot force spiritual growth.

If, for a long period of time, a person has absolutely no interest in growing, it may very well be that he was never saved to start with.

17. Teachers must recognize their total dependence on the Lord to accomplish the will and purpose of God.

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.

Philippians 2:13

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Galatians 3:3

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. 2 Corinthians 2:14

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:5

The goals of preaching and teaching are spiritual goals. Our human abilities cannot bring a person to maturity or equip them to do the work of God. Only God can do that. No matter how talented we may be, we cannot do God's work in our own abilities or strength.

God works through us, His people, to accomplish His own will and purpose. It is important for us to realize that it is God doing the work but that He works through us. Our part is to submit to God, actively serve Him, and allow Him to do His work through us. We must be individuals who deeply want God to work through us. The closer we walk with God, the more effective we will be as teachers of the Word of God.

We do not have to be a spiritual "giant" to be used by God. Most of God's work on earth is done through very ordinary people.

*Chapter Thirteen***Preaching and Teaching With Integrity**

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned,... Titus 2:7

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God... 1 Peter 4:10-11a

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. James 3:1 (ESV)

Some Pitfalls to Avoid

There are a number of pitfalls that await the preacher or teacher who does not develop good Bible study habits and does not properly prepare to teach.

1. Simply repeating what he has heard other pastors or teachers say. We should never repeat what others have said unless we know for sure that it is Biblical and we know where it is taught.
2. Teaching what we hear in gospel songs.
3. Preaching essentially the same message week after week with little real genuine Biblical teaching.
4. Continually feeding people table scrapes rather than nourishing milk and meat of the Word.
5. Continually attempting to stir emotions and motivate people through guilt rather than through teaching the Word of God.
6. Continually rebuking people for being malnourished and feeble, but doing little to feed them.
7. Relying on preaching loudly to stir people rather than genuinely relying on the Spirit of God.
8. Becoming proud rather than walking humbly with the Lord.

A Code of Bible Teaching Ethics

1. I will seek the Lord with all my heart, and I will seek to be the best example that I can be to those I teach.
2. I will consistently pray, individually by name, for those I teach.
3. I will not get up to teach or preach until I have examined my own heart and confessed any known sin. This will be a deliberate action each time I am to teach or preach.
4. I will not get up to teach or preach until I have examined myself for any pride. Again, this will be a deliberate action each time I am to teach or preach.
5. I will not get up to teach or preach until I have asked the Spirit of God to lead, and I have deliberately yielded myself to His control.
6. I will handle the Bible with reverence, recognizing that it is the very Word of God.
7. I will not teach or preach on any Biblical topic or passage that I am not prepared to teach. I will not get up unprepared and preach random thoughts.
8. I will be very careful to teach the Word of God accurately and correctly. I will teach exactly what the Bible teaches, not what I want it to teach. I will not, in any way, slant or misrepresent the meaning of any Scripture.
9. Once I am convinced through my study of the Word and through the illumination of the Holy Spirit that I have come to understand what a Bible passage teaches, I will teach it, even if many of those listening disagree.
10. If I do not understand a Biblical passage, I will quickly and freely admit it. I will not try to bluff my way through a passage of Scripture. I will also freely admit it when I do not know the answer to questions that are asked.
11. I will be dogmatic where the Bible is clear, and I will not be dogmatic when the Bible is not clear, or if I do not fully understand a particular teaching.
12. I will be very careful in expressing my opinion on a subject. If it is simply my opinion and not a clear Biblical teaching, I will clearly say that this is my opinion and should not be taken as Biblical truth.
13. When preaching or teaching, I will not repeatedly say, “the Bible says”. Instead, I will read the Scripture itself. I will never say “the Bible says” unless I know exactly where it is clearly taught in the Bible.

Other Helpful suggestions

1. Pastors and teachers, arrive at your class early. Never be late!!! You only have so much time to teach the Word. Use it. If you are habitually late, it portrays an attitude that the Word of God is not valuable enough to you to make sure that you use all your time to teach it.
2. Pastors, teachers, and song leaders --- you need to speak up loud enough to be heard. Learn to speak clearly. If people can't hear you or understand you, they are not learning anything. You don't need to yell. But you do need to speak up and speak clearly!!! On the other hand, don't turn up the volume so loud on the speaker system that it assaults people's ears.
(That goes for musicians as well !!!)
3. Pastors and teachers should dress appropriately and modestly when teaching or preaching, and at all other times.
4. Do not chew gum when you are preaching or teaching.
5. When you are sitting in a chair on the platform, sit. Don't "lay out" or "sprawl" in the chair.
6. Don't lean on the pulpit. Stand up straight.
7. During the invitation, no one should take over for the guest speaker or the evangelist unless he asks you to do so.
8. Do not "re-preach" the message after a guest speaker or evangelist has finished speaking. Simply close the service.
9. Don't correct a speaker or licensed minister publicly. Take him off to the side later and correct him.
10. Don't take a text out of context. If you do, let the people know.
11. When a person is called on to pray, only that one person should be praying out loud. The rest should pray silently.
12. Preachers should not walk out during an invitation or song service.

Chapter Fourteen

What kind of person does God want pastors, teachers and others to be?

Biblical qualifications for a Pastor/teacher as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless -- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:5-9

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, 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. 1 Peter 5:1-4

Being in the ministry and serving as a pastor is a good thing. It is a tremendous privilege to teach and preach the Word of God. It is one of the highest privileges in all the world. What a joy to be called by God to be a shepherd of His people and to be able to lead and encourage God's people to grow in their knowledge of God and in their walk with God.

Yet, along with this privilege come many responsibilities and demands. The pastor's way of life will be closely watched by others, both saved and unsaved. He is to set an example for others. No one should desire to be a pastor unless he clearly senses that God is leading him in that direction, and he is willing to face demands and pressures that the average Christian does not normally face.

A pastor must be mature in the Christian faith. He must keep learning and growing in his walk with God, setting an example for others to follow.

The pastor must be mature in his faith because Satan will oppose him every step of the way. If the pastor gives Satan a foothold in his life, Satan will hinder, or even stop, his effectiveness as a pastor.

Another reason that a pastor must be a mature growing Christian is that God holds him to a higher standard than others. In James 3:1 we are told, “**Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly**”. God will hold pastors and other teachers to a higher standard than other Christians. This is a sobering truth. Individuals who cannot measure up to a higher standard should not consider being a pastor.

The Spirit of God through the Word of God has given us the qualifications for being a pastor. These qualifications set a very high standard. To ignore them is to invite a tremendous amount of trouble into our lives and into the churches we pastor.

Someone who is clearly not qualified may feel he is called by God to preach. If this is the case, then he needs to re-examine his call. The Spirit of God will **never** lead contrary to the Word of God. One who is not Biblically qualified to be a pastor cannot be called by God to be a pastor. That individual cannot expect God’s blessing.

This study deals with the Biblical qualifications for a pastor that God has given us in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5:1-3. These qualifications are given below. Following each qualification there is a very brief explanation of that qualification.

Following each qualification there is also a series of probing questions. These “questions for self-examination” have two purposes.

One purpose for these questions is for someone who is considering the ministry to help him examine himself to see if he is qualified to hold the office of a pastor. Every individual who feels he is called to the ministry should thoroughly examine himself in the light of these Biblical qualifications before committing himself to the ministry.

The second purpose of these questions is for someone who is already in the ministry to examine himself to see if there are areas that he needs to work on to be a better pastor.

This study and these questions **are not meant** to discourage men whom God has called to be pastors. However, it is meant to challenge a God-called man to examine himself and seriously commit himself to actively growing toward maturity in areas where he is weak.

If an individual clearly does not measure up in any one of these qualifications for a pastor, then he should wait until he has matured in that area(s) before becoming a pastor. Not only must he gain the victory in that area or areas, but his life must demonstrate over a period of time that he has, in fact, gained the victory in that area.

We need to recognize that no one, including pastors, is perfect. All of us still sin. However, a pastor’s

life must be free of any sin that controls him in any of these areas. If there is repeated failure or sin in any one given area, then that individual should not be a pastor or become a pastor until he has broken the control of that sin, gained victory, and has had time to demonstrate that he has gotten victory in that area.

Some individuals are simply not qualified to be a pastor. This study **is meant** to discourage them from seeking the office of a pastor. In some cases, this disqualification may be open and evident. In other cases, only God knows. It should be our earnest desire and prayer that God's will be done.

One of the qualifications, "the husband of one wife", has been understood to mean a number of different things. Since there is confusion about this qualification, there is a section at the end of this paper that deals specifically with this qualification.

We need to be warned about becoming so fixed on this one qualification, "the husband of one wife", that we ignore the rest of the qualifications God gave us. This is only one of many qualifications. Every one of them is given by God and every qualification is very important. Ignoring any of them will only lead to trouble and heartache.

What God Wants Us To Be

A. *An individual called to be a pastor should desire to be a pastor* (bishop -- overseer -- elder -- shepherd -- minister -- servant). (1 Peter 5:2, 1 Timothy 3:1) An individual must be led by God and should eagerly want to be a pastor. He should not be pushed into the ministry by other people.

For self-examination:

1. Do you want to be a pastor?
2. Why do you want to be a pastor?
3. Do you feel a clear leading of God to be a pastor?
4. Do you want to be a pastor so that people will look up to you or because you want prestige?
5. Is it your pride or the leading of God that is behind your desire to be a pastor?
6. Are there other people who are pushing you to become a pastor?
7. Are there Godly men who are encouraging you to consider being a pastor? (This is different than being pushed by others to become a pastor.)
8. Have you established a pattern of daily Bible reading and study?

9. Have you developed an on-going habit of daily regular prayer?
10. Do you see regular answers to your prayer?
11. Have you already led other individuals to a mature walk with God?
12. Have you led others to be productive and bear fruit in their walk with God?
13. Have you experienced some deep trials that have deepened your faith?
14. Are you able to stand firm when Satan and all his evil forces come against you?
15. Have you put on the full armor of God? (Ephesians 6:10-18)
16. Are you willing to have your life judged more severely by God? (James 3:1)

B. Above reproach, blameless. (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6-7) On-going mature Christian living which gives no opportunity for accusation.

For self-examination:

1. Is there anything in your life which leaves you open to the accusation of others?
2. Are you setting an example of moral purity?
3. Do you live within your income or do you regularly borrow money or go into debt?
4. Do you regularly, cheerfully, and generously financially give to the Lord's work?
5. Do you love money or the things money can buy?
6. Do you get angry easily?
7. Is there anyone you are carrying a grudge against?
8. Is there anyone you want to get even with?
9. Is your relationship with your wife and children above reproach?
10. Have you been mentally and physically faithful to your legally married wife?
11. Are you actively taking part in the raising of your children or are you leaving that to your wife or others?
12. Do you discipline your children when they are rebellious and disobedient?

13. Are you a hard worker or do you tend to be lazy at times?
14. Are there some people who do not trust you? If so, why?
15. Are you honest with everybody?
16. Are you known as a man of integrity?
17. Do you absolutely keep all confidences?
18. Do you have a tendency to be proud?
19. Do you feel you can handle things yourself?

C. The husband of one wife. (1 Timothy 3:2, 12, Titus 1:6) Must have only one wife and she must be your legally married wife. He must be a “*one-womaned man*”, not given to lust or desiring other women.

Note: See the section at the end of this lesson for a more detailed look at this qualification.

For self-examination:

1. Do you have a satisfying, fulfilling sex life with your legally married wife?
2. Are you sexually involved with anyone who is not your legally married wife?
3. Do you have a reputation of sexual purity?
4. Are you setting an example of moral purity?
5. Do you control the kind of things you allow yourself to think about?
6. Do you often think about sexual experiences with someone who is not your wife?
7. Do you look at any kind of pornography?
8. Has pornography been a problem in the past?
9. Do you have complete victory over past problems with pornography?
10. Can you lead others to live a life of moral sexual purity?
11. Do you often watch television programs, videos, or movies, that have immoral content?

12. Are you willing to live by and teach the Bible's clear teaching on sexual purity?
13. Do you rationalize, justify, or in one way or another, excuse sinful sexual behavior?
14. Have you genuinely repented and turned away from past sexual sin?
15. Are you able to teach and encourage married couples to have a God-honoring enjoyable sex life?
16. Are you willing to teach and preach that living together without being married, is sin?
17. Are you willing to exercise Biblical church discipline when a couple who are members of your church refuses to repent of sexual sin?
18. If you have engaged in sinful sexual behavior in the past, are you now willing to teach that it was sin and rebellion against God?
19. Does your wife use sex as a way to manipulate you, to control you, or even to punish you?
20. If your wife does this, are you able to deal with it without wishing for better sex with another woman?

D. Temperate, Self-Disciplined. (Sober, vigilant---KJV) (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8) Self- controlled. Able to control one's passions and desires. Sober, clear minded, alert, steady. Able to make good decisions. Has good judgment. Mentally and psychologically well balanced. One who is not intoxicated. One who is able to control his fleshly and sensual desires.

For self-examination:

1. Are you clear minded and sober?
2. Do you use any product that inhibits clear thinking?
3. Do you regularly make good decisions?
4. Do you regularly use good judgment?
5. Do other people trust your judgment?
6. Are there those who distrust your judgment?
7. Are you a steady person that others can regularly trust and rely on?
8. Are you known as a stable or unstable person?
9. Do you have any medical or mental conditions that could cause you to be undependable at times?

10. Would you identify yourself as a self-disciplined person?
11. Do you control your appetite?
12. Do you control the amount of food and the kind of food you eat?
13. Are you given to outbursts of anger?
14. When driving, do you keep the speed limit and obey other traffic laws?
15. Are you habitually late for work or for church services?
16. Do you let pride in yourself get in the way of God's working in your life?
17. Do you daily read and think about the Word of God?
18. Do you daily spend time in prayer?
19. Do you use your time wisely or do you waste a lot of time?
20. Is your life organized or haphazard?
21. Is there any area of your life in which you do not exercise self-control?

E. Not given to drunkenness. (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) One who does not have a reputation of being a drinker. Not controlled or impaired by wine, other alcoholic drinks, or drugs.

For self-examination:

1. Do you have a craving to drink any kind of alcoholic drinks?
2. Do you go to bars, clubs, or other places where drinking is going on?
3. What is your reputation in regards to drinking and drugging?
4. If you had problems in the past with alcohol or drugs, do you now have victory over them?
5. Do you occasionally or regularly use any illegal drugs?
6. Do you overuse or abuse any prescription drugs?
7. Do you use any product that alters your mind?
8. If you regularly used alcohol or drugs in the past, do you now have the reputation of being a sober

man?

9. What is your attitude toward “social” or occasional drinking of alcoholic drinks?

F. Respectable, well behaved. (1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 3:7) Respected by everyone, including both those inside and outside the church. A well-organized mind and life.

For self-examination:

1. Do people tend to respect you for the way you live?
2. Do your wife and children respect you?
3. Does your physical appearance cause people to respect you?
4. Does the appearance of your home cause people to respect or disrespect you?
5. Do you show integrity in your dealings with other people, causing them to respect you?
6. Do you show respect for other people by the way you treat them?
7. Does the way you act around other people bring you respect?
8. Does the way you treat your wife and children bring you respect?
9. Does the way you speak and the language you use cause people to respect you?
10. Do people in the church respect you?
11. Are there some who do not respect you? If so, why?
12. Do people outside the church respect you?
13. Do some outside the church disrespect you? If so, why?
14. Do you have any habits or addictions that will cause people to disrespect you?
15. Do you gamble?
16. Do you play Bingo?
17. Do you borrow money to play Bingo or another form of gambling, hoping to win enough money to pay the money back?

G. Not violent, not quick tempered, not prone to fighting. (No striker, brawler, –KJV)

(I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) Not quick-tempered, or vengeful, and does not physically, verbally, or mentally abuse others. Able to control his anger. Does not get into fights. Does not always have to have his own way.

For self-examination:

1. Do you control your anger?
2. Do you quickly forgive those who have wronged you or do you hang on to grudges and irritations?
3. Do you say things to some people in order to hurt them?
4. Do you physically hit anyone in order to hurt them?
5. Do you control your anger at home?
6. Do you physically hit your wife in anger?
7. Do you say things to cut down or hurt your wife?
8. Do you get angry and hit your children? (This is not the same as a controlled spanking.)
9. Is there anyone you are holding a grudge against?
10. Is there anyone you want to get even with?
11. Is there anyone you need to forgive?
12. Do you often argue with people?
13. Are you quick to retaliate?
14. Is there someone from your past that you resent?
15. Have you held in anger against someone for weeks, months, or even years?
16. Do you feel that you have to settle things yourself?
17. Do you use strong or abusive language to get your own way?
18. Are there times when you are “out of control”?
19. Do you enjoy watching violence on television?

20. Is “getting your own way” always important to you?

H. Not self-willed or overbearing. (Titus 1:7) Not one who demands his own way without regard for others. He does not offend others by his self-centered attitude. (Notice that this qualification says “not self-willed”. It does not say “not strong-willed”.)

For self-examination:

1. Are you always determined to get your own way?
2. Do you normally think you are always right?
3. When you give in to somebody else, do you do it grudgingly?
4. Are you a stubborn person?
5. Do you have trouble giving in to authority?
6. Are you a proud person?
7. Do you lead by being a dictator?
8. Are you a dictator at home?
9. Are you known as a humble man?
10. Do you have a tendency to be proud?
11. Do you feel you can handle things yourself?
12. Do you regularly pray that God’s will be done in your life?
13. Is your goal in life to promote God’s kingdom or your own agenda?

I. Gentle, patient. (1 Timothy 3:3) One who is patient, loving, considerate, gracious, forgiving, and kind.

For self-examination:

1. Are you known as a gentle man?
2. Are you patient with your wife?
3. Are you patient with your children?

4. As you teach and preach, are you impatient and demanding or are you patient and gentle?
5. Are you patient when you go through difficult times?
6. Are you impatient with God?
7. Have you learned to wait on God, or do you want to rush on ahead?
8. Do you quickly forgive or do you hold on to anger?

J. A lover of what is good, just, holy. (Titus 1:8) A man who loves what God loves. A man who highly values being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. He works at being conformed to his image.

For self-examination:

1. Do you hate sin?
2. Do you love what the world loves or do you love what God loves?
3. Are you known as a man of God?
4. Is doing the will of God more important to you than anything else in all your life?
5. Is doing what is right in God's eyes more important to you than doing what seems right to you?
6. Do you know God well enough to understand what He loves?
7. Has your life been set apart to the Lord Jesus Christ?
8. Can you justify from Scripture your understanding of God?
9. Do you thoroughly understand the Biblical doctrine of holiness?
10. Can you explain the difference between "positional" holiness and "practical" holiness?
11. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 tells us to be separate from the world. Have you separated yourself from the world?
12. Do others recognize you as a person who loves what is good, just, and holy?

K. Not greedy for money or position, not covetous. (filthy lucre KJV) (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:2-3) One who does not love money, prestige, or power. Has a Biblical attitude about things that appeal to man's flesh.

For self-examination:

1. Are you content with the basic necessities of life, or do you always want more?
2. Are you content with the basic necessities of life, or do you desire things that impress others?
3. Do you want to preach as a means of getting extra money?
4. Do you always want more money?
5. Do you love money?
6. Do you have a tendency to be proud?
7. Do you wish to be a pastor so that people will look up to you?
8. Is it your pride or the leading of God that is behind your desire to be a pastor?
9. Do you expect financial rewards for ministering?
10. Have you learned to trust God to meet your financial needs?
11. Is your focus on laying up treasure on earth or in heaven?
12. Are you willing to work hard to make a living?
13. Are you lazy?
14. Do you try to get money by gambling?
15. Have you lost money by gambling?
16. If you have habitually gambled in the past, have you gained complete victory over this habit?

L. Hospitable. (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8) One who uses his home as a place of ministry. One who enjoys serving other people.

For self-examination:

1. Are you willing to use your home to enhance your ministry?

2. Are you kind and helpful to those who have needs?
3. Are you willing to share what you have with others who do not have much?
4. Would you rather serve another person or would you rather be served by others?
5. Do you expect someone else to take care of you when you could take care of yourself?
6. Are you gracious to members of your own family?

M. Able to teach. (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9) A skilled teacher. Able to teach and equip others for productive service. Able to teach the Word and lead others to use their talents and gifts to serve the Lord. He regularly reads and studies the Word and understands and teaches it correctly.

For self-examination:

1. Are you prepared and able to follow the Great Commission's instruction to "teach all that I have commanded you"?
2. Do you regularly read and study the Word of God?
3. Have you been actively teaching the Word of God in the past?
4. Do you see the Spirit of God changing lives through your teaching?
5. Do you have the spiritual gift of teaching?
6. Do you have a reasonably good grasp of what all the Bible is about?
7. Can you give quality teaching or do you preach in generalities?
8. Do you rely on your knowledge of the Word or loud preaching to get your point across?
9. Are you teachable yourself?
10. Are you eagerly studying for greater understanding of the Word?
11. Are you continually learning?
12. Are you actively studying and committed to learning more and more about all the Bible?
13. Do you read and study the Bible daily?
14. Is your knowledge of the Bible continually growing?

15. Are you giving honest answers to these questions?
16. Do you have and know how to use some basic Bible study aids?
17. Are you continually filled with the Spirit of God so that He can enable you to understand and teach the Word?
18. Does your lifestyle encourage others to know and walk with God?
19. Do you think that once a person is ordained, he knows everything he needs to know about the Bible?
20. Does your knowledge of the Word come from your own study of the Word or from what you have heard others say?
21. Do you take great care to accurately teach the Word, or are you at times careless with the Word of God?
22. Are you willing to be more strictly judged by God based on the quality of your life and teaching?
23. Can others learn and grow in their walk with God by watching how you live?
24. Is there any part of your life that would not encourage others to grow in their walk with God?
25. Do you feel that the louder you teach or preach, the more people learn?
26. Can you tell the difference between being emotionally stirred up and the genuine working of the Spirit of God?
27. Which do you feel is most important — getting people emotionally stirred up or depending on the Spirit of God to bring results?
28. Are the messages you give fresh from your study of the Word of God, or do you simply say, “the Spirit will lead me”?

N. Able to answer false teachers from the Word of God. (Titus 1:9)

For self-examination:

1. Some false teachers know Scripture quite well. Can you go to Biblical passages and give sound Biblical answers to refute all kinds of wrong teaching?
2. Are you knowledgeable enough in the basic doctrines of Scripture to recognize wrong teaching?

3. Which do you consider more important---refuting wrong teaching or not creating “waves”?
4. Have you developed good Bible study habits that are developing your knowledge and understanding of the Bible?
5. Is your knowledge of the Bible continually growing?
6. Do you have and know how to use some basic Bible study aids?
7. Is your claim to know the Bible well a true, genuine, claim or do you just think you know it?

O. Must be a good leader and manager of his own home. Children who believe and are obedient (1 Timothy 3:4-5, Titus 1:6) Children who live at home must be believers, obedient, and respectful. A pastor must be a good husband and father. He must not neglect his own home or leave the managing of his home to others.

For self-examination:

1. Are you the spiritual leader in your home?
2. Do you personally read, discuss, and teach the Word of God to your family?
3. Do you pray with your wife and children daily?
4. Do you expect your wife to be the one to teach the kids?
5. Do your children obey you when you give them instructions?
6. Are your children walking with the Lord or are they rebellious?
7. Are your children submissive to you?
8. Being a pastor can bring a lot of stress into one’s life. Can you handle the stress and still be pleasant at home?
9. Being a pastor takes a lot of time. Can you be a pastor and still give quality time to your wife and children?
10. Is your family life a good example for others to follow?
11. Do you discipline your children when they are disobedient?
12. Are you demonstrating your ability to lead a church by being an effective spiritual leader in your own home?

13. Is your home normally peaceful or is there continual bickering and fighting?
14. Do you regularly fight and argue with your wife?
15. Do you regularly yell at your wife or children?
16. Is your wife in agreement with your desire to be a pastor?
17. Is your wife able to cope with the added stress that comes with your being a pastor?
18. If your being a pastor was causing your home to have serious problems, would you be willing to withdraw from being a pastor for a time in order to concentrate on strengthening your own home?

P. Not a new or immature Christian. (1 Timothy 3:6) An individual must be a mature Christian who has proven himself to be a Godly leader. He must not have a problem with pride.

For self-examination:

1. After the apostle Paul was saved, he was trained by God for some 10-15 years before he became a leader in the church. Moses was trained for some 40-80 years before he became a leader of God's people. How long has God been training you to lead his people?
2. How long have you been a Christian?
3. Are you a mature Christian?
4. Have you led others to spiritual maturity?
5. Do you know the Word of God well or just a few parts of the Word?
6. Do you have any problem with pride?
7. Are you a humble man?
8. How do you deal with pride when it begins to happen in your life?
9. Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us how to stand against Satan. Have you studied and know and understand this passage well?
10. Is every part of the armor, as described in this passage, an on-going part of your Christian life?
11. 2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:2 tells us the purpose of the Word of God and how a pastor is to preach. Have you studied and know and understand this passage well?

12. Ephesians 4:11-16 teaches us the role of evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and it describes a healthy church. Have you studied and know and understand this passage well?
13. Galatians 5:16-26 describes the life of a person living a life controlled by the Spirit of God. Have you studied and know and understand this passage well?
14. Is your life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit?
15. Do you love all of God's people, even those who don't seem to be lovable?
16. Do you regularly have joy in your life?
17. Do you regularly experience peace in your life?
18. Are you patient with people?
19. Do you regularly exercise self-discipline?
20. Do you know the plan of salvation well and can you explain it in detail to another person?
21. Do you personally lead others to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?
22. Is your vision of the church limited to evangelism or can you lead a church toward accomplishing all that God has designed for the church?

Q. Not lording it over the church, but being an example to the flock. (1 Peter 5:3)

For self-examination:

1. Does being in a position of authority feed your pride?
2. Do you like to "lord it over the church"?
3. Do you lead by being a dictator or by being an example?
4. Is your life an example for others to follow?
5. Are there areas of defeat in your life that you try to hide from others?
6. Are you willing to have your life be open for others to see?
7. Do people respect you because of the way you live?

“The Husband of One Wife”

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, 1 Timothy 3:2

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, Titus 1:6

In both 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 the qualification, “the husband of one wife”, is stated.

It is very important to treat this qualification as one in a whole series of qualifications. To isolate it from all the rest of the qualifications and treat it as if it stands apart from the others is a poor way of handling this Bible passage, and will likely lead to a poor understanding of the qualifications of a pastor. Again, this qualification should not be considered as the major qualification of a pastor and all the rest of the qualifications simply ignored. This qualification is a very important one, but it is one of many very important ones.

Today, and down through the years, there have been several different views taught as the correct way to understand this qualification. *Following are five different ways that have been taught as the correct way to understand what is meant by “the husband of one wife”.*

- 1. That a pastor cannot ever marry a second time**
- 2. That a pastor cannot ever have been divorced**
- 3. That a pastor cannot be single**
- 4. That a pastor cannot be a polygamist (currently married to more than one wife)**
- 5. That a pastor must control his passions and be mentally and physically faithful and devoted to his one legally married wife. He must be physically and mentally sexually pure.**

Each of these interpretations have been promoted as the right one. It is the strong conviction of this writer that a combination of numbers 4 and 5 is what this passage is intended to teach.

Following are reasons why:

The qualifications for a pastor in these Scriptures deal with the present, not the past.

To begin our discussion of this qualification (the husband of one wife), it would be well to note that every other qualification for a pastor in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3 is speaking of the present condition of a man’s heart and life, not what he was like in the past. These qualifications are stated **in the present tense**. The verb “be” is in the present tense in both 1 Timothy and Titus -- they are not in the past tense. The qualifications deal with what a man’s walk with God is like now, not what his failures were in the past. For example, it does not say that person who was a drunkard in the past cannot be a pastor now. It does not say that a person who was a fighting and quarrelsome man in the past cannot be a pastor now. It does not say that a person who was a poor example in the past, who was not self-controlled in the past, or who was not a respected person in the past, cannot be a pastor today. If all of these qualifications were to apply to an individual’s entire life from the past, there is hardly a person alive who could even come close to meeting these qualifications for being a pastor.

If we believe that all the other God-given qualifications apply to the present, except for this one qualification, and that “the husband of one wife” applies to the past, we must be able to give a sound Biblical reason why only this one qualification applies to the past and all the others apply only to the present. This is a difficult thing to do and stay within sound principles of Biblical interpretation.

The very heart of the Christian faith is that God forgives the past and we go on to maturity in our walk with God. God forgives and forgets the past. He remembers it no more. A pastor is one who has gone on to spiritual maturity, who can correctly understand and teach Scripture, and can lead by the example he now sets. A pastor is not one who has never had sinful habits or moral failures in the past.

The qualifications all deal with character, or an individual’s readiness to be a pastor. There is no reason to believe that “the husband of one wife” is an exception.

It should be noted that every qualification mentioned in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5, deals with the kind of person a pastor should be. These qualifications deal with a pastor’s character and his readiness to be a pastor.

The first three of the five possible understandings of “the husband of one wife” which were given earlier in this study, (1. that a pastor cannot marry a second time, 2. that a pastor cannot be divorced, and 3. that a pastor cannot be single), all suggest that this qualification does not deal with character or moral fitness, but rather simply with marital status. All three of these understandings would make this one qualification stand out as the only one given that does not deal with one’s character, or readiness to be a pastor. A person’s marital status is not necessarily an indication of good character or moral fitness.

However, when one understands this passage to mean that a pastor cannot be a polygamist, and that a pastor must control his passions and be mentally and physically faithful and devoted to his one legally married wife, and that he must be physically and mentally sexually pure, then this becomes a very important moral qualification that is not specifically covered in any of the other qualifications. This is a very appropriate and extremely important understanding of “the husband of one wife”.

It is God’s plan for the gospel to be preached and churches be established in all cultures.

We must remember that the Word of God is written to all people in all the world. Many people, perhaps most people, who come from an unchristian culture have loose immoral lifestyles. Many cultures allow multiple wives (polygamy) and sexual partners. When a missionary goes to a group of people like this, his purpose is to bring these people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and establish an indigenous church. The missionary must train leadership for the new church. Keep in mind that the leaders and pastors from these cultures have the same set of Biblical qualifications that we do since the Bible applies to all people of all cultures. If we make this qualification, “the husband of one wife”, apply to the past, then it would be impossible to pick national leadership and establish an indigenous church in many of these cultures since essentially every man in that culture has had multiple wives and sexual partners. If “the husband of one wife” does, in fact, mean that a pastor could never have been

married a second time, then it would have to be a whole new generation, 20-40 years later, before a national Christian could meet this qualification and serve as a pastor. That is a difficult position to Biblically defend. The truth is that God wants churches established in every culture, not just cultures that already have a moral lifestyle.

Now let's look at each of these five possible interpretations of "the husband of one wife".

1. That a pastor cannot marry a second time.

Some people believe that a pastor cannot remarry or have been remarried for any reason. However, to take this position means that this qualification applies to the past, which, as stated above, is a difficult position to defend using sound Biblical principles of interpretation.

Another problem is that God does permit remarriage under certain conditions. Certainly, when a spouse dies, God not only permits, but encourages, remarriage. (1 Corinthians 7, Romans 7:1-3) Under some conditions He permits remarriage after a divorce. (See the next section.) Are we disqualified from the ministry for doing what God encourages us to do?

2. That a pastor cannot have ever been divorced.

There are problems with this interpretation as well. First, it centers on the past rather than on the present condition of a man's heart. This understanding does not deal with character or moral fitness, but instead focuses only on marital status.

Another major problem is that *the word "divorce" is simply not in this passage*. If God had meant that a pastor should never have been divorced, it would have been simple enough to say, "never divorced"; however, the word simply isn't there. To teach that this means never divorced, one has to read divorce into the passage.

If this passage does, in fact, mean "never divorced", then a man who was divorced by an unfaithful wife would be unqualified to be a pastor even if he himself never committed any sexual sin and was never unfaithful to his wife in any way. However, a man living in sin with multiple sexual partners and who had lived with several different women but had never married any of them, would be qualified for the ministry because he was never divorced. He could have lived in gross sexual sin, never getting married; therefore, he has never been divorced and would still be qualified for the ministry, while the man who never committed any sexual sin would be unqualified because his unfaithful wife divorced him. This is a difficult Scriptural position to defend.

Another problem with this interpretation is that God does allow for divorce under certain conditions.

A. Divorce is acceptable when one's partner commits sexual sin.

In Matthew 19:9 Jesus states, **"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."** (Also see Matthew 5:32.) There is no question that God hates divorce; however, God graciously permits an innocent party to be free from bondage to an unfaithful partner. With that freedom comes the freedom to remarry another believing woman.

B. Divorce is acceptable when an unbelieving partner leaves.

In 1 Corinthians 7:15 Paul says, **"If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace."** If an unbelieving partner wants out of the marriage, the believer is instructed to let him or her go. God doesn't require you to live in a state of war with an unbelieving partner.

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), but He is gracious to the innocent party when one partner commits continuous sexual sin or when an unbelieving partner leaves. In either case, the innocent party is free to remarry.

Again, we have to ask, "Is God going to disqualify an individual from being a pastor when that individual has been obedient to the Word of God and has followed the instructions given in God's Word"?

3. That at a pastor cannot be single.

Some people believe that "the husband of one wife" prohibits single men from serving as pastors. But that position is refuted by the fact that Paul, who established churches and often served as the pastor, was himself single. (1 Corinthians 7:8)

4. That a pastor cannot be a polygamist. (Married to more than one person at the same time)

When this passage states "the husband of one wife", there is no reason to believe that it means anything other than exactly what it says—that a pastor cannot have more than one wife. In other words, he is not to be a polygamist. We must remember that the Bible is written for all people from all cultures in all the world that have existed over the last 2000 years. Many, many of these cultures permit polygamy. This is a very appropriate understanding of "the husband of one wife" since the cultures that permit polygamy probably outnumber those who do not permit a man to have more than one wife.

This understanding may seem a little odd to some at first, and some have even found humor in it and make jokes about it. However, polygamy is no laughing matter. It is a practice of many past and present cultures. It is also being advocated by some social liberals in the United States today. Stating

that a pastor is not to be a polygamist is very relevant and very important.

This understanding (that a pastor cannot be a polygamist) combined with the next interpretation (No. 5) of “the husband of one wife” go together and deal with a very important area in the qualification for a pastor. Together these are a very natural and Biblical way to understand “the husband of one wife”.

5. That a pastor must control his passions and be mentally and physically faithful and devoted to his one legally married wife. He must be physically and mentally morally pure. He must be sexually pure in his actions and in his thoughts.

Many scholars tell us that this passage in the Greek is saying that a pastor must be a “one-womaned man”. The words translated “wife” (gunaikos) and “husband” (aner) are literally translated “woman” and “man”. The Greek construction places emphasis on the word “one,” thereby communicating the idea of a “**one-womaned man**”. This stresses the condition of a man’s heart. A pastor must be mentally and physically faithful to his one legally married wife. He controls his fleshly desires and passions and does not lust after other women.

It is extremely important that a pastor control sensual desires that can arise in any normal man, even good Christian men. Many pastors have had to leave the ministry because they have, in one way or another, gotten involved with another woman. Satan will attack in this area and if a pastor has not learned to control his passions, he very likely will not last in the ministry over a long period of time. Not only will he not last, but he will cause untold damage in the lives of other Christians and to the church. Being “the husband of one wife” or a “one-womaned man” speaks directly to this very important issue. *Pastors must control their passions!!! That’s what this qualification is all about.*

This position on the interpretation of “the husband of one wife” is held by many solid Bible teachers such as Dr. J. Vernon McGee, Dr. Charles Swindoll, Dr. John MacArthur, Dr. Gene Getz, and many others.

Note: Two books, *Church Leadership* by John MacArthur, and *The Measure of a Man* by Gene Getz, were frequently consulted in putting this material together. Other Bible study aids including *The Complete Word Study New Testament* by Spiros Zodhiates were also extensively also used.