

## How To Bless Those In Full-Time Ministry – 1 Cor 16:5-12

As always, it's good to be back; And despite the fact that we were smack dab in the middle of Tropical Storm Debbie for the first 5 days – we had a good time away  
We were able to worship with HBC-Orlando; We spent some time with Joel and Jill Anderson, the SP there; And we were eventually able to even soak up some sun

But the highlight, at least for Becky and the girls, was meeting Tim Tebow (**photo**) –  
pictured here with our family  
Definitely a fun memory, and quite possibly a Christmas picture\*\*\*\*\*

- That said, I'm thankful for Garth Glenn and John Cochran who preached while I was away, and I trust you'll take their messages to heart  
To strive for and protect our unity, so as not to hinder the advancement of the Gospel . . .  
And last week, to see our sinful habits for what they are – idols of worship in our lives
- Which brings us to the present, and the last few messages in our study of 1 Corinthians  
So why don't you turn there with me, to 1 Cor 16:5-12 (p.962) (**Intro**)  
This is where Paul switches from a *teaching* mode, to *narrative* mode  
From addressing issues, to telling them his plans

But even in that, we find lessons to learn from his *example*  
Principles we can apply to our lives and church  
Starting with – *How To Bless Those In Full-Time Ministry*; That's the message  
How to bless those men and women who serve the Lord as their full time vocation  
Who give their lives to the work of ministry, and depend on it to support their families  
Like missionaries; And ministry leaders; And especially pastors

Which I realize could come across as self-serving on my part, but I trust you won't take it that way; I trust you'll hear my heart in this . . .  
And see it as a direct application of the text; And come to realize the great *need* to treat pastors well; And not just SP's, but all pastors

None of which I'm preaching b/c there's something wrong around here in this respect  
But b/c it's in the text, and I want to keep that way

- So with that in mind, follow along with me as I read, starting in v5  
[5] *I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, [6] and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. [7] For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. [8] But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, [9] for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. [10] When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. [11] So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. [12] Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.* (1 Cor 16:5-12)

You know how you look back on your life with regrets in some areas?  
You did something wrong; Or didn't do something right

Or as good as you could have? This is one of those areas for me; And I don't want it to be one of those areas for you; That's . . .

### The reason for this message

I wish, as I look back, that someone had told me what it's like to be a pastor  
Not so I could have been better prepared myself; But for the purpose of being a better church member; A better follower as one of the sheep  
A better lay leader in *supporting* my pastor and the work of ministry

- I wish someone had told me about the battle of insecurity that rages in pastors  
Wondering if the message was any good; Or if anyone's coming back next week  
Or who really likes them and who's just faking it; Or who's planning on leaving next

*I wish I'd known about . . .*

- The difficulty of saying the hard things and preaching the hard truths, and wondering how much it's going to affect our attendance and giving  
And how much pastors have to work at not caring about those things

The constant pressure of preparing a message week in and week out  
Making it as good as last week's, or better if last week's wasn't so good

The toll it takes to do so – to actually prepare the message  
And the number of hours involved; Which for most is 20-25 every week

- How depleting it was to preach it; Which some people say is equal to a full day's work – just one message  
B/c of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual output that's required

The ecstatic let-down, sometimes the ecstatic crash, that happens afterward  
And the intensity of the spiritual warfare and temptation that follows  
And the complete sense of futility that comes with facing a blank piece of paper on Tuesday morning, knowing that in 5 short days . . .  
You have to stand up and do it all over again; And again; And again; And again

- The fickle nature of peripheral people who are more interested in being entertained by a great speaker, than being edified about the God who spoke  
Or how hard it is to “measure up” in this day and age, when those listening have instant access on the radio and internet, to some of the greatest preachers of our day

The expectation to have an answer for every question/theological nuance ever thought of  
Which used to scare me to death when I first started; That someone was going to ask me a question I couldn't answer; Which wouldn't have been too hard in those days

- The stress of dealing with people who are never happy  
Or just wondering who they are and what kind of discontent they're spreading  
Or how hard it is to take unjustified hits from graceless people, who are quick to throw stones; Or “suggestions” from people who think they know better, just b/c they attend  
Kind of like thinking you're a master mechanic, just b/c you drive a car

The mind of a good pastor never, ever shuts off; Ever; They're constantly thinking

- The loneliness of leadership  
And the pressure of being a godly example that's worth imitating  
And the unrealistic expectations some people have in that respect – making their pastor feel trapped in their own church

How stressful it was for my pastor to see me in a grocery store, and not remember my name; While I just assumed he knew

- The friction that full-time ministry creates at home, in a pastor's marriage and family  
Something so common, that we now tell prospective pastors to expect it

The toll that full-time ministry takes on a pastor's wife, just b/c she's married to guy  
Not to mention the stress and strain of her *own* responsibilities, and pressure, and expectations; And the blessing it was to him, to bless his wife and kids

- No wonder (**Some statistics**), that in study after study, and survey after survey . . .  
70% of pastors say they are so stressed out and burned out, that they not only battle with depression on a regular basis, but consider leaving the ministry on a regular basis  
And many do; In fact, 35% of pastors leave the ministry within 5 years  
And the number goes up to 70% by 10 years

That means 1500 pastors leave the ministry every single month, in North America alone  
And these statistics are just for *evangelical* pastors – Bible-believing pastors like myself  
It doesn't even *include* the fall-out in *liberal* denominations

Meanwhile, for the ones who remain, 77% say they don't have a good marriage  
And 33% say that ministry is *hazardous* to their families  
And last but not least, 30% percent say they've had an affair in ministry  
And those are just the ones who admit it; I wish I'd known

- And while some of the damage and issues are *self-imposed* – the product of sinful choices, poor leadership, and the fear of man . . .  
Much of it simply comes with the territory  
The territory of stepping into the no-man's land of spiritual warfare, between the trenches of good and evil  
And I wish someone had told me, so that I would have been a better blessing to them

So having told *you*, I also want you to know what to do, in light of Scriptures like this  
The first principle of which, is to . . .

### 1. **Welcome them into your home** (or your *life*) (v6a)

That's the broader principle here- welcome them into your life

B/c Paul says in v5 – *I will visit you after passing through Macedonia*

Remember, Macedonia was just to the north of Corinth, where Berea and Thessalonica and Philippi were located

*I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, [6] and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go.*

Paul assumed, and rightfully so, that they would welcome him into their homes  
Whether it was for a short stay or a long one . . .

It was Paul's responsibility to preach and lead and shepherd, and it was theirs to show him hospitality; To open their doors for a meal, a good night's rest, or an extended stay

Circumstances that *mirror* the situation when our global *partners* come through  
It's our responsibility to open our homes to them  
And I know many of you have; And the blessing is yours, isn't it?

- But it's not just for missionaries  
This principle also applies to our *pastors*, right here; With whom you can share a meal  
Or take them to a restaurant; Or get some ice cream together  
Especially if you already know them; In fact, those are the ones you should focus on – the pastors you're most involved with in ministry

The *circumstances* are different than Paul's, but the principle is the same – be hospitable  
Welcome them into your life; Don't assume that they're just fine without you  
Or too busy; Or don't want your company; Extend the invitation

- But do so without any expectations, b/c they may not be able to take you up on it  
And you shouldn't expect it; Nor be offended if they don't  
It might not fit their schedule; Or it might be more of a burden than a blessing at that particular time; And that's okay  
Give them that grace; Show them that kind of latitude  
But don't let it keep you from offering, and welcoming them into your life

That's the first way to bless those in full-time ministry; Second, is to . . .

### 2. **Help them when they need it (v6b,11b)**

Paul says in v6 – *perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go*

And again, in v11b regarding Timothy – *Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.*

Paul needed help in order to fulfill his ministry, and expected the church to provide it  
Which included helping Timothy when *he* needed it; Pretty simple

- But that doesn't mean we have to support every missionary that comes our way; And we don't; They're not our spiritual leaders, like Paul was to the Corinthians . . .  
And it's not possible from a practical standpoint

But it is with our *pastors*; And they *are* our spiritual leaders

So it's incumbent upon us, as a church, to help them when they need it  
Materially, financially, spiritually through prayer, or emotionally through encouragement or fun

And do so with no strings attached

No expectations of returning the favor, or receiving special consideration, or getting some sort of public recognition; Just help when they need it

- One of my favorite examples of which, is when we first moved here 8 years ago next month; We drove into our court with the moving trucks, and found it *filled* with cars  
Wondering where in the world they all came from, and who was having a party

Until we walked into our house, and found it *filled* with people carrying brooms, mops, tools, and rags – to help us clean the place up and move in  
It was help when we needed it, and a huge blessing at that

### 3. Bless them with rest (v10)

That's v10; And don't worry, I'll pick up v7-9 next week; As well as v12  
But for now, Paul says – *When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.*  
IOW he's in full-time ministry; He's given his entire life and energy to serving the Lord, just like Paul

None of which means you're chopped liver if you *haven't*  
Or that you're *not* doing the work of the Lord as a *lay* person  
It just means that Paul is distinguishing between those for whom it's their *vocation*, and those for whom it isn't; Implying a difference in responsibilities, and *needs*  
Specifically, the need for rest and refreshment  
*See that you put him at ease among you*; See that you bless him with rest

Which in our day and age could include anything from offering them a few nights in a second home, to letting them use your pool, to babysitting for a date night

Whatever the case, pastors need rest; Ministry leaders need breaks; Missionaries need refreshment; That's why Becky and I took the Buser's, one of our global partners . . .  
Into *our* home when they were here last  
And did our best to show them a good time by putting them at ease and paying for everything; We wanted to demonstrate our love, by blessing them with rest  
And pastors need the same

### 4. Protect them from disrespect (v11a)

B/c Timothy is doing the work of the Lord, Paul says in v11 – *Let no one despise him*  
Let no one hate him; Let no one look down on him; Or think less of him; Or view him with contempt; Or cause others to do so in any way, shape, or form

The question is – How do you do that?  
How do you keep people from despising your pastor? How do you protect him from dishonor and disrespect?

The answer, I believe, is 3-fold

1. Don't do or say anything yourself, that would cause others to think less of him  
IOW if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all; Don't add fuel to the fire
2. Don't remain silent when someone *else* spouts off  
If someone expresses something you don't resonate with, or something that's not true – say something; Speak up on their behalf; Tell the person you don't have ears for that  
Challenge them to speak *directly* to the pastor, or let it go
3. Don't be privately supportive but publicly silent  
Encouraging him when he's around, but sitting idly by when he's not  
That not only *condones* a lack of respect, but makes you two-faced  
One of the more *insidious* forms of disrespect

Better to heed Paul's words in passages like **1 Thess 5:12-13**, where he says . . .  
*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, [13] and to esteem them [i.e. honor them, value them] very highly in love because of their work.*  
And again in **1 Timothy 5:17** – *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*

Show that, do that – and you'll go a long way toward blessing our pastors with hospitality, help, rest, and protection (**Summary**)  
Making the work they do, a duty of delight instead of drudgery  
And helping them avoid becoming a statistic

Pray – Thank you for our staff of pastors and directors; We are so very blessed; And thank you for the grace found in this church; Would you use this message to spur us on to greater and greater love and good deeds? And in the process knit us together more and more in brotherly love?  
Take our tithes/offerings now, and use them for that purpose and more