

HONESTY IN MINISTRY

HOW TO PREVENT MINISTRY CORRUPTION

*"[We] have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty,
not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully..."*

~ 2 Corinthians 4:2

1. Ministry Lies

- a. Misunderstanding ministry is believing a lie about serving God.
- b. Lie: a minister is someone who gets support from others to do "God's work"
- c. Lie: a ministry that is growing in numbers is "blessed by God" and doing it right.
- d. Lie: a ministry is doing God service if it helps more people by any means.
- e. Lie: ministry is about performance, show, making God look good, appearance
- f. Lie: ministry should make Christ attractive to the audience.

2. Dishonesty Corrupts

- a. We are to be the pillar of truth; ministry is corrupted by lies, deceptions, dishonesty
- b. *"many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity..."* - 2 Cor 2:17
- c. The unleavened bread is sincerity and truth (leaven = dishonesty) - 1 Cor 5:6-8
- d. An impure conscience leads to dishonest ministry – 1 Cor 15:33, 2 Cor 1:12, Ti 2:7-8
- e. Many people thought Paul was lying – Gal 1:11, 20, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Cor 11:31

3. Dishonesty from the Pulpit

- a. The most dangerous lies are those that attract, help, comfort, conceal, affirm.
- b. If there were truth in advertising in churches – it would be easier to choose.
- c. "if God provides", "God spoke to me", "God gave me a vision", "God called me"
- d. Let no man deceive you - Eph 4:14, 4:29, 5:6 (yes, even pastors – Rom 16:17)
- e. This would disqualify most ministers → 2 Cor 4:2 (e.g. tithes,
- f. Lies include preaching out of context, spiritualizing, teaching error, popular opinion.
- g. Pretending to be someone you are not, a church you are not, stealing, 'not talk of it'
- h. Our "approving what is excellent" is in order to be "sincere" – Phi 1:10

4. Dishonesty to "Help More People"

- a. It is a subtle lie that reaching more people matters most in the church.
- b. Without courage, conviction, character (honesty) appeals are made to what you want
- c. Bait and switch ~def. advertise one product, but sell them another (false advertising)
 - i. e.g. Free concert! (Pass the plate) Free food! (listen to sermon) Games! (Bible)
 - ii. This tactic used if not as many would come if they were honest upfront.
- d. You cannot trust people who lie to get your attention, to tell you the truth. (singles)
- e. Paul says "not many", "all in Asia be turned away", endure hardness - 2 Tim 3:1-8

5. Dishonesty in Appearance

- a. So much in politics and in pulpits is about appearance. Beware of corruption.
- b. Men have gloried in appearance since the beginning - 2 Cor 5:12, 10:7, 12-18
- c. Paul didn't care if he appeared to fail if they did "that which is honest" - 2 Cor 13:5-8

6. Preventing Corruption

- a. Truth can be hard b/c it can hurt, requires patience, humility... but it exposes lies.
- b. Grace Be strong in the grace of Christ – 2 Tim 2:1
- c. Be no more children in understanding – Eph 4:14-15
- d. Paul goes to great lengths to ensure honesty (esp in finances) – 2 Cor 8:20-21
- e. Do all things in the sight of God – 2 Cor 2:17, 5:9-11; 1 Tim 6:13-14, 2 Tim 4:1-4
- f. To please God – Gal 1:10, 1Th 2:4, approved of God – 2 Tim 2:15 ... not men.
- g. If your ministry is to be believed you must be honest.