

# MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## SEMINAR IV

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### **Theme: “The Pentecostal Minister and Relationships”**

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### *Purity and Accountability*

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#### **Introduction**

God is very serious and clear concerning His command for holiness of life, which includes both purity and accountability. Every aspect of our walk of life is to be pleasing to God and obedient to His commandments for purity, sanctification, holiness, and accountability.

#### **I. Moral Purity**

God's will is that we live pure lives before Him. Purity involves abstaining from any kind of sexual immorality and manifesting the dynamic virtues of love and loyalty. "For this is the will of God, even you sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3a). God's will is that we know how to control our lives (mind and body) in sanctification and in honor. Sanctification is achieved through a personal consecration to moral purity. Impurity dishonors God, is a sin against God, and will be revenged by God.

Sanctification means resisting the enslaving passion of immoral lust. Immoral lust is of the sinful world, not of God. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14,15, NKJV).

Immorality defrauds and cheats, it destroys trust and love, and it steals innocence and affection. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

God has called us to holiness and purity because immorality destroys:

- love of self and others
- trustworthiness
- discipline and self-control
- true concern for others
- self-esteem
- confidence in self and others
- justice and fairness
- honesty
- family and nation

Moral purity and holiness of life are possible and expected in believers because of God's redemptive grace through salvation in Jesus Christ. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

The love of God demands purity and a turning away from sin. Sin is always some form of disobedience, rebellion, or denial to following after purity and holiness. Without Jesus Christ and the new birth we are all unrighteous, impure sinners.

Sin has produced in mankind spiritual death and eternal damnation, but the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ has delivered us from the penalty of sin and death.

Purity demands that we as believers be filled with the fruits of righteousness and that we deny ungodliness. We are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:12).

The call to perfection demands of us a life which is ever on the watch against sin, always fights the battle for goodness, and does not surrendered to sin, but demands a life which is always quick to repent and abide in obedience to God's Word. As we walk in the light of purity, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and enables us to overcome the world through faith.

Purity requires "guarding yourself in your spirit" (Malachi 2:15). Aristotle said, "Character is that which reveals moral purpose, exposing the class of things a man chooses or avoids."

Henry Ward Beecher said, "Expedients are for the hour, but principles are for the ages..." Purity is a principle for the ages. Recently the word purity has made a great comeback when we consider the prevalence of sexual immorality around the world. Purity has a great payoff when we consider the wages of sin in child abuse, diseases, guilt, or broken destructive relationships.

It is time to be pragmatic and honest in dealing with sexual immorality and all violation of purity of life. It is time for the church to cry out over America's degeneration and violations of the basic principles of purity and morality.

## **II. Accountability Through Submission**

Accountability is complex because it refers to the many Biblical principles of *leadership*, *responsibility*, and *holiness*. There are hundreds of specific commands to be and to do placed upon those who name the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Our life with God depends upon our obedience to walking in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. We are accountable to all of these spiritual principles.

The big question is – How can we be accountable to God and one another in a way that assures our anointing and fruitfulness in the Holy Spirit?

The secret is in living out the Redemptive Call to Submission.

Submission produces:

- diligence – The diligent shall be filled with the Spirit (Proverbs 13:4).
- trust – He who trust in the Lord shall prosper (Proverbs 28:25).
- responsibility – God said, I will send you a man, anoint him over my people (I Samuel 9:16).
- righteousness – Those who love righteousness and hate iniquity will be anointed with the oil of gladness (Psalms 45:7).
- courage – For God will not fail you (Deuteronomy 31:6).
- Obedience – The ability to do all the Lord commands (Joshua 11:15)
- unity – Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).
- joy – The oil of gladness (Isaiah 61:3).
- humility and brokenness – To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

All followers of Jesus Christ are called to accountability, submission, faith, and love, which are available because of God's redemptive grace.

Redemption brings into our lives God's process of reconciliation (healing, forgiveness, deliverance) under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This process is an act of submission – to Christ and to one another. Submission to the Lordship of Christ causes us to – "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15b).

Submission is inward surrender governing outward action. Without submission there is no church and no reconciliation. "Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Philippians 2:2). In Philippians chapter 2, Paul describes the fruit of submission and unity.

**A. We Avoid Conflict and Contentious Controversy**

Philippians 2:3 – "Let nothing be done through strife..."

**Strife** is disputes, quarrels, contentions. Paul told Titus (3:9) – "Avoid foolish controversies..."

In Colossians Paul said, "...forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"

(3:13). Paul told Timothy that the servants of God must not quarrel nor be resentful.

Submission requires that we develop the mind of Christ for obedient accountability. Submission is an act of worship guided by a heart for the Lord and A Passion to be Like Jesus!

## **B. We Follow the Example of Jesus Christ**

Philippians 2:8 – He humbled Himself

From His entry to His exit, Jesus walked in humility and submission in order to be obedient. Isaiah described the Messiah as "...despised and rejected by man, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not...oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth..." (53:3-9).

From the Incarnation to the Crucifixion of Christ, it is a story of scandalous shame and abuse reflected in the passion of Christ! Peter reminds us that we too shall suffer for Christ.

Paul said we will have to, "Work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Therefore, we are to "Do all things without murmurings and disputing...be blameless and harmless..." (14, 15). This is how we are to live

here on earth in the midst of a wicked and perverse world. We therefore "Shine as lights in the world" (15).

**C. We are Committed to an Unconditional Obedience to God and His Word**

Submission is about our attitude and a matter of the heart. Obedience is action, a matter of faith. Obedience is our response to truth as we put our faith and trust in God. For example in the book of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego disobey Nebuchadnezzar's order to bow down and worship the image of gold, and Daniel disobeyed the king's decree by praying to the God of Israel. In the New Testament, Peter and the apostles disobeyed the order of the Sanhedrin to stop preaching the Gospel. Their response was, "We must obey God rather than man!" (Acts 5:29).

**D. We Live in the Light and Confront the Darkness**

Ephesians 5:8-11 says, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light...live as children of light...have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." Light is a symbol of obedience, faith, and spiritual purity. Darkness represents spiritual depravity and corruption. Paul said that we are saved out of darkness to be "children of light," who live in the light; therefore, we expose sin and darkness,

realizing that sin is not a private issue! We do not control sin; sin seeks to control or possess us!

Only in the light can we live holy, pure, authentic lives. Accountability demands submission to the light of God's holiness. Paul said we are to "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness." We are to be reconciled to God. We are to be restored, made perfect, and made like new!

We are to recover what has been lost! When darkness creeps in, a light must be restored if joy is to return. You cannot restore unity to a church that has not had unity. Many churches never achieved a vibrant life and unity where people are joined heart and mind under the Lordship of Jesus with a pure vision and love.

Some Christians do not understand the normal spirit-filled life of unity produced by accountability and submission. Darkness keeps up conflicts and destroys or deprives us of power with God.

Accountability calls for authentic communication ("speaking the truth in love"), which must be present within the community (koinonia) of the church. Leaders are admonished to correct, rebuke, and encourage. Speaking the truth often

requires confrontation calling for honest responses. In the Greek the word for truth literally means "nonconcealment." We are held accountable by God to cause truth to shine in the light for all to see.

Truth is the attributes of mind and character that are free from falsification, pretense, simulation, concealment, or deceit. Again, truth is living in the light; living in a new reality without concealment, or pretense, or any deceit.

Jesus said concerning Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 1:14; 14:6). Truth and Love work together. Truth sanctifies; Love sacrifices.

Truth Sanctifies: Jesus said, "Sanctify them by the Truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Love Sacrifices: "Not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for sins" (I John 4:10,11).

Accountability involves our responsibility to confront in love:

- We are not responsible for the sinner's response.
- We are not responsible for justice or vindication.
- But we are responsible to model accountability and submission to God.

Living in the light requires personal examination and corporate confrontation marked by humility and submission. Church conflicts usually come from personal sin or bad theology. We must confess our sins and change our theology or we will self-destruct.

Confession of our sins and failure glorifies God, builds character, and creates unity. Confession brings forgiveness because if we refuse to forgive others, God will refuse to forgive us. Jesus taught us that forgiveness is the power to love. Also, that he who has been forgiven little loves little! Why do some people not love others?

Forgiveness brings freedom and the power to worship God in the Spirit. Revelation 3:19 says, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent."

## **Conclusion**

David cried out in prayer, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (Psalm 51:12-13).

David turned from the darkness to the light and was restored. The redemptive call to submission and to purity can set us free, forgive us, and restore in us the peace of God and the glory of the Lord.

Let us truly become a people transformed by the power and wisdom of the Resurrected Christ. People of a pure heart are fully submitted to Christ and obedient to God's demands of love and holiness.

We started in the Spirit; let us go on in the power of the Holy Spirit and shine as bright lights in a dark world.