

Lesson 9

Teacher's Manual

YOUR PASTOR AND YOU

READ & MEDITATE ON: Ephesians 4:1-16 MEMORIZE: I Thessalonians 5:12-13

INTRODUCTION

There are divine agencies our Lord gives us to fashion and mold our lives so that we can be acceptable unto Him and successful as a Christian. There are at least three major agencies to consider. First, we have the Word of God. Then, we have the Holy Spirit of God as a constant teacher and guide. Also, we have the man of God--our pastor. In this lesson we will deal with the role our pastor plays in our spiritual lives.

The word "pastor" literally means "shepherd." The guiding and helping hand of a godly pastor will be invaluable to you in your walk with God. As a new creature in Christ, walking a brand new but unfamiliar path of life, it is good to be able to follow and listen to someone who has walked this way for many years. Nurture a desire to be fed and led by the man of God!

I. YOUR PASTOR

According to Ephesians 4:7-11, pastors are one of God's special gifts to the church. God gave (not man) the five-fold ministry as a gift to the church. Just as surely as God purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28), He also gave to this church which He purchased, a ministry to be the overseers, leaders, and shepherds of His flock.

As we look back into the Old Testament we have Moses as a good example of the office of a pastor. God ordained that Moses would be a leader over His people. He was to be respected and even revered. Not revered as God, but because God willed that the head of Israel was to receive this honor. For Moses was speaking for God to the people. Though the head of a congregation holds this illustrious authority simply because God wills it, doubtless there are good and wise reasons why He wills it.

II. HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU

Let us examine the solemn charges given your pastor as he ministers to you as a servant in the sight of God.

A. Equip

The Apostle Paul tells us the reason God has given the church the various ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:12. The purpose is, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...." Now when we say, "for the perfecting of the saints....," we mean not only maturity but preparation for works of service. This is done in order that the saints may be able to minister toward the building up of the body of Christ. The Amplified Bible accurately translates this idea as follows:

"His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), (that they should do) the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church)..."

Ephesians 4:12

Your pastor, by the Word and Spirit of God, is guiding you into a place of usefulness in the kingdom of God. He wants you to develop spiritually, to the point that your life will be a blessing to others.

B. Feed

Paul speaks to spiritual shepherds in regard to their ministerial responsibility in Acts 20:28-29:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Your pastor understands this to mean that he is in a very responsible position as a minister of the gospel and therefore cannot take lightly the task of presenting a people who have made themselves ready for the coming of Christ. Therefore, in watching for your soul, his messages from the Word of God will be to encourage, inspire, strengthen and stir your heart so you will not be lost.

As you surely understand by now, your pastor plays an important role in your spiritual growth and perfection. The reason many fail God and go back into the world is because they do not grow as a normal Christian should. After the initial infilling of the Holy Ghost, there is a time of growing. II Peter 3:18 tells us to, "...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This scripture implies that there should be progress in our walk with God. Growth involves a moving on, it involves activity. The second part of this verse is very important inasmuch as the more knowledge a person acquires about our Lord and His Word the less his chances of going into false teachings will be. The Lord spoke to His people in the Old Testament saying, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosea 4:6). How does knowledge come then? Knowledge is imparted to us through the Word of God and through the help of the ministry.

Hebrews 6:1 is another scripture that relates to our growth and our tie to the ministry. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." The writer is telling us not to tamper with the doctrines or the foundation of the church because this has been carefully laid by the apostles and this is a sacred trust that we must never violate. However, he encourages us to go on from this foundation and build. To build our lives properly we must have guidance. Here, again, we see the importance of faithful leadership that can guide us and help us avoid mistakes as we build upon a firm foundation.

III. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO HIM

A. Esteem

Paul exhorts us to hold in high regard our spiritual leaders:

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake..."

I Thessalonians 5:12-13

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

In addition to these things, be quick to pledge your support during fasting and prayer days when the pastor feels it is time to bind together for a revival or special spiritual needs. Learn the blessedness of cooperation. There is nothing as refreshing to the heart of a pastor than to know that you can always be counted on as one who is always at your post of duty.

C. Submit

Submission to authority is another God-given responsibility we must render to our spiritual leaders.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Hebrews 13:17

Your leader is very anxious to help and see that your spiritual needs are taken care of. This is only possible as you are willing to submit to his teachings, council and advice. You will notice throughout the Word of God, that special emphasis is placed on our obedience to God-called ministry. Before you would ever allow yourself to become critical or rebellious because of conditions that exist in the church, or because you cannot relate to your pastor because of personality or type of leadership, then it is time to fast and pray until God either changes you or him or conditions that exist that seemingly hinder you. Let us look at the Bible and note the consequences of not showing proper respect for God's ministers. Numbers 12 and 16 lists three examples of the consequences of having an improper attitude toward the man whom God places over the congregation. And let it be remembered that, "...whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." (Romans 15:4) and, "...they are written for our admonition..." (I Corinthians 10:11).

First, we have Moses' own sister and brother declining to reverence him. They even went a step further and dared to sit in judgment on him. They insinuated that Moses was taking too much authority for a mere man. Furthermore, were not both Miriam and Aaron anointed of God also? This was their thinking and criticism (Numbers 12:1-2). God heard and answered them in short order (verses 4-8). A most terrible judgment fell on Miriam. She became

Our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, says to those that will be His disciples, "Follow me." The Bible exhorts believers to be, "...followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1), and to follow His undershepherds as they follow Christ (Philippians 3:17 and I Corinthians 11:1). The Word of God teaches us to follow, respect, believe, and work with the man of God. He is a representative of our heavenly Pastor, of whom it is said, "...that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). In I Thessalonians 1:6, the Apostle Paul portrays the ideal situation for pastor and people. He says, "...Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord...." What a beautiful relationship! This is the kind of relationship God wants you to have with your pastor.

()

()

()

a leper (verse 10). She suffered the reproach of being shut out of camp seven days. Shamed, if you please, in the presence of the whole congregation. And she was healed only because the man she had refused to respect prayed for her (verse 13). To lift up your hand (or tongue) against a man of God is simply begging for trouble. Only heartache awaits the person who will not conquer that spirit.

The second incidence where Moses was disdained and accused of grabbing too much power is recorded in Numbers 16. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram accused Moses and Aaron of taking too much upon themselves, lifting themselves above the congregation when, said they, the whole congregation was holy (verse 3). They even blamed Moses for their failure to be in Canaan at that time (verse 13). They refused to recognize the difference between the God-ordained leader and the rest of the congregation. They died a horrible death under the judgment of God (verses 31-35). This spirit is still at work today and will try to make inroads within the church. Anytime you feel and see that spirit in operation, do not be identified with it.

The third instance of contempt for God's ordained leader is found in Numbers 16:41. Though Israel had witnessed what can happen to those who treat God's man shamefully, yet they were emboldened the very next day to attack the very same man. They charged, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." In this, they readily took the part of the rebels that had died under the hand of God. They not only refused respect for Moses, they, in effect, accused him of tyranny (killing those who oppose him). And as rebels usually are, they were wrong on every count. Those who had died were not "the people of the Lord." Moses did not kill them, God did. Moses was not being a dictator. He was simply obeying God. This rebellion against their pastor caused the death of 14,700 lives (verse 49). This should reveal just how heinous this is in God's sight.

Almost all church trouble arises out of this spirit that refuses to render proper respect for God's pastors. And when a church goes along with that spirit and attitude, something dies within. Let us remember to always accept our pastor as the God-ordained leader and by so doing we help ourselves, strengthen our church, and bless the kingdom of God in general.

This is not intended to leave the impression that the pastor is always right. However, he is always pastor--at least until God removes him--and if he is wrong, be assured that in time, God will take care of the matter.

I Peter 2:17 says, "Honor all men." The Bible also tells us to render honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). If this reference is made in reference to human authorities only, how much more should we honor spiritual authorities! Indeed, ministers that rule well are, "...worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word, and doctrine" (I Timothy 5:17).

B. Support

There are several ways in which you can support your pastor. Two important ones are finances and faithfulness.

1. Finances

Your financial support of the man of God will come natural for you. Your appreciation for him will cause you to want to be a blessing to him as he has blessed you. This understanding is based on the scripture, for Paul asked the Corinthians in regard to ministerial offerings, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things (money)?" (I Corinthians 9:11).

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

I Corinthians 9:13-14

God has ordained that the ministry be supported by tithes and offerings. Tithing, in God's plan, means that we give ten percent of our income to the ministry. (Note to teacher: this subject will be covered more completely in Level II.)

2. Faithfulness

Always be loyal to your pastor. Never allow yourself to become critical of his mannerisms or methods. When others may criticize, always stand in his defense or pray for him. God's Word teaches us never to touch His anointed (I Samuel 24:6-10). Faithfulness also involves regular attendance in worship services. In fact, this is a command found in Hebrews 10:25.

The preaching of the Word of God will keep you saved. Your soul will be fed continually as the pastor faithfully ministers the Word of God. We are told in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Never lose the desire in your life for the Word of God. Realize your God-called pastor is preaching and teaching from the Word that is able to save your soul. Also, the pastor as shepherd over the flock will keep the wolves away. These wolves represent false teachers who will try to bring false doctrines into the church. It is good for you to know your shepherd who watches at all times to make sure the sheep are not scattered. Jesus said of a good shepherd, that, "...he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:4-5).

In the times of Jesus the shepherd was the door to the sheepfold. The sheep learned his voice and would only move at the sound of the voice of the shepherd. As sheep, we learn the certain sound of our shepherd (our pastor). Even though there are many voices, we will appreciate our shepherd's voice that lovingly helps direct our daily lives.

The Apostle Peter also exhorts Christian leaders to nourish God's people in I Peter 5:2-4:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

C. Watch

As an overseer, your pastor also becomes the watchman. He takes the oversight of your spiritual development and is accountable to God for his care of your soul.

"...for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account..."

Hebrews 13:17

His duty as a watchman is a serious one. If he does not warn you to turn away from your wicked ways when he sees you going astray, God holds him responsible for your misfortune (Ezekiel 3:17-18).

A. Divine Order

God knows, (and we ought to know), that for a business, organization, family, or church to succeed there must be one head. There can be helpers, workers, leaders, and assistants but there can only be one head. One person must occupy the position of highest authority, a person whose word is final in any matter of import. If this is not carried out properly, there can only be confusion.

It is more important that a church have this arrangement than any other organization. However, a church is not merely a business. It cannot be run on the same principles as a club, store, factory, or other such organizations. These may be governed by stockholders, executive boards, and such like, but the church cannot be. To try to do so is to disregard three facts: (1) The church is ruled by spiritual laws not carnal ones, (2) The church is not owned by stockholders, or a man-man official board. It is owned by Deity, and (3) God has ordained that pastors be the primary overseers of local churches. Our Lord proclaims that it is His church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus Christ is the sole owner of the church and has the right to establish the kind of government in it He deems wise.

B. Divine Communication

In the Old Testament, what God wanted Israel to know, He conveyed through His leader Moses. At least sixteen times we read of God saying to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel...." This is the way it was done, even though there were many who held responsible positions among the Israelites.

This same procedure is found in the New Testament even though the whole church is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God has arranged His church this way so He may be able to communicate His will to the saints through His leaders. God conveys direction to the congregation through its pastor. This is vividly seen in the messages to the seven churches of Asia in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Book of Revelation. These messages were addressed to the "angel" of each respective church. The Greek word, "aggelos," (rendered angel) is not used exclusively of spirit beings, but of men, too. The word literally means, "messenger, envoy, one who is sent." Strong's Commentary says the term means, "by implication, a pastor." These angels are the pastors of the seven churches and none other. Your pastor is a messenger of God. The message he delivers from the pulpit is the instruction and rules of conduct he deems necessary for your good and the good of the church. The pastor communicates what he sincerely feels to be the will of God in the establishment of biblical holiness standards. Your pastor will teach and preach what he feels is right in the fear of God. (There may be a little difference between the standard of your church and other churches in the organization. However, you are obligated to follow the teaching of your pastor regardless of what others may do.)