

Nurturing the Novice

The Old Union Baptist Ministers' School

Thirtieth Annual Session

Wednesday, March 27, 2002

By ~ Elder Ronald G. Spurgeon

Pastor of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Scottsville, Kentucky

Scripture Lesson: I Timothy 3:1 – 7 (KJV), Text verse 6. “...Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

The word **nurturing** means to feed, nourish, train, educate, sustain, provide for or simply care for the needs of someone. In this lesson, we are focusing on the novice.

The central themes of the epistles to Timothy and Titus are **Nurturing the Novice**. Timothy receives counsel and exhortations as a young pastor respecting his personal conduct and ministerial work. Titus, who was most likely more sturdy and mature than Timothy, receives counsel and exhortations relating to ministerial duties and doctrines, with special emphasis upon maintaining good works.

Objective: My aim in this lesson is to provide tools to aid the preacher in making the transition from the novice to an ordained elder (if applicable) for the work of the church and The Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

Brothers, **PRIDE** is the preacher poison of a novice! A humble spirit will lead you to a successful maturing ministry. “**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.**” James 4:10 (KJV)

The Apostle Paul instructed a young pastor Timothy on how to qualify to be a Pastor. The scriptures teach us that there are at least 15 qualifications for the Greek word *episkopos* meaning overseer, superintendent, or commonly named among us as the bishop or Greek *presbuteros* meaning Elder. The sacred 15 are subdivided into three categories:

- **Personal character and habits vs., 2 & 3.**
 - **Attitude toward his family vs., 4 & 5.**
 - **Experience and good reputation vs., 6 & 7.**
1. Must be blameless ~ of sinful accusations.
 2. Husband of one wife. Enough said.
 3. Vigilant and Sober ~ of a sound and stable mind.
 4. Good behavior ~ orderly deportment that is becoming of the man of God with the highest calling on Earth! In the pulpit and out of the pulpit.
 5. Hospitable ~ to everyone we come in contact with.
 6. Teacher ~ if he's a preacher -- he's a teacher!
 7. **NO Wine**
 8. No striker ~ or reviler.
 9. Greedy of filthy lucre ~ do not be guilty of loving monetary sources, for the love of money or power is the root of all evil!
 10. Patient ~ gentle, yielding.
 11. Not a brawler ~ no physical fighting -- ours is a spiritual fight!
 12. Not covetous ~ not wanting more than God has already blessed us with, naturally speaking.
 13. Rules his house ~ Greek *proistemi*, means to maintain a Godly home.
 14. Not a novice ~ The focus of our lesson.
 15. Good Report without ~ it should be easy to recognize us as being good upstanding citizens anywhere we are.

What is a Novice?

Novice - Greek: *Neophytos* means one newly planted. A **neophyte** means a recent convert or a beginner. A **novice** is described as a beginner in any occupation; an inexperienced person. One who enters a religious order or community on probation. We are on probation until we prove that we can do the job. Who is the judge? It is God that calls and God who evaluates our progress.

Read Jeremiah 1: 4 - 10 (KJV). “Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send

thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: (Baptist norm?) for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

Paul instructs Timothy -- **"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."** *1 Timothy 4:12. KJV* The word youth in the Greek is: Neotes. Both words are derived from neos; meaning "new" or "young". Preachers, do not **despise**, (Greek - *kataphroneo* - **to think or look down upon someone**) young preachers! Young preachers, **do not give a reason for anyone to despise you!** We are to be good Godly examples to all believers, in word (Greek - *logos* - **speech, matter, reason**), in conversation (Greek - *means behavior*), in charity (Greek - *agape unconditional LOVE*), in spirit (Greek - *pneuma* - **In the Holy Ghost**), in faith (Greek - *pistis* - **assurance, belief, fidelity**) and in purity (Greek - *hagneia* - **chastity or innocence**)! **The preacher preaches. When? At an age when the Lord calls him to preach. So, preach it Brother, Preach it! Preach What? The central theme of our message should be the Gospel of Jesus Christ!**

Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity begins when the preacher puts forth the effort to become, **"Apt To Teach"** (*1 Timothy 3:2, KJV*)- Greek *didaktikos*, **means appropriate teaching**. The younger minister has the God given ability to teach or preach (both have similar meaning). Not at the level of a seasoned minister of God, but the younger has a message given from God and should teach or preach it with the ability that God gives. The young minister is required by God to learn all that he can about a subject, research it, meditate on it, deliver it to the people that God intended for it to go too, add nothing to it that does not relate (stick to the subject) and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit to take the message to the hearts of the hearers!

How do we measure Ministerial Maturity?

Ministerial maturity begins with patience and waiting on the Lord. The Apostle Peter learned the hard way. He said he would lay down his life for the Lord's sake. He later denied that he knew Christ and had to repent with bitter tears. His maturity level was elevated when he responded positively to Jesus concerning the question: Peter do you love me? Jesus told Peter to feed the lambs and sheep, three times. Peter did just that from the time of the Day of Pentecost until his untimely death. The over-zealous Preacher Peter learned ~ **Patience by experience!** Read *Romans 5: 1- 3 (KJV)* **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;..."** Charles Hadden Spurgeon said, "Believe it, brethren, God never saved any man for being a preacher; nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was justified, sanctified, and consequently faithful in his Master's work." C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students*, p. 12, complete & unabridged **Being faithful goes along way in learning patience.**

Experience That Works. Called HOPE!

Read Romans 5: 4,5 (KJV) **"And patience, experience: and experience hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."** Brothers, this experience must be experimental! **"Better abolish pulpits than fill them with men who have no experimental knowledge of what they teach."** C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students*, p. 11, complete & unabridged There is hope for the novice! There is hope for the minister of God! We must be like the Son of Jesse -- King David, a man after God's own heart! Acts 13:22 (KJV), We must be a man of God! Spurgeon quotes, **"you must be a man of God, not after the common manner of men, but 'after God's own heart;'" and men will strive to be like**

you, if you be like to God:...” C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students*, p. 19, complete & unabridged

When is a Novice not a novice?

Read Galatians 6: 3 – 9 (KJV) ***“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the work communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”***

In summary, a novice is not a novice:

- When the preacher realizes he is nothing and that God gives the increase. Reference I Corinthians 3: 6,7. (KJV)
- When he proves his work by practicing what he preaches.
- When spiritual rejoicing from above floods the SOUL!
- When he learns to be accountable for his personal responsibilities.
- When he gives and receives the word mutually.
- When he properly sows and reaps spiritual discernment.
- When he perseveres in all of God’s work!

The young preacher’s guide to a successful ministry. (Summary of excerpts from C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students*, complete & unabridged)

1. There must be a Heavenly Calling that accompanies an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.
2. Combined with the earnest desire to become an evangelist, pastor, teacher, or missionary, there must be an aptness to teach with some measure of the other qualities needful for the office of a public instructor.
3. After a little exercise of the gifts granted by God, he must see a measure of conversion-work going on under his efforts, or he may conclude that he has made a mistake, and, therefore, may go back by the best way he can. **NOTE: Key word is “may”! You better talk and listen to God about this!**
4. A step beyond all this is, however, needful in our inquiry. The will of the Lord concerning pastors is made known through the prayerful judgement of His Church. It is needful as a proof of your vocation that your preaching should be acceptable to the people of God.
Note: I said acceptable, not pleasing to the ears!

Be proactive, not just preventative.

Read II Timothy 2:15 (KJV) ***“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*** We need to incorporate these five “P’s” into our personal ministries.

1. **Persistence** ~ Let’s learn from a child. *“Among some skaters was a small boy so obviously a beginner that his frequent tumbles awakened the pity of a tenderhearted, if not wise, spectator. “Why, child,” she said, “I wouldn’t stay on the ice and keep falling down; I’d just come off and watch the others.” Quickly brushing away his tears, the little fellow looked from his advisor to the shining blades on his feet and answered indignantly, “I didn’t get new skates to give up with; I got them to learn how with.”* God did not call preachers to stay down when it gets too tough, so learn something new and preach...preach...preach!
2. **Passionate Enthusiasm** ~ *“Think about the most enthusiastic person you know. You kinda like being around that person, don’t you? ‘Nuff said.”*
3. **Practice ~ Practice ~ Practice** ~ *“Little girl watched as her Daddy brought the pan of water to boil. She said, “Boy, Daddy, that looks hot. Why don’t you put your finger in and see?” Without*

thinking, he did. Sometimes, even experience doesn't prevent you from making the same mistake again." We must think about what and how we are practicing, by gaining experience, because it sure helps to prevent mistakes and getting burnt in hot water!

4. Powerful Courage ~ "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine." I Samuel 17:40 (KJV) The rest is history! The Shepherd boy wins!

5. Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance ~ "Without a charted course, the ship never sails from the harbor." Be ready to preach before you get to the pulpit! "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Timothy 4:2 (KJV).

Respect

Read I Timothy 5:1,17-21. (KJV). "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;...", "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the work and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."

Respect means to esteem others higher than self! Brothers, it is a solemn duty before God to respect each other! We may not all agree on everything, but we must agree that the most important element of our ministry is to preach The Gospel of Jesus Christ that Lost souls might be saved! "No preacher preaches his sermon well to others, if he does not first preach it to his own heart!" (John Owen as quoted by C. H. Spurgeon.) We must respect each other, young to the aged and the aged to the young!

Meekness/humility.

A meek and humble spirit is essential for the novice. Read Matthew 11:28-30. (KJV) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is very important for us to emulate the meek and lowly spirit of our Savior in our ministry. Learn to lean on **HIM ONLY** for our strength in troubled times! My hope and prayer for all of us is that Jesus would aid us in our burdens and encourage us to be humble and submissive to His will!

Conclusion.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13,14. This advise is from "the Preacher" to the Preacher, (Ecclesiastes 1:1). I love all of you very much and may the "Spirit of Philadelphia" rest upon us all! "Let brotherly love continue." Hebrews 13:1, (KJV).