

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 1

#### The Nature Of Authority

The subject of governments and administrations is really a study in the organization and delegation of authority. **Governments** are *the organization of authority to rule and govern*, while **administration** is *the actual process of using the authority given to rule and govern*. However, in order to have an accurate and proper understanding of church governments and administrations, one must have a sound understanding of authority. This lesson will deal with the essence of authority.

#### ALL AUTHORITY COMES FROM GOD

All authority comes from God. **Authority** is defined as *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience*. This right or power begins with God. He is the first authority and He is the final authority. He is the creator and giver of life. All things began with Him for He is authority.

- **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (*authority*). For there is no power (*authority*) but of God: the powers (*authority*) that be are ordained (*ordered*) of God.** **Romans 13:1**

#### ALL AUTHORITY IS DELEGATED

All authority begins with God and it is His to delegate. After man's creation, God very quickly delegated authority to man so that man would be authorized to do things for God.

- **And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth . . . <sup>28</sup>And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it (to keep under): and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

**Genesis 1:26, 28**

God gave man dominion (*authority*) and commanded man to use it (*subdue the earth*). God chose man to be a representative of God on the earth and man was given a measure of God's authority in order to rule on the earth. Man had God's authorization to use His authority.

#### NO ONE HAS THEIR OWN AUTHORITY

All authority is on loan. If you have any authority, it is only because someone with more authority than you has given it to you. In this regard, authority is like a river flowing from the top down. It begins with God and is passed down to man.



- When a boss promotes you, he gives you more of his authority.
  - When a father promotes you, he gives you more of his authority.
  - When a church leader promotes you, you are given more of their authority.
  - When the government promotes you, you are given more of its authority.
- **For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. Matthew 8:9**

The centurion could only command soldiers because he was under authority. It was not his authority, but rather his superior's authority. It was authority on loan, but it empowered him to make decisions and enforce behavior. His authority, when used, authorized the soldiers under him to then go and perform his commands. If someone were to question the soldiers and ask why they were going or coming or doing, they could then answer, "My centurion has commanded me," and they would be left alone.

### **ALL AUTHORITY HAS A PURPOSE**

That ultimate purpose is to secure and enforce peace. Whether it be to maintain peace on the streets, order in the courtroom, structure in the classroom, or efficiency on the factory floor. All authority is an extension of the Prince of Peace to manifest peace in the earth.

### **AUTHORITY IN THE GODHEAD**

Even the Godhead has a chain of command during the Church age. This is very clearly communicated throughout the scriptures. The Holy Spirit submits to Jesus.

- **Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. <sup>14</sup>**He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. John 16:13-14****

But where does Jesus get His authority? From the Father. This is called Economic Subordinationism.

### **ECONOMIC SUBORDINATIONISM VS. ONTOLOGICAL SUBORDINATIONISM**

*Economic Subordinationism* deals with the arrangement of activities, while *Ontological Subordinationism* deals with the essence of being. To say that Jesus is ontologically subordinate to the Father is heresy—that is, He does *not* exist as an inferior person. But economically speaking (Greek *oikonomikos*—*the arrangement of activities*), Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are both subordinate to the Father. Jesus declared, "**I must be about my Father's business**" (Luke 2:49) and "**Not my will, but thy will be done**" (Matthew 26:42). See also John 5:37 and 6:38 and Hebrews 10:7.

- **Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19**

- **And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (*authority*) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **Matthew 28:18****

Jesus stated that He could, of Himself, do nothing. After His resurrection, He received all power and authority over heaven and earth. With that authority, He speaks to the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the Church.

### **ALL AUTHORITY IS A STEWARDSHIP**

All authority must be accounted for one day, whether now on earth, or one day at God's throne of judgment. If you are in leadership, you require a status on the things you have authorized and commanded to be carried out. You want to know what has been done with the authority you delegated. If the report is good, you are likely to promote. If the report is bad, you are likely to punish and demote.

### **SUBMISSION BRINGS AUTHORITY**

The only way to gain or earn more authority is to submit to authority. Authority is only lawfully granted through submission. It is possible to steal authority, but this is called hi-jacking and thievery, and God will never honor it. You must submit your way up. If God can find you faithful over a little, He will make you ruler over much (**Matthew 25:21**).

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 2

### Offices Of The Church

The Church of the LORD Jesus Christ is a highly organized institution. Jesus Christ left nothing to chance. His Body is designed to operate and run very smoothly. In this lesson, we will give a brief synopsis of the various offices—or positions of authority—in the Church. We will see who authorizes them and what those offices are authorized to do. **\*\*Remember, all authority has a purpose and the premiere purpose is to make and keep peace.\*\***

This teaching will help to clear up some of the misunderstandings of governments in the Church today. Ultimately, the goal of any and all church governments should be to properly and honorably delegate God's authority to those who are rightly qualified, to the end the local church runs smoothly and peacefully for the glory of God. We must readily acknowledge that different churches and denominations employ various ecclesiastical titles differently, but in the end, their intention is to lead, guide, and bring peace to the local church.

#### FIVEFOLD MINISTERS (Ephesians 4:11)

- **Who**—The Apostle, the Prophet, the Evangelist, the Pastor, and the Teacher
- **Who authorizes them**—The LORD Jesus Christ. They are chosen by Him. They cannot be self-appointed or self-selected.
- **And he [Jesus] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;** **Ephesians 4:11**
- **Accountable to**—These men and women will answer severely to the LORD Jesus Christ (**James 3:1**) and to each other (**Galatians 2:11; 1 Timothy 1:20**). Do not covet to be a full-time minister.
- **Purpose**—For the perfecting of the saints, so the saints can do the work of the ministry, so the Body of Christ can be edified (**Ephesians 4:12**). For these timeless reasons, we believe all five of these offices must still exist today. These five classes of believers have a supernatural calling and gifting ordained by God. A Christian cannot aspire to these roles; they are assigned by Jesus Christ as He wills.
- **Job Description**—These officers of the church are authorized and anointed to perfect the saints through doctrine, instruction, correction, training, rebuke, and prayer. They also have their specialty roles as follows:
  - **Apostles**—*Sent ones*. Apostles establish churches and doctrines and go places the Gospel has yet to be preached. The apostle is always on the go and always looking for a new place to start a new work.
  - **Prophets**—*Seers*. This office keeps the Body of Christ out of error and sin and is always bringing the Church back to righteousness. The prophet will always see where the Church is out of line with the Word and the Spirit of God and seek to bring it back on course.
  - **Evangelists**—*The great soul-winners*. They are anointed to preach the simple Gospel message and confirm it with signs following. The evangelist has a heart that is always yearning for the lost.

- Pastors—*Shepherds*. These men are shepherds over the local flock. They live with the local church. The pastor can't stand to see sheep scattered, hurting, or ignorant. Real shepherds smell like their sheep.
- Teachers—This office keeps the church balanced with in-depth, line-upon-line teaching. They have an anointing to see deeper things in the Word and piece together established doctrine, explaining it in such a way that even the simplest mind can grasp it. If a teacher is convoluted and confusing, they may not be a genuine teacher.

### **BISHOPS (1 Timothy 3:1-7)**

- **Who**—Anyone who desires to do the work needed in the local church and then qualifies for the office of a bishop.
- **Who authorizes them**—The established leadership in the local church appoints bishops. To some degree, the terms bishop and elder can be used interchangeably.

- **For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee . . .**

<sup>7</sup>**For a bishop must be blameless . . .**

**Titus 1:5, 7a**

- **Note**—This verse perfectly demonstrates the nature of authority: It began with Paul the apostle; it was then bequeathed to Pastor Titus for the needs of Crete, who then used it to appoint elders in every city. Those elders would then be able to say they had been authorized, not by themselves, but by ordained leadership.
- **Accountable to**—Bishops are accountable to the leadership who appointed them. In the local church it will be the pastor or apostle.
- **Purpose**—Bishops, by Greek definition, are overseers and help superintend what is already established in the local church. A church without elders/bishops is therefore wanting and undone in this capacity (**Titus 1:5**). They can be over departments or different ministries, superintending and overseeing them. Some denominations also use the term “superintendent,” in which cases there are different rankings of superintendent from district level (statewide) to local Sunday school superintendent (local church).
- **Job Description**—An overseer, an individual charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly; any curator, guardian, or superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church. I make the semantical distinction that by definition, all pastors are bishops (superintending the entire flock) but not all bishops are pastors (perhaps only superintending a Sunday school program or a department).

### **ELDERS (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1)**

- **Who**—There are three types of elders in the New Testament Church: 1) aged elders, 2) teaching elders, and 3) fivefold ministry elders. This fact helps us begin to make some nuanced distinction between the offices of elders and bishops.
- **Who authorizes them**—This depends on the type of elder. The aged elders don't have any governing authority; therefore, they require no authorization to be old. The teaching elders are equivalent to bishops (**Titus 1:5**), so their authority comes

from the apostles or the local pastor. The fivefold ministering elders are authorized by the LORD Jesus Christ and have been ordained by some ecclesiastical body, and are therefore elders in the Body of Christ. It is proper to revere and honor them as a visitor even though they may not hold any direct authority over that specific church (**1 Peter 5:1**).

- **Accountable to**—Accountability with an elder depends on the type of elder:
  - Fivefold minister/elder—accountable to Jesus Christ or a superior minister.
  - Local church elder—accountable to the local pastor.
  - Aged elder—accountable to the local church leadership.
- **Purpose**—Local church elders are men/women who have earned a position of honor within the Body, either for their age or for their promotion into leadership. An elder is not to be rebuked but called near as a father (**1 Timothy 5:1**). They are needful for the Body to help aid in leadership and to give younger Christians a living epistle to look up to.
- **Job Description**—All full-time fivefold ministers would be considered elders of the church (regardless of age) (**1 Peter 5:1**). They would be an elder to any church they visited because they have been set apart as a full-time minister to perfect the saints. Any church they visit would therefore need to show them honor. In any given local church, there are also “teaching elders.” These are men or women that may or may not have a full-time ministry call on their lives, but they are actively helping the pastor of their church to care for the flock and teach the people. I view these elders like sheepdog to the shepherd; they help the pastor with the flock. These elders would not necessarily be honored in any church but their own. Finally, there are the aged elders. These are the aged saints in any local church that must be shown honor simply for their age, life experience, and devotion to Jesus Christ.

### DEACONS (**1 Timothy 3:8-13**)

- **Who**—Any born again believer who meets the biblical requirements and wants to serve. There are 16 requirements that must be met to be a deacon (**Acts 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:8-13**). Phebe, a woman, was a deaconess at Cenchrea (**Romans 16:1**).
- **Who authorizes them**—A deacon must have a good report among the people, but they are then appointed by the church leaders, after prayer and consecration, through the laying on of hands (**Acts 6:6**).
- **Accountable to**—Since deacons serve exclusively in the local church, they are accountable to the pastors over them.
- **Purpose**—Deacons are set in a local church, so the church leaders are free to seek God, pray, and study the Word and not have to wait tables.
- **... It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.**  
**Acts 6:2b**
  - In short, deacons free the pastor up to focus on spiritual things and not have to worry about natural things.

- **Job Description**—According to the Greek definition, a deacon is *one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master, a servant, an attendant, a minister; to attend to anything, that may serve another's interests*. A deacon may cut the grass for a shut-in, take food to a new mother, vacuum the floors, clean the toilets, check on a missing sheep, etc. However, it is still an office in the church and is therefore supernatural and not to be taken lightly.

### HELPS (1 Corinthians 12:28)

- **Who**—Everybody!!!
- **Who authorizes them**—The LORD Jesus has set this in the church, so technically He authorizes every believer to be a “help,” but the ministry of helps must operate within the organization of the local church or ministry. Therefore, the local pastor and other church leaders have a say in what a helps minister is doing to help in the local church.
- **Accountable to**—Pastors, bishops, and elders.
- **Purpose**—Helps exist so that the local church or ministry may be built up, edified, effective, and productive. Without helps, nothing gets done. The Body is designed to help itself. Helps is the ultimate fruit of the fivefold officers who perfect the saints so they can “**do the work.**”
- **From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**  

**Ephesians 4:16 NASB**

  - When every member of the Body of Christ properly works in the Kingdom, it causes the Body to grow and be built up.
- **Job Description**—What needs to be done in the ministry? Cleaning, cooking, teaching, prayer services, childcare, children’s church, building maintenance, administration, vehicle maintenance, child pick-up, nursery work, youth, worship, sound, television, etc., etc. There is a job for every member to do.

May we each find our place in the local church and submit our way up to the glory of God!!  
Amen!

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 3

### The Four Types Of Church Governments

Every local body of believers must be governed, in some form or fashion, for our God is not the author of confusion. Today, there are four major types of church governments employed in the Body of Christ for the governance of the local church. Let us analyze each of them and discuss their biblical merit. Remember, authority has a purpose and that ultimate purpose is to maintain peace.

#### EPISCOPAL GOVERNMENT

The episcopal form of church government gets its name from the Greek word *episkopós*, meaning *bishop or overseer*. By its namesake, this form of government distributes all of its power and decision-making authority to bishops or overseers. The Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, and the Churches of God use the episcopal form of church government. There are several reasons why this may not be the most biblical form of administering authority:

1. A bishop is not a fivefold minister with authority directly from Jesus Christ.
2. A bishop is an office any Christian can strive to obtain (**1 Timothy 3:1**).
3. Bishops are selected by fivefold ministers (**Titus 1:5-8**).
4. Fivefold ministers are selected by Jesus Christ (**Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 4:11**).
5. How can someone appointed by a man have authority over someone appointed by Jesus Christ?

Semantics may relieve issues here, assuming the bishop is an actual fivefold ministry gift operating under the title of bishop. But then a new title must be given to those within the local church that desire the office of a local in-house bishop. (See **1 Timothy 3:1**.)

#### PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT

The presbyterian form of church government gets its name from the Greek word *presbúteros*, meaning *elders*. By its namesake, this form of government distributes its power and decision-making authority to an elder board. This form of church government is used by Presbyterians, Pentecostal Holiness, some Baptist churches, and many non-denominational churches. There are several reasons why this may not be the most biblical form of administering authority:

1. Elders were established under Moses' leadership to assist Moses and to help bear his burden (**Numbers 11:16-17**).
2. Elders are selected and ordained by fivefold ministers (**Titus 1:5**).
3. Fivefold ministers are selected by Jesus Christ (**Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 4:11**).
4. How can someone appointed by a man have authority over someone appointed by Jesus Christ?

Semantics may relieve issues here, assuming the elders are actual fivefold ministry gifts operating under the title of elder. This is seen in **1 Peter 5:1** when Peter, an apostle, described

himself as “**also an elder.**” But then a new title must be given to those within the local church that desired the office of a local in-house elder. (See **Titus 1:5.**)

### **CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The congregational form of church government allows the laity, or the congregation, to have a say in the direction and decision making of the church. This form of government allows the church members to vote on the direction and the decisions of the church. This form of church government is used by the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, the Churches of Christ, and the Congregationalists. There are several reasons why this may not be the most biblical form of administering authority:

1. The congregation has no ruling power.
2. Throughout the Bible, when the congregation was given a vote, they always voted against the will and plans of God, usually involving some form of violence against the leader or returning to Egypt. (See **Exodus 17:2-4; 32:1; Numbers 14:1-10; 16:41-45; 1 Samuel 30:6; and Matthew 27:22.**)
3. According to **Ephesians 4:12**, the congregation needs a leader to perfect them so that they (the congregation) can do the work.
4. Congregation members are to submit to those that have the rule over them (**Hebrews 13:17**).
5. The brethren will always have someone over them (**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**).
6. If the people vote to tell the leader what to do, the people are actually leading.

It is curious that in many churches with this form of government, the members have to be reminded to “come to church for our upcoming vote.” If a church member is not spiritual enough to be faithful to church, will they be spiritual enough to discern the will and direction of God for the church? However, more and more churches are using the traditional congregational vote to help the congregation “feel” involved in the decision-making process, though the actual leaders have already determined the church’s course of action.

We must readily recognize that there is great wisdom in a pastor ensuring that his congregation is excited and supportive of any major decision being made such as property purchases, church renovations, or building projects. Also, there are many scenarios where the approval and installation of a new pastor might certainly call for a congregational vote.

### **EXECUTIVE (OR INDEPENDENT) GOVERNMENT**

The executive form of church government places all of the power and decision-making authority in the hands of one man, the executive. This is typically the local pastor or another fivefold ministry gift running the ministry given to them by the LORD Jesus. The executive form of government is the most apparent style of leadership from Genesis to Revelation. From Joseph and Moses to the judges and the kings, to the Apostles and New Testament pastors, God has always led His people through executive offices. Admittedly, it is not without its dangers, including tyranny, despotism, and corruption.

### **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT**

- **Abraham**—Abram heard from God and loaded up the family and the servants and headed to a land he knew not of. He became the father of our faith.

- **Moses**—Moses heard from God, argued, lost, and headed back into Egypt to deliver God’s people from slavery. He led Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.
- **Joshua**—Joshua was selected by God to replace Moses. He led Israel into the Promised Land and distributed the inheritance. He ruled for 30 years.
- **Judges**—From Othniel to Samuel. Many of these judges were only over a tribe or a few tribes. They led, and those who followed did great exploits.
- **The Kings**—Kings were not elected by popular vote. When they got into sin, they were often rebuked by the prophets, and, occasionally, a priest. Their rule was often cut short by their sin.
- **Paul**—Paul was the apostle over the churches he had established and disciplined. When the Corinthians challenged his authority, he was quick to point out his authority over them in the Gospel.
- **Timothy**—First pastor/bishop over the church at Ephesus.
- **Titus**—First pastor/bishop over the church at Crete.
- **The Seven Candlesticks**—These were the angels (messengers) of the seven churches of the apocalypse. These were the men set over these respective churches. The LORD addressed them, not the congregation. These candlesticks were responsible for their church’s faults and sins.

## COMMITTEES

A committee is a group of people appointed for a specific function. Usually, committees are appointed to help research and study a situation and then make a recommendation to the executive. Many churches wisely use committees as data gathering teams. The danger arises when a committee is given power to make decisions and steer the church. This would make the committee either a presbytery or an episcopal form of government. Note that committees are “appointed.” They would then be answerable to whoever appointed them. (Note: In the world of biology, a flock of vultures is called a committee; committees love to pick things apart.)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The early church saw the apostles coagulate in Jerusalem for many years before finally dispersing throughout the world in obedience to **Acts 1:8**. In that season, that apostolic presbytery discussed theology, established church structure and organization, sorted out the conversion of the Gentiles, and worked through this new offshoot of Judaism called The Way. Ultimately, their goal was to preach the Gospel, win the lost, and provide an organized community of believers for them to be disciplined in.

The Bible gives us God’s blueprint for governing and leading His church. We will do well to follow it.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 4

### The Deacon's Ministry

A deacon, by definition, is someone who is authorized to do the will of another. They are, in essence, official servants. There is a strong case to be made that the New Testament office was established under the Levitical priesthood. Under the Law of Moses, there were Levites whose responsibilities were to care for the peripheral needs of the Tabernacle, as opposed to the daily ministrations of sacrifices, incense, and menorah maintenance.

- **The Levites must join you in fulfilling their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the Tabernacle, but no unauthorized person may assist you. <sup>5</sup>You yourselves must perform the sacred duties inside the sanctuary and at the altar. If you follow these instructions, the LORD's anger will never again blaze against the people of Israel. <sup>6</sup>I myself have chosen your fellow Levites from among the Israelites to be your special assistants. They are a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD for service in the Tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>But you and your sons, the priests, must personally handle all the priestly rituals associated with the altar and with everything behind the inner curtain. I am giving you the priesthood as your special privilege of service. Any unauthorized person who comes too near the sanctuary will be put to death.**

Numbers 18:4-7 NLT

It might help to view deacons as “special assistants” to the necessary natural work of the ministry.

There are also numerous examples of kings, prophets, and priests having servants who cared for their needs: Joshua cared for Moses. Samuel cared for Eli. David cared for Saul. Elisha cared for Elijah. Gehazi cared for Elisha. Though these men could be viewed through the secular lens as mere servants, their care for their leader enabled him to advance the work of God.

#### NEW TESTAMENT DEACONS

**Diakonéō** (v.)—*to be a servant, to wait upon, to care for another's needs, to attend to another; to attend to anything, that may serve another's interests; to run errands.*

**Diákonos** (n.)—*one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, an attendant, a minister.*

**Diákonos** is a general Greek word for “servant.” The Bible describes several different types of people as being or having **diákonos**:

- Kings had **diákonos** (**Matthew 22:13**).
- Wedding parties had **diákonos** (**John 2:5**).
- We are called to be the Lord's **diákonos** (**John 12:26**).
- Governors, police, and soldiers are God's **diákonos** (**Romans 13:4**).
- Jesus Christ was a **diákonos** of the circumcision (**Romans 15:8**).

- Phebe was a *diákonos* of the Cenchranean church (**Romans 16:1**).
- Apostles are *diákonos* to the churches (**1 Corinthians 3:5**).
- Preachers in general are *diákonos* of the gospel (**Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23**).
- Paul was a *diákonos* (**Colossians 1:25**).
- Pastors are *diákonos* of Jesus Christ to their churches (**1 Timothy 4:6**).

The significant takeaway from this list is that the world systems are cared for by servants. Yet, there is still the church's office of deacon. The official errand runner and attendant ordained by leadership to help care for the local church. These are the "special assistants" to the natural work of the ministry.

## DEACONS IN THE CHURCH

The first ordination of New Testament Church deacons is found in **Acts 6**.

- **In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.**

**Acts 6:1 NIV**

The natural burdens of some of the congregation members required special attention. In this case, it was the Grecian widows being passed over in favor of the Hebrew widows during the daily food distribution. There was apparently already some degree of deaconship in place since there was someone organizing food services, but these men were obviously prejudiced and needed to be replaced. The apostles determined that the new deacons should be selected by the people (the church had grown rapidly) and the candidates would need to meet three requirements (**Acts 6:3**):

1. Honest report—This implies they were well-known among at least most of the people
2. Full of the Holy Ghost
3. Full of wisdom

After the apostles prayed, they laid hands on the candidates and ordained them as the first official deacons of the New Testament Church. The people's selection is very revealing:

- Stephen, a Hellenistic Jew
- Philip, of coastal Caesarea
- Prochorus,
- Nicanor, a Cypriot Jew
- Timon, a Hellenistic Jew
- Parmenas,
- Nicholas, a Gentile proselyte of Antioch

Five of the seven deacons were non-Hebraic Jews. There were either proselyte Jews (now believers) or Hellenized Jews (now believers). Their job was to care for **all** the believers, not just their favorite type of believer.

**NOTE:** It was important that the first deacons had a good report among the people, so they were sociable. Also, the apostles had to approve of the people's selection since they would be the ones officially authorizing them and laying hands on them. The deacon's office is a supernatural office ordained by God to help with a congregation's natural needs.

### THE PURPOSE OF A DEACON

- . . . **“We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. <sup>3</sup>And so, brothers, select seven men . . . We will give them this responsibility.”** Acts 6:2-3 NLT

Deacons free the pastor up from natural burdens so that he can focus on spiritual things. A deacon may cut the grass for a shut-in, take food to a new mother, vacuum the floors, clean the toilets, check on a missing sheep, etc.

- Deacons are selected and appointed by the pastor to help the pastor.
- Deacons serve God (and the pastor) by serving the people's natural needs.
- They are third-tier leadership.
- They should reflect some of the very best of their church.

### MORE QUALIFICATIONS

- **Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; <sup>9</sup>holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. <sup>10</sup>And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. <sup>11</sup>Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. <sup>12</sup>Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. <sup>13</sup>For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 3:8-13**

Combining **Acts 6** and **1 Timothy 3:8-13**, there are a total of 17 qualifications to be chosen as a “special assistant.” They are:

1. Honest report
2. Full of the Holy Ghost
3. Full of wisdom
4. Grave (serious, venerable)
5. Not double-tongued
6. Not a drinker
7. Not greedy of money
8. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (this will produce confidence because you know you are living clean)
9. Grave wives
10. Slander-free wives
11. Sober wives (in control of their mind, sane)
12. Faithful wives (dependable)



13. Only one wife
14. Ruling well their own home
15. You will be proved (examined, assayed, tested)
16. You will be publicly investigated (being found blameless)
17. A reflection of the very best of their congregation

### **NT DEACON STATISTICS**

42% of deacons will slip into obscurity (Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas); 42% will be promoted to greatness (Philip, Prochorus, and Stephen); 14% will become cult leaders and hurt the flock (Nicholas). This office will allow you to earn a promotion in God, or it can hurt you spiritually.

- **Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.**

**1 Timothy 3:13 NLT**

May God bless those that aspire to be special assistants in the Kingdom's work! Amen.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 5

### The Elder's Ministry

The elder's ministry (i.e., the congregational elder) was established by the nation of Israel while in Egypt, prior to the Exodus. This is evident from passages like **Exodus 3:16**, "**Go, and gather the elders of Israel together.**" It is clear from this context that these original elders were part of the established leadership that helped govern and oversee the nation of Hebrews while in Egyptian captivity. Moses inherited these elders, and they formed the first presbytery of the Bible. The very first command God gave Moses concerning this type of elders sets a precedent for their ministry in the New Testament.

- **Go and bring together the elders of Israel and tell them . . . <sup>18</sup>The elders will listen to you, and then you and the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'** **Exodus 3:16a, 18 NET**

The responsibilities listed below can be principalized from this verse:

- The elders assemble at the executive's (the pastor's) behest.
- They listen to the executive (the pastor).
- They stand with the pastor in the face of the opposition (Pharaoh).
- They must be able to say, "God has met with me", viz., I have a walk with God.
- They assist the pastor by helping the people to worship their God.

The first Passover was instituted while the Israelites were still in Egypt. The command from God to Moses was then delivered directly to the elders.

- **Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.** **Exodus 12:21**

This delegation of orders wasn't just a way to disseminate the Passover instructions throughout the nation; it also served to demonstrate that the elders must lead by example.

- The elder's household must be first partakers of the Passover instructions, viz., they lead by example.

Time and again, the elders were present with Moses, representing their unity, their support, and their role in helping to bear the burdens of the people.

- They were present when Moses struck the rock (**Exodus 17:5-6**).
- They were present when Jethro sacrificed a burnt offering (**Exodus 18:12**).
- They were present with Moses when he gave Israel instructions at the base of Mt. Sinai (**Exodus 19:7-8**).

- They were commanded to ascend Mt. Sinai with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu. This is the first time the number of elders is revealed. It could be that there were only 70 total to being with, or this could be the Lord limiting the number to a strict 70 from a greater original pool (i.e., “and seventy of the elders,” not, “the seventy elders”) which is more likely, given the total population of Israel (**Exodus 24:1**).
- The seventy elders “**saw the God of Israel . . . and did eat and drink**” (**Exodus 24:9-11**).
- The elders laid hands on the bull used as a congregational sin offering (**Leviticus 4:15**). I believe this symbolizes their role in helping the congregation stay clean.
- They went with Moses to confront the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (**Numbers 16:23-27**).
- They stood with Moses as he was preparing Israel to finally enter the Promised Land, when he redelivered all the laws and commanded Israel to keep them (**Deuteronomy 27:1**).

### REPLACEMENT OF ELDERS

There came a time during the Exodus when the elders Moses had inherited were no longer living up to their responsibilities. Moses was greatly burden by the needs and complaints of the people. His cry for help (and suicide) was met with an unusual answer from God: get better elders.

- **What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? . . . <sup>12</sup>Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors? . . . <sup>14</sup>I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! <sup>15</sup>If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!**  
Numbers 11:11c, 12b, 14-15 NLT

A closer look at Moses' expressions like “**the burden of all these people**,” “**carry them in my arms**,” and “**heavy load**” grants the believer great insight into the burden of ministry. God's answer to His suicidal under-shepherd was: get better elders.

- **The LORD said to Moses, “Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know are elders of the people and officials over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting; let them take their position there with you. <sup>17</sup>Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take part of the spirit that is on you, and will put it on them, and they will bear some of the burden of the people with you, so that you do not bear it all by yourself.”**  
Numbers 11:16-17 NET

These are clearly replacement elders (perhaps not everyone was replaced, but I'm sure most were). This new batch of elders would:

- Be known by Moses. He was in relationship with these guys, unlike the original batch.
- Already be moving among the people in a caring role of leadership.
- Take their place in position beside Moses at the Tent of Meeting.

- Be given a measure of Moses' anointing for the sole purpose of bearing the burden of the people.
- Ensure that Moses didn't bear the burden alone.
- Begin to prophesy by the Spirit of God (speaking edification, exhortation, and comfort, presumably to the people).

### THE SANHEDRIN

During the time of Christ, the Sanhedrin, or Great Council, was the updated version of Moses' Seventy Elders. It became more political and responsible for legislative and judicial decisions (**Matthew 5:22; 26:59; Mark 14:55; Acts 4:15**). It was comprised of 71 members, including priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, it moved to Galilee. It was finally disbanded in 425 AD.

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ELDERS

The early Church followed in the tradition of Moses by establishing and using elders. The first reference to church elders is in **Acts 11:30**:

- **So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. <sup>30</sup>This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.**  
**Acts 11:29-30 NLT**

The Book of Acts grants many insights into the elder's ministry:

- Barnabas and Paul ordained elders in every church (**Acts 14:23**), no doubt patterning their new works after the Jerusalem flagship church which had its own
- "apostles and elders" (**Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4**), no doubt patterned themselves after Judaism with its,
- "chief priests and elders" (**Acts 4:23; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15**).
- Paul once called a special elders' meeting while in Ephesus (**Acts 20:17**). He exhorted them to protect the church.

Church elders follow in the vein of Moses' elders. The NT qualifications are found in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9**. Below is a chart comparing the two different lists.

1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
Blameless ( <i>anepilēptos</i> )	Blameless ( <i>anékletos</i> ) (x2)
The husband of one wife	The husband of one wife
Vigilant ( <i>nēpháleos</i> )	*****
Sober ( <i>sóphrōn</i> )	Sober ( <i>sóphrōn</i> )
Of good behavior ( <i>kósmios</i> )	*****
Given to hospitality ( <i>philóxenos</i> )	Lover of hospitality ( <i>philóxenos</i> )
Apt to teach ( <i>didaktikós</i> )	Exhort with sound doctrine ( <i>didaskalía parakaléo</i> )

1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
Not given to wine ( <i>pároinos</i> )	Not given to wine ( <i>pároinos</i> )
No striker ( <i>pléktēs</i> )	No striker ( <i>pléktēs</i> )
Patient ( <i>epeikēs</i> )	Not soon angry ( <i>orgilos</i> )
Not a brawler ( <i>ámachos</i> )	*****
Not greedy of lucre ( <i>aischrokerdēs</i> )	Not greedy of lucre ( <i>aischrokerdēs</i> )
*****	Lover of good men ( <i>philágathos</i> )
Not covetous ( <i>aphilárgryos</i> )	*****
Rules well his own house ( <i>proístēmi kalōs</i> )	*****
Children in subjection ( <i>téknon hupōtagē</i> )	Faithful children ( <i>pistós téknon</i> )
*****	Children not accused of riot ( <i>asōtía</i> ) or unruly ( <i>anypótaktos</i> )
Not a novice ( <i>neóphytos</i> )	*****
Good report ( <i>kalós martyría</i> )	*****
*****	Not selfwilled ( <i>authádēs</i> )
*****	Just ( <i>díkaios</i> )
*****	Holy ( <i>hósios</i> )

There are 17 Ephesian criteria as compared to 15 Cretan criteria, with 10 criteria being identical. The explanation for this rests in the cultural differences between the two churches. Paul emphasizes a necessary aversion to greed and money twice for the Ephesian elder which is in line with the city's reputation for commercial success and wealth. By comparison, the Cretan criteria lean heavily against the three-point Epimenidian reputation: liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons, thus, there in Crete it would be especially important for elders to be just and holy, not self-willed; and their kids can't be anything like their culture (wild and rebellious). The general rule would be that local church elders and their families must stand out as different than the worldly culture around them.

### FURTHER NEW TESTAMENT INSIGHTS

Paul's Ephesian elder conference in **Acts 20:18-31** provides a few more responsibilities for church leaders:

- Guard yourselves
- Guard God's flock
- Feed the flock
- Guide the flock

So then, generally speaking, elders are appointed leaders, drawn from the local congregation, whose lives and families reflect the gospel's transformative power, who then desires the responsibility of helping lead, feed, and protect the local church and do so under the delegated authority of the local pastor. Amen!

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 6

### The Office Of Pastor

#### Part 1: Introduction And The Natural Allegory

As we have thus far endeavored to prove, the executive form of church polity and governance is the most biblical in application. By executive polity, we are referring to ruling and decision-making power being given to a sole individual or executive. This is in contrast to committees, boards, or congregations possessing the ruling and decision-making power. (As a brief reminder, the Bible does not contain one single example of a board, committee, or congregation wielding the authority to make the major decisions or steer a ministry or body.) This is not to say the executive should not be without checks and balances. In this lesson, we will only deal with the executive of the local church—the pastor. We do acknowledge that there are many synonyms that different streams of Christianity have adopted for pastor, such as rector, parson, bishop, and reverend.

These lessons will show, from the Bible, what a pastor is authorized to do and not do. These lessons will also teach us the proper way to view, relate to, and honor the local church executive—the pastor.

Though the Bible teaches the deep importance and value of a pastor, our current church culture seeks to disarm and equalize the local pastor, emasculating him spiritually and authoritatively. The next three lessons are designed to help the Christian understand, honor, and receive the most from their pastor.

#### THE LOCAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE

**Executive**—*a person having administrative or supervisory authority in an organization*

The executive over a New Testament local church is the pastor. Even though he might be called bishop, rector, the preacher, “Brother,” or reverend, the office anointed by God to shepherd the local flock is biblically called pastor. A closer look at the office of pastor will reveal just how fitting that title really is. Consider the following:

- Jeremiah calls the pastor the “**principal of the flock**” (**Jeremiah 25:34**).
- Old Testament pastors include Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Jeremiah, and many others. (See *Lesson 7* for more details.)
- New Testament pastors include Jesus Christ, James, Timothy, and Titus.
- A pastor is one of the five ministry gifts given unto men to perfect the saints, according to **Ephesians 4:11-12**.
- Our English word “pastor” comes from the Latin verb *pascere*, meaning to *shepherd*.
- The terms pastor and shepherd are interchangeable.
- Why is the office called a shepherd? Because God’s people are called sheep and the Bible calls the local congregation a flock.

The local church executive is a shepherd, or one who cares for the sheep. Sheep follow a shepherd. A shepherd does not submit to sheep, though their needs certainly dictate what he

does, how he does it, and when he does it. Sheep without a shepherd go astray, and a shepherd without sheep is a lonely and purposeless man standing in a pasture.

### THE BIBLICAL ALLEGORY

A shepherd in the biblical context was a singular man assigned to care for a flock of sheep. Typically, the flock was not his own but belonged to his father or another man much greater than himself. A shepherd would be responsible for the following duties:

- Living with the fold. His life revolved around them (**Exodus 3:1; Psalms 78:70-71**).
- Feeding the flock (**Psalm 231-2, 5; Jeremiah 3:15; Ezekiel 34:23; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28**).
- Leading the flock in its comings and goings (**Exodus 3:1; Psalm 23:2-3**).
- Keeping watch for enemies, wolves, hazards, etc. Providing general safety (**Luke 2:8; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:29-31**).
- Providing a resting place for the flock (**Psalm 23:2; Jeremiah 33:12; Ezekiel 34:15**).
- Providing adequate water (**Psalm 23:2; Exodus 2:16**).
- Healing the injured and sick sheep (**Ezekiel 34:4; cf. Zechariah 11:15-17**).
- Pursuing the sheep that have wandered out of the way (by accident, not intentionally) (**Ezekiel 34:4**).
- Caring for all other needs, e.g., grooming, sheering, insecticide, etc. (**Psalm 23:5b**).

### DEFINITIONS

The Hebrew word for pastor (*ra'ah*) means:

- To tend—pastors tend to the flock. They live with them, and they live for them.
- To feed—pastors make sure the flock is properly fed and nourished.
- To teach—pastors feed by teaching doctrine, not just always preaching.
- To care for—pastors take care of the sheep and their needs.
- To guard—pastors guard the sheep from thieves, wolves, and dangers.
- To rule—pastors are to rule over the sheep. The pastor calls the shots.
- To govern—by defining “govern,” we can understand that pastors are *to preside over, reign over, control, be in charge of, command, lead, dominate, run, head, administer, manage, regulate, oversee, supervise, and be in the driver’s seat*.

The Greek word for pastor (*poimén*) as used in the Bible means:

- Shepherd—pastors care for the sheep.
- Presiding officer—pastors are the chief officer over a local church.
- Manager—pastors manage or oversees the local flock.
- Director of any assembly—pastors direct the goings-on of the local assembly.
- Of Christ, the Head of the Church—Jesus Christ Himself is the Good Shepherd.

### DOCTRINAL IGNORANCE

Below is a list of observations that are unbiblical and demonstrate a lack of understanding and reverence for the office of pastor. Each of these mindsets fail to recognize the tremendous

importance and the spiritual significance of a pastor as a God-ordained leader and ruler over the local flock.

- Many churches call their pastor by their first name, e.g., “Bob,” “Chuck,” “Michael.” This is dishonorable.
  - Even heathen call their coach, “Coach”; their doctor, “Doctor,” their professor, “Professor” or “Doctor”; the policeman, “Officer.”
  - Yet in the church we call God’s authorized man, “Jim.” This is regrettable.
  - There should be some term of honor, recognizing that the shepherd stands several feet taller than sheep and lays down his life for the flock’s betterment.
- Many churches hire/fire their pastor by voting.
- Many churches expect their Rev. Bro. Preacher to do all the work that they, the sheep, dictate. This violates **Ephesians 4:11-12**.
- Many churches/flocks see their pastor as their equal—or worse—one who is subordinate to the congregation’s whims.
- Many churches/flocks/committees see their pastor as an employee. Though he is employed by the church, his paycheck comes from God’s tithes, not the congregation’s generosity.
- Many pastors have become merely administrative preachers, running the church as a business and preaching canned sermons. This is not the same as shepherding a flock.
- Many pastors are controlled by boards and committees, who vote on the direction of the church.
- As one denominational pastor begrudgingly told me, “My denomination wants to be pastor fed but people led.” You cannot have it both ways.

The next lesson will look at examples of Old Testament pastors. Studying these examples will help us understand God’s heart and plan for the “**principal of the flock.**”

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 7

### The Office Of Pastor

### Part 2: Old Testament Pastors

We have proven that the most biblical form of government in the Kingdom of God is that of executive leadership. We have also seen that the executive, or leader, of any flock is biblically called a pastor. A pastor is the most widely accepted and the most visible leadership position in the Body of Christ. Yet, despite the seemingly commonality of pastors in the land and the overabundance of biblical references to pastors, the modern Church (including pastors themselves) has demonstrated a genuine lack of understanding for what a biblical pastor is and does. These four lessons are designed to give us a greater understanding of a pastor's role and authority in leading God's people.

The office and job of a pastor is not just limited to the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament says very little about the office and responsibilities of the pastor (only 18 verses directly refer to pastors or shepherds). To fully understand the role of the pastor, we must begin in the Old Testament and study our way forward.

It would appear that the New Testament says less than might be expected about the ever-important office of pastor because it (the pastoral office) is the oldest and most established leader given to God's people. As with worship and tithing, the New Testament says very little about pastors because these subjects have already been thoroughly established in the Old Testament before the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The apostles and early church would have seen little need to rehash established doctrine.

#### OLD TESTAMENT PASTORS

Below are examples of Old Testament pastors and 17 job descriptions we can learn from them:

- **Moses**—Moses was Israel's first pastor.
  - **Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? <sup>12</sup>That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm . . .**  
Isaiah 63:11-12a
  - **But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.**  
Psalm 78:52
  - **And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hands of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock.**  
Exodus 2:19

This last verse is prophetic of Moses' real call: to be a shepherd who delivered the people from the Egyptians and to draw out the living waters for the people and their livestock. He led Israel through the desert for 40 years, helped them fight a few battles, and gave them the Law. There are four things we can learn from Moses' pastorate:

1. Pastors have the Holy Spirit upon them to be a pastor.
  2. Pastors lead God's people.
  3. Pastors help deliver God's people.
  4. Pastors water and refresh God's people.
- **Joshua**—Joshua was Israel's second pastor.
    - **And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, <sup>16</sup>Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, <sup>17</sup>which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. Numbers 27:15-17**
    - **Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. <sup>10</sup>Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people saying . . . Joshua 1:9-10**

Joshua was Israel's second pastor. His basic role was the same as Moses'—go out before them, come in before them, and lead them. However, his pastorate faced different obstacles. Joshua was a militant pastor and led Israel into battle, city after city, until Israel had settled their Promised Land. There are three things we can learn from Joshua's pastorate:

5. Pastors are set over the congregation.
  6. Pastors go out before and come in before the people.
  7. Pastors command the congregational officers.
- **The Judges (Othniel to Samuel)**—After the death of Joshua, God led His people through judges (*to govern; lawgiver*). This period lasted over 300 years. This season of pastors was defined by military leadership, teaching the Law, and judicial activities. Each judge was tasked with bringing Israel back to God.
    - **Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed (pastor, shepherd) my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars? 1 Chronicles 17:6**
    - **And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel . . . <sup>10</sup>and the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war . . . <sup>11</sup>And the land had rest forty years . . . Judges 3:9a, 10a, 11a**

Israel's judges were also considered pastors: from Deborah, to Gideon, to Samson, to Samuel. They all governed and led God's flock, guiding them back to the Great Shepherd. These shepherds brought deliverance from tyrannical oppression and rest to God's people. They delivered the people from the mouth of their enemies and produced rest for the people. Their pastorate was a little different from Moses' and Joshua's. There are six things we can learn from the judges' pastorates:

8. Pastors are commanded to feed God's people.
  9. Pastors aid in delivering God's people from life's entanglements.
  10. Pastors adjudicate matters.
  11. Pastors govern God's people.
  12. Pastors lead God's people in battle and in the wars of life.
  13. Pastors provide rest for God's people.
- **David (and the Kings)**—David was Israel's greatest king and pastor. He was a type of Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd.
    - **He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:**  
<sup>71</sup>**From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed (pastor, shepherd) Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.**  
<sup>72</sup>**So he fed (pastor, shepherd) them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided (govern, lead) them by the skillfulness of his hands.**  
**Psalms 78:70-72**

Remember that the definition for pastor or shepherd in the Hebrew includes *to guard, to rule, and to govern*. This is also part of the job description for a king. David is a type and shadow of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is now both our King and our Chief Shepherd. These verses further reiterate that a pastor feeds and guides God's people. These verses give us two qualities of a good pastor: 1) integrity of heart and 2) skillfulness of hands. We can learn from David that:

14. Pastors are first chosen by GOD, not by any person or committee.
  15. Pastors should walk in the integrity of their heart.
  16. Pastors are graced to pastor with skillfulness.
- **Jeremiah**—Jeremiah is known as the wailing prophet and the last prophet before Israel's 70 years of captivity. But by his own testimony, he was a pastor, too.
    - **As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee . . .**  
**Jeremiah 17:16a**
    - **As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows you . . .**  
**Jeremiah 17:16a NKJV**

Jeremiah teaches us that a pastor must follow the LORD, not people. Following the LORD permits a pastor to effectively lead the people. Jeremiah through his preaching endeavored to guide Israel back into the will of God. However, they would not listen to him. Had Jeremiah

listened to the people in his day, he would have sinned against the LORD (**Jeremiah 2:8**). There is one critical thing we can learn from Jeremiah's pastorate:

17. Pastors must always follow God. They can only lead God's people as far as they are willing to follow God.

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT JOB DESCRIPTION**

Below is a list of 17 job descriptions for an Old Testament pastor based on the previous verses and examples. To review, an Old Testament pastor:

1. Was anointed by the Holy Spirit to be a shepherd.
2. Led God's people through difficult times.
3. Delivered God's people from their enemies.
4. Refreshed God's people with pure water.
5. Was set over the congregation.
6. Went out before and came in before God's people.
7. Commanded the officers, not vice-versa.
8. Fed God's people.
9. Delivered God's people from life's entanglements.
10. Judged God's people and adjudicated internal matters.
11. Governed God's people.
12. Led God's people in battle.
13. Provided rest for God's people.
14. Was chosen by God, not by man.
15. Were to walk with integrity of heart.
16. Were graced to pastor with skillfulness.
17. Were to follow God with all of their heart.

### **SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

- None of these Old Testament pastors had committees voting on the direction of the congregation. They had advisors and elders, but the final decisions rested on the shoulders of the executive.
- These men acted as executives and governors, calling the shots. They were not just teachers or preachers.
- God spoke directly to these men concerning His will for the people and the congregation and the tasks He wanted accomplished.
- When these men listened to the people, they generally failed God and got into serious trouble, e.g., Moses (struck the rock twice), Joshua (sent a smaller battalion up against Ai), Saul (didn't slaughter all the sheep or Amalekites), etc.
- If you thought you didn't need a pastor in Moses' day, you died a slave in Egypt.
- If you thought you didn't need a pastor in Joshua's day, you died having never received the Promised Land.
- If you thought you didn't need a pastor during the times of the Judges, you stayed in slavery and oppression to your enemies.
- If you thought you didn't need a pastor in David's day, you failed to enjoy the greatest time of Israel's history.
- If you thought you didn't need a pastor in Jeremiah's day, you went into Babylonian, Assyrian, or Egyptian captivity.



From the very beginning of Israel's history, God ordained pastors to care for His people. This office of executive leadership and wisdom was thoroughly established in the Old Testament and continues into the Church Age. Our next lesson will look at New Testament pastors.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 8

### The Office Of Pastor

### Part 3: New Testament Pastors

We have previously ascertained through the scriptures that an executive form of government is the most biblical form of church government. Having established this fact, we continue our study of the New Testament church's local executive—the pastor.

The Old Testament thoroughly established the office of the pastor, also known as the “**principal of the flock**” (**Jeremiah 25:34**). The powers and responsibilities of a pastor, as established in the Old Testament (not old covenant), are only slightly changed as we cross over into the New Testament.

#### DIFFERENCES

- Old Testament pastors often operated as political leaders. This was the case with the judges and the kings. New Testament pastors are not leaders on the political level. Rather, they lead the local flock known in the New Testament as a church.
- Old Testament pastors weren't focused so much on teaching as they were on governing a nation, a region, or a tribe. New Testament pastors teach and only govern a congregation.
- Old Testament pastors often led the people in natural battles. New Testament pastors rarely if ever lead natural battles but are constantly engaged in leading the local flock in spiritual battles.

#### SIMILARITIES

- Both Old and New Testament pastors are God-ordained leaders.
- Both Old and New Testament pastors are equipped and anointed to accomplish God's will through leadership.
- In both Old and New Testaments, God will speak first and foremost to the pastors concerning the direction for the flock before He will speak to the congregation.
- The people voted neither Old nor New Testament pastors into office. As an example, Paul set both Titus and Timothy in as the pastors over their respective churches.

#### NEW TESTAMENT JOB DESCRIPTION

Let us look at what a New Testament pastor is called to do:

##### Feed

- Feeding refers to the continual teaching of the Word of God. Pastors keep their flock spiritually healthy by feeding them a steady diet of the Word. Not opinion, not politics, not fashion, not entertainment, but a steady diet of the Word.
- Scriptures: **John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2**

### Oversee

- Overseeing refers to the responsibility of managing the activities within the local church, including the classes, the departments, the outreaches, etc. Overseeing includes looking out for the spiritual health of the sheep who submit to the headship of the local shepherd. Pastors are not authorized to oversee your private life or your home. They can teach you how to do better in your private life, but ultimately if you fail, it will be your fault. However, if your private life begins to sinfully affect the local fold, the pastor will deal with your private life.
- Scriptures: **Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2**

### Protect

- Just as a natural shepherd must watch out for wolves, cougars, dogs, and other predators that would threaten his flock, so must a pastor watch out for the spiritual predators that would attack his local church. These would include perverts, deviants, cons, false preachers, Jezebels, insurrectionists, gainsayers, rebels, and Judases. Shepherds must often fight these predators off with the Word. Defending the sheep can get pretty ugly at times.
- Scriptures: **Acts 20:29-31; Hebrews 13:17**

### Be a Living Example

- New Testament pastors must lead by example. The local pastor should be a holy example set forth before their congregation. Their entire life should be a living epistle worth reading and replicating. They should strive to be examples in their words, their lifestyle, their love, their attitude, their faith, and their purity. A pastor should have a lifestyle that, should someone choose to emulate it, would cause them to glorify Jesus Christ. This only comes by walking with God closer than anyone else in the church.
- Scriptures: **1 Peter 5:3; 1 Timothy 4:12; Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9**

### Train

- Training is different than teaching. Most Christians like teaching. Very few Christians will actually tolerate and submit to training. Training requires correction, rebuking, practice, participation, and discipline. Teaching merely requires an attention span. Pastors are called to train up strong Christians.
- Scriptures: **1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 2:14, 25; 3:14; Titus 1:13; 2:6, 15**

### Ordain Leaders

- According to the New Testament epistles, it is the local pastor who raises up and ordains leaders in the local church. Without a pastor, you will not be able to be an elder, a bishop, or a deacon. You can't be a bishop, elder, or deacon without a local church. The offices of elder, bishop, and deacon work together to help the local pastor manage and operate the local church.
- Scriptures: **1 Timothy 3:1-15; Titus 1:5**

### YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD YOUR PASTOR

Just as a pastor will be judged for how he cared for the LORD's sheep, so too will the LORD's sheep be judged for how they cared for their pastor. Never forget: your pastor has been given

to you by the LORD Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 4:8, 11**). Below are seven responsibilities you have toward the pastor the LORD has given you.

- **And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; <sup>13</sup>And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**

1. Know them. Not buddy-buddy knowledge but know their heart. Understand their vision, their personality, as well as their likes and dislikes. This can be done without hanging out. It can be done through prayer and by watching and listening.
2. Esteem them highly for their work's sake. We are not taught to esteem them highly for their doctrine's sake but for their work's sake. No minister has perfect doctrine. If you look for holes, you will find some. Esteem and honor them for their labor for God.
3. Be at peace. Don't be a source of strife or contention toward your leader. Someone will love your pastor more than you. Don't run their leader down. You may end up with a bloody nose.

- **Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; <sup>2</sup>the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.**

**1 Timothy 5:1-2**

4. Rebuke not. We are commanded to never rebuke leadership but to call them near as we would our own father. Fathers and leaders can and will be wrong but rebuking them is also wrong. There is proper Kingdom decorum when dealing with leadership.

- **Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. <sup>18</sup>For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.**

**1 Timothy 5:17-18**

5. Count them worthy of double honor. This is a reference to financial support. The pastor labors like an ox. Let him be rewarded. This is a proper form of honor.

- **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**

6. Obey them. Don't be rebellious. Obey your godly leadership. Don't obey sin and don't obey heresy. If it's biblical and furthers the Gospel cause, just obey it.
7. Submit yourselves. The entire Kingdom is founded on submission. Rebellion is witchcraft. Submit and help the local pastor fulfill the call on your church!



Pastors are still the “**principal of the flock.**” They are God-ordained authority in the local church. Love them. Pray for them. Learn to work with them. And enjoy the beauty of helping to build God’s kingdom.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 9

### Natural Shepherding

This lesson has been included to teach the truths and allegory of natural shepherding. Most modern Christians are quite removed from any form of animal husbandry and are therefore ignorant of the implications of the pastor/sheepfold allegory God chose to use in the Bible. A brief lesson on the life of sheep and shepherds will prove most invaluable. The following points were taken from books written by men who had lived their lives as natural shepherds over multiple decades and in many countries around the world.

#### THE SHEPHERD

- A well-managed flock can restore derelict land. For this reason, sheep were of ancient times called “the golden hooved ones” because of their tremendous contribution to the world around them. Where they go, the land is fertilized and weeded. They prefer higher ground, and so, fertilize that area too.
- A shepherd is both an owner and a manager of sheep.
- The shepherd knows where he is going. He has direction for the flock. He knows the range and where the flock should go next.
- A shepherd’s sheep come first, above all else.
- A good shepherd spares no pain for the welfare of the sheep.
- As it goes with the shepherd, so it goes with the flock.
- Under one shepherd, a flock could starve; while under a different shepherd, the same flock would flourish.
- The welfare of any flock is entirely dependent upon the management afforded them by their owner.
- Indifferent shepherds produce foragers (not good).
- A good shepherd has an eye for injured sheep. They survey the flock every morning.
- The presence of the shepherd will stop all inter-flock abuse.
- A shepherd knows his flock. He knows the stubborn, the laggards, the leaders, the runaways, and the strays.

#### SHEEP BEHAVIOR

- Sheep are marked by their shepherd.
- Sheep are very contented with their shepherd. They know his call and his whistle.
- Sheep are very leery of new shepherds.
- Sheep are the least self-sufficient of all of the livestock animals. They require meticulous care and endless attention.
- Sheep would remain sedate and stationary if not for the shepherd’s leadership.
- Sheep are the only animal that can be lost within a few miles of their home.
- Sheep panic easily and give up easily, baaing in circles.
- Sheep can overeat and become obese.
- Sheep can eat the wrong things.
- Sheep cannot discern poisonous plants.
- Sheep do NOT just take care of themselves.
- Human/sheep behavioral parallels include mob instinct, fear, timidity, stubbornness, and stupidity.

- Sheep require four things to lie down:
  1. No fear
  2. No herd friction
  3. No pests or parasites
  4. No hunger
  
- Sheep are so timid that even a jackrabbit can cause a stampede. When one is spooked, a dozen will blindly follow it.
- Nothing quiets and reassures the flock like the presence of the shepherd.
- A flock of sheep under one shepherd's care are very alike and very content to be together. They are marked and have a life together. If you put a stranger among them, they would all know it and be uneasy. It takes months to be accepted by the flock.
- There is an order among sheep. It is called the butting order.
- A hungry, ill-fed sheep is ever on its feet. They are not content and will not thrive.
- During "fly time," parasites, flies, and nose flies lay larvae in the nose of the sheep. The worms then hatch and crawl through the sinus cavity into the brain, tormenting the sheep literally to death. Oil salve is needed with multiple applications to prevent and relieve the pestilence.
- Some sheep choose to feed on barren, inferior forage.
- Sheep cast (lie down without the ability to arise) for three reasons:
  1. Too comfortable
  2. Too fat
  3. Too wooly

If the sheep is not rescued soon (within about 24 hours) after casting, they will die. They must be manually set upright on their feet to prevent their stomach gases from killing them (they are ruminating animals with 4 stomach compartments). Then, the cause of the initial casting must be remedied, i.e., wool sheered, fat walked off, or the comfortable sheep disrupted.

### **TYPES OF SHEEP**

- "Wanderers"—The distant sheep, the roamers, and the wanderers are the ones that get picked off by the predators.
- "Fence-Crawlers"—Some sheep are called "fence-crawlers." These are discontent sheep that are eager to move on to any place else. As soon as a flock is moved into a new pasture, these sheep will begin walking the fence line looking for a way out. Sadly, they will teach the other sheep (including their lambs) their routes and their fence holes, and they will lead some sheep into dangerous terrain. They must usually be put down by the shepherd.
- "Hermits"—Often a sheep will choose to live alone, shun the flock, and not come when called to muster. This sheep is called a "hermit." He is also called "stupid," "silly," "cranky," and "crazy."
- "Pet Sheep"—A shepherd can have no "pet sheep." A pet sheep is unnatural to the flock and will not be happy among the flock. It will prefer to be alone with the



shepherd where it can receive full attention, care, and spoiling. Allowing a sheep to become a pet sheep essentially ruins that sheep.

With so many obvious parallels, it is no wonder why God chose to relate to us as sheep and why He chose this allegory to describe the local church and its shepherd. Selah!

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 10

### The New Testament Authority To Administer Correction

One of the responsibilities of authority is to keep order and to enact judgment and discipline when necessary. Remember, **authority** is defined as *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience*. Church leadership is authorized to keep us in line with God's Word and the Kingdom.

As Christians looking to be disciplined in God's Kingdom, we should be prepared for our church leadership to correct us. The Kingdom of God changes people. The changes that God wants to accomplish in our lives will be impossible without someone correcting, rebuking, chastising, admonishing, exhorting, and disciplining us. These are not dirty words. They are words of promise. They are, however, not words for the faint of heart, the prideful, or the stubborn.

#### WHAT ABOUT LOVE?

Any time discipline and judgment are discussed, inevitably someone will cry, "That's too harsh!" or "You're being judgy!" or "Where's the love?" Remember that God is love and His commandments are spoken in love. And if we love Him, we will keep His commandments.

- **If you love me, keep my commandments.** **John 14:15**
- **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.** **John 15:10**

Keeping God's commandments keeps us in love. Love obeys the Word of God. Love, first and foremost, loves God. Remember that Father always knows best. His commandments are spoken with eternal wisdom. So, "Where's the love?" It's in obeying God. And love rebukes those it is authorized to rebuke.

- **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.** **Revelation 3:19**
- **Open rebuke is better than secret love.** **Proverbs 27:5**

Love rebukes and corrects. Hatred allows people to continue hurting themselves. An open rebuke is better than a secret love.

#### CORRECTION, ADMONISHMENT, AND REBUKE

The Bible is very clear on the subject of correction: Expect it! However, there is an evident escalating progression in terms of the severity of the correction. The severity of the correction is directly related to the heart of the one being corrected. Correction follows an escalating trend. The escalation is as follows:

Instruction—Correction—Admonition—Rebuke—Discipline

- **Instruction**—You receive instruction or teaching in a new matter.
- **Correction**—Your attempt to act on your instruction is not adequate, so it is adjusted.
- **Admonition**—The correction you received was not effective; you are admonished to do better. Admonishment is correction with a hint of warning. “Get it right, or . . .” Several admonitions may be called for if the adjustment is not made.
- **Rebuke**—When admonitions are not fruitful a rebuke may be necessary. A rebuke answers a stubborn or insubordinate heart. The severity of the stubbornness or insubordination will dictate the harshness of the rebuke.
- **Discipline**—This is defined as the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience. When a rebuke fails to correct behavior, punishment is enacted.

A diligent and humble Christian can perpetually live in the *Instruction-Correction* zone.

- **Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: Job 5:17**
- **Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; <sup>13</sup>That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. Psalms 94:12-13**
- **My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: <sup>12</sup>For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Proverbs 3:11-12**

Not only are we to expect correction and chastisement from the LORD, we are to count it a good, blessed, and even happy thing. Why? Because it means God is delighting in us. We must learn to see His corrections as divine investment in our destinies.

Scriptures: **Ecclesiastes 7:5; Hebrews 12:5-12**

### THE COMMAND TO ADMONISH AND REBUKE

Often, God rebukes through His appointed leaders. Certainly, within the confines of a local church and concerning the operations of the local church, a great deal of the correcting will come from the leadership. A leader’s orders to discipline and rebuke come directly from the LORD Jesus Christ Himself. If a leader is going to please Jesus and successfully represent Him in the earth, there must be some degree of correction and chastisement coming out of him as he leads. It is biblical to expect church leadership to correct, rebuke, warn, and chastise.

- **And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the LORD, and admonish (warn or reprimand firmly) you; 1 Thessalonians 5:12**

This verse displays a portion of the job description of biblical leaders. They labor, supervise, and admonish. Many modern churches and congregations only want their leaders laboring. They reject the notion that biblical leaders must also supervise or admonish.

- **Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.**

**1 Timothy 5:20**

In this verse, the Apostle Paul is teaching a pastor, Timothy, how to lead the local church. This leading includes public rebuke of elders. This is not a private rebuke. If it were private, no one would know about the rebuke and, therefore, would be unable to learn from the rebuke.

- **Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.**

**2 Timothy 4:2 AMPC**

The preceding passage reveals what Jesus Christ expects out of His leaders and pastors. If ever a verse was a preacher's job description, this is it. The Amplified Classic Bible gives a list of ministerial responsibilities:

- Herald and preach the word
- Show people in what way their lives are wrong
- Convince them
- Rebuke them
- Correct them
- Warn them
- Urge them
- Encourage them

It is good for both shepherds and sheep to know the shepherd's role.

- **One of their [very] number, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, hurtful beasts, idle and lazy gluttons. <sup>13</sup>And this account of them is [really] true. Because it is [true], rebuke them sharply [deal sternly, even severely with them], so that they may be sound in the faith and free from error.**

**Titus 1:12-13 AMPC**

Titus was the pastor over the churches on the island of Crete. In these two verses, Paul is actually dealing with the island nation's cultural reputation: lazy, lying, hurtful, idle beasts. Paul wanted Titus to rebuke this ungodly culture out of the Cretans so they would be sound in the faith. This demonstrates that some cultural aspects can be detrimental to a believer's faith. Titus was commanded, as a pastor, to "sharply rebuke." Why? To produce sound faith. Any church without a steady diet of correction, and even rebuking, will ultimately be weak in the faith and unsound in their doctrine.

- **These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.**  
**Titus 2:15**

Titus was authorized to rebuke those who were out of line. For the local pastor, rebuking is a biblical commandment.

May our leaders grow up to lead and correct us and may we grow up to follow and be correctable. Amen!

Other Scriptures: **Ephesians 5:11; Revelation 2:20-23**

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS LESSON 11 The New Testament Authority To Administer Discipline

**\*\*WARNING: This lesson may be controversial and offensive, but only to the immature Christian who has no interest in running the race that is set before them.\*\***

One of the responsibilities of all authority is to keep order and to enact judgment and discipline when necessary. In every venue of life, authority figures wield the right to rebuke, correct, discipline, and even punish. The world's authorities are authorized to do more than just correct. They can also punish. For example, employers can fire, teachers can eject from class, principals can suspend from school, police can arrest, and the military can dishonorably discharge and will even court-martial and hang. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is no different.

Discipline is different from correction. Discipline is what comes after correction is ignored. The escalation of correction is as follows:

Instruction—Correction—Admonition—Rebuke—Discipline

**Discipline**—*The practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience.*

Anyone in any kind of authority is given some level of authorization to discipline if rules are not followed. It should come as no surprise, then, that we would also find authority to discipline in the local church; which is the household of God, the army of the living God, the school of faith, the pillar and ground of the truth, the family of God, and the vineyard of God.

### **KINGDOM CONSEQUENCES**

Many Christians ignorantly believe they can live or act any way they want to within the confines of the local church ministry and not face any confrontation. This is totally unscriptural. According to the Bible, there are to be consequences for living a dirty and rebellious Christian life. Aside from a public rebuke, the Bible prescribes, in some scenarios, EXCOMMUNICATION! Gulp! Shocking? It shouldn't be. After all, even a bar will kick you out if you get too . . . sinful.

### **NT DISCIPLINE/PUNISHMENT**

Throughout the New Testament, we find discipline being enacted in only four different ways, they are:

1. Resistance
2. Demotion
3. Excommunication
4. Death

## RESISTANCE AND DEMOTION

The first level of discipline enacted upon a Christian who refuses to heed correction and rebuke is resistance. God will use resistance and frustration to discipline a stubborn saint. To the spiritually sensitive Christian, this is most miserable and effective.

- **God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5c NKJV**

If God is resisting you, you will know it. Your life will be difficult and miserable. The Spirit of God that is resisting you might, at times, also bear witness with church leadership to also resist you and, in effect, not use you in the ministry.

- **But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work.**

**Acts 15:38 NLT**

Here, Paul refused to use John Mark because of his lack of faithfulness to the ministry, considering John Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first trip. Not taking John Mark with them on their second missionary trip would have been an act of church discipline. On an encouraging note, John Mark was eventually able to redeem himself (**2 Timothy 4:11**).

- **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 1 Timothy 1:12**

Paul was promoted to ministry after he was found faithful. It stands to reason, he could have been demoted if he was ever found unfaithful. Demotion is a form of discipline and spiritual resistance.

- **For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. <sup>7</sup>But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Psalm 75:6-7**

God distributes promotion and demotion, and He usually uses mankind to do so. Thankfully, humility and repentance can reverse these forms of discipline.

## EXCOMMUNICATION

Stepping up a level in spiritual discipline, we find actual excommunication. This is a very biblical form of discipline. Should demotion and resistance fail to humble the stubborn or train the guilty party, it may be necessary to actually put them out of the church in order to prevent the leaven of rebellion from spreading.

## SIX NT REASONS TO EXCOMMUNICATE

Church leaders have a right, and are actually commanded, to excommunicate stubbornly sinful Christians for the following six reasons:

1. Unwilling to repent of an open sin (trespass)
  - **And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen (*pagan*) man and a publican. Matthew 18:17**
  
2. Sowing discord
  - **Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (*shun, eschew*). Romans 16:17**
  - **A man that is an heretick (*schismatic*) after the first and second admonition (*rebuke*) reject (*shun, avoid*). Titus 3:10**

A heretic is someone who uses bad or differing doctrine to split a church.
  
3. Disobedient to doctrine
  - **And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 2 Thessalonians 3:14**
  - **If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; <sup>4</sup>he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, <sup>5</sup>perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 1 Timothy 6:3-5**
  
4. Apostasy, teaching heretical doctrine
  - **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1 Timothy 1:20**
  - **And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; <sup>18</sup>who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2:17-18**
  - **A man that is an heretick (*schismatic*) after the first and second admonition (*rebuke*) reject (*shun, avoid*). Titus 3:10**
  
5. Gross immorality
  - **And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed [*sex with his step-mother*] might be taken away from among you. 1 Corinthians 5:2**
  
6. Refusal to get a job
  - **Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly (*no show at work*), 1 Thessalonians 5:14a**

- **Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly (out of ranks, idle, no job), and not after the tradition which he received of us.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:6**

Thankfully, humility and repentance can reverse this form of discipline. The Corinthian fornicator was excommunicated but found repentance and was allowed back into the church.

## DEATH

The final and most extreme form of New Testament discipline is death. We might say, if you refuse to get it right, you get to go home early. This is the final straw and is irreversible.

- **But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? <sup>4</sup>Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. <sup>5</sup>And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.**

**Acts 5:3-5**

Not only was this an open rebuke in front of the whole assembly, but it was also an instant rendering of judgment. Ananias and his wife Sapphira both dropped dead in the church service.

- **To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

**1 Corinthians 5:5**

This was the man who acted like a Christian in right standing but was openly having sex with his step-mom. Paul's judgment on him was death. Paul commanded the whole church of Corinth to deliver this man into the custody of satan for a death sentence. Thankfully he repented and turned the situation around.

- **For he that eateth and drinketh [this cup] unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. <sup>30</sup>For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. <sup>31</sup>For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.**

**1 Corinthians 11:29-31**

Death is the possible end result for those who refuse to honor the Body of Christ.

- **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.**

**1 Timothy 1:20**

These two ministers had left the true faith and had become heretics. Paul delivered them to the school of satan that they might learn to not be blasphemous. It may have ended in the same result as the Corinthian fornicator, but that is only speculation.



As we can see from these many verses, there is very much a biblical precedent of discipline for those Christians who refuse to submit to correction and instruction. Be quick to obey the Word that you might avoid discipline. Amen!

## CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

### Lesson 12

### Wisdom For Pastors

- This region rests on its pulpits.
- A church is only as strong as its pastor. Pastors will draw what they are.
- Dirty sheep like dirty pastors.
- A pastor's job is to strengthen the sheep, not necessarily to make friends.
- You can only pastor the sheep you have, not the ones you don't have.
- Pastors tend flocks; they don't herd them. You herd goats and you herd cattle. Sheep must be tended to, so don't herd them in and herd them out; you'll only hurt them.
- Nehemiah never came off the wall to cater to Sanballat. He rebuked him and said, "You have no part, nor inheritance, nor portion in Jerusalem." We don't cater to the pagan's whims. They must be taught to cater to God's holiness.
- Don't look to collect people; look to make disciples.
- A church's strength might be best measured by looking at its average believer.
- Jesus had trouble retaining a hungry crowd. You will too if you preach like Jesus. If you're retaining a large crowd, you may want to reexamine your messages.
- Fight insecurity and know how God measures success.
- God isn't the only Spirit that draws people to churches. Satan doesn't mind growing dirty churches.
- Don't sweat the numbers. Church growth isn't about numbers; it's about the Christians you do have growing more in Christ.
  - "I'd rather take 40 to heaven than lead 400 to hell." —Pastor Brian Ford
  - "Big churches have dark corners." —Pastor Titus Murefu
  - As of 2026, the average American church is about 75 people.
  - For all of the megachurches today, there is not a single county in the US more churched today than it was in the 1990s.
  - Jesus Christ never applauded church size in His letters to the seven churches in Revelation. He also never rebuked churches for a lack of membership either. His rebukes were:
    - » You've left your first love and have fallen.
    - » You tolerate church members who keep Balaam's doctrine.
    - » You tolerate church members who keep the Nicolaitan doctrine.
    - » You permit your wife to be a Jezebel, and you allow her to mislead your church.
    - » You have imperfect works and have not held fast to what you have heard.
    - » You are lukewarm,
    - » wretched,
    - » miserable,
    - » poor,
    - » blind,
    - » naked.

- What does lukewarm look like:
  - » Unfaithful to church
  - » Unwilling to evangelize
  - » Unwilling to financially support the Gospel
  - » Unwilling to labor in the Kingdom
  - » Unwilling to change into the image of Jesus
  - » Lukewarm-the temperature of your region or surroundings
- What did Jesus Christ applaud among the 7 Churches?:
  - » Works
  - » Labor
  - » Patience
  - » Intolerance of evil
  - » Accurate judgment of false preachers
  - » Endurance in the Gospel
  - » Hatred of carnal Nicolaitan doctrine
    - a. Loose sex standards
    - b. No condemnation
    - c. Grace as a license to sin
  - » Holding fast to Jesus' name
  - » Not denying the faith
  - » Keeping the word of patience
- You can't make disciples from the pulpit. You must get your hands dirty.
- Discipleship requires change. If a Christian is not changing, they are not a disciple. Not every Christian is a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Seeker-friendly ramps up are also lukewarm Christian ramps down.
- To quote the Reformation's ethos: reformed and being reformed.

### Some Questions For Pastor's To Ask Themselves

- What is your church known for in the community? Evangelism? Boldness? Strong discipleship? Blue jeans? Gimmicks? Holy Worship? Doctrine? Summer at the movies?
- Are you allowing the heathen to govern how you do church? If the heathen are the children of satan and the enemy of our God, are they qualified to steer the direction of Gospel ministry? The lost have absolutely no voice in the Kingdom except to say, "Hey, I'm over here, come witness to me!" and "What must I do to be saved?"
- What is your church's culture? Does it look more like Hollywood? Like America? Or does it look biblical and Book of Acts? If it's a biblical church culture, guard it and keep Hollywood and marketing techniques out. The Holy Ghost is powerful enough to draw people to your church. God is not obligated to endorse unbiblical growth techniques.
- Are you making disciples of the people God has given you, or are you merely drawing them to a service? Discipleship changes people; entertainment draws a crowd.
- Do you have services or experiences? One denotes Christian responsibility; the other infers carnal entertainment.
- Are you growing the church with secular means, or are you allowing Jesus to build the church?



- Are you following the Bible example to strengthen the sheep, or have you resorted to other books and techniques?
- What bait are you using to draw people? Whatever you use to draw them is what you'll have to keep using to keep them. The type of bait used always determines the type of catch.
- Are your weekly services hosting the presence of a holy God every week or a symposium on the great falling away?

“Many modern teachers have lost track of God in the church and don't know how to get him back, so they have diverted to other things to attract people.” —Dr. Hilton Sutton

May we tremble and fear before the Most Holy God! Amen.