

StraitWay



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Overseeing The Flock Part Seven (Working with the evangelist)

God made a distinction between the evangelist and the pastor, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” (Eph. 4:11). The elders must not “dump” their work upon the evangelist, and the evangelist must not take over the work of the elders. They should be supportive of each other.

When a preacher is doing a good work, the congregation should readily see that he has the full support of the eldership. It is very appropriate, from time to time, for one of the elders to stand before the congregation and commend the work of a sound preacher. And, if the elders are doing their work properly, the preacher should make it very clear that he is supportive of them.

However, if the eldership sees something they are concerned about in the work of the preacher they should go directly to him, not anyone else. It is unfair and to be anything less than honest with the preacher about what the elders may perceive as a problem with him or the work he is doing. It is during this type discussion that the elders should be very careful not to discourage the preacher. The elders should certainly have the right attitude and be mindful of how they present the problem to the preacher. This will determine whether the end result will be positive or not. Likewise, the preacher should also talk to the elders in private about any problem he may have concerning them. He should never use the pulpit to air problems he has with the elders.

Elders and preachers must always keep in mind that their ultimate responsibility is to God. It is sad there seems to be some preachers that are nothing more than hired hands. They are very careful to preach only the things they think will please the elders and the congregation as a whole. They fear if they preach certain things that needs preaching, they may be fired or cause some to leave. It is under these circumstances that the whole counsel of God fails to be preached. God’s man will listen to the suggestions of the elders and the congregation about things they suggest needs to be preached, but will never fail to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”(2nd Tim. 4:2).

When meeting with a preacher to determine whether he will come work with a congregation or not, some preachers may resent being asked certain questions. Some will compare questioning them to a creed or such like. But, how will the elders know where the man stands concerning truth if they don’t ask him? A sound preacher will welcome the opportunity to let elders, and everyone else, know where he stands concerning truth and the issues facing the church. This is also a time for the preacher to determine if he will be able to peaceably work with this eldership. As one preacher once told me, “Sometimes certain preachers and congregations just don’t mesh.”

It is God’s plan for the each local congregation to have elders, (Acts 14:23). The relationship between the evangelist and the eldership is a very important one and will determine the direction of the work of a congregation. If the relationship is based upon biblical direction and principles, it will work. And, if the preacher and the eldership are on the same page, the congregation will not split every time a problem arises.

Preacher Training

In this series we are breaking down the work of training preachers into segments for consideration and our hope is that some seed for thought might be encouraged in each area.

The Work of Study

I have addressed this area of the preacher's work in the fashion above, i.e. as a "work" because that is exactly what it is, work. A quick glance through Paul's letters to Timothy will bring home the point to us that study is a necessary part of the preachers efforts. The apostle told that 'intern' to "pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching", 1Tim.4:16; "Be diligent (study, KJV) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth", 2Tim.2:15; "...from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation" 2Tim.3:15, and of course, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable... so that the man of God may be adequate (complete, KJV) equipped for every good work" 2Tim.3:16-17. Read these admonitions and reminders again and try to deny that the effectiveness and faithfulness of a gospel preacher is going to be dependent upon study!

A common mistake that young preachers and other Christians make is thinking that a gospel preacher is some kind of denominational pastor. Even though we deny it, our actions often speak louder than our words. We act like the preacher is the social director, the youth minister, and the appointed hospital/nursing home visitor. While elders busy themselves with "real jobs" or about their home if they are of retirement age, preachers run all over town calling and visiting and seeing to needs in the flock. Who is the "real" pastor I've got to ask? Who's really checking on the sheep? It ought to be an embarrassment for elders to need the preacher to keep them informed of what's going on in the church... for two reasons.

First, **THAT'S NOT HIS JOB.** He is a teacher, NOT a shepherd. Seeing to the needs of the sheep is the shepherds job. Anyone, in any field, who sits back and hands his job to another to do would be called a slacker. Well? Tell me again why the church is suffering so in our culture.

Secondly, because he's doing someone else's job, **HE'S NOT DOING HIS OWN WORK.** How can he obey the admonitions of Paul in the passages above when he is not allowed time in his office to sit and pray and study and meditate. How can there be any spiritual depth to lessons that are thrown together because the preacher was running all over town or organizing get-togethers for the church? What level of learning will our classes have when the preacher never has the time to really develop and research the text being studied?

One part of every training program that I have been part of was making it clear that he had definite "office hours." One reason was because the average Christian is out working 40-50 hours a week and they needed to know that the preacher is not lazy. The other, more important reason however, was that I wanted the young man to get in the habit of studying. I explained that I wanted him to have quiet time when he could pray over his studies. I wanted him to think about what he was saying, and why, and to who, and what effect it was going to have. Young men need to get in the habit of research. One 'intern' had already been preaching for two years before he took on the task of working with me. He confided that in two years he had never written a lesson "from scratch". He got his lessons off the internet. That young man, who was and is a fine preacher by the way, subsequently lost his computer privileges when it came to preaching. He had to find a pencil and write EVERYTHING for awhile. After complaining how hard it was, he later thanked me for the difference it made.

Churches or elders who oversee training programs should demand certain hours per week of the young preacher to be spent in his office, not make demands that would pull him away. There should be assignments on contemporary issues as well as historic ones that will make the man dig for information and show his progress. Please note that I am certainly not opposed to preachers who visit and we must at times call on the members to develop relationships. I'm simply saying that the most important foundation stone of the preacher's faith and work is accurate knowledge. And that cannot be gained without time in the study.

“Home” Needs A Godly Husband

Earlier we discussed the need for a “real” or godly man in the home. In this study we want to address the husband as the term is used in 1Pet. 3:7. Holman’s Bible Dictionary defines “husband” as: “The male partner in a marriage.” Easton’s Dictionary has: “I. e. the ‘house-band’ connecting and keeping together the whole family.” From the above we understand that the “husband” is a male and has particular and specific responsibilities in the home. As emphasized in these studies, the home begins with one male and one female united together in marriage for life (Gen 1:24,25). 1Pet 3:7 says the husband is to dwell with his wife according to knowledge; a knowledge of what is right; i.e., God’s will. Look with me now at some of the specific roles or responsibilities of the husband.

The husband is given the responsibility of “headship” (Ephesians 5:23 **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**) Certainly, God did not make woman (the wife) a slave Eph 5:22-25. Yes, there is submission, but you will notice in the same chapter, the husband is to love his wife as himself (vs. 28,29) and Paul points out that no one hates his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it. The husband is to nourish and cherish his wife. “Nourish” means to take care of and “cherish” means to warm or make warm (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). The husband, then, is to take care of his wife and furnish her the things necessary and be vitally concerned with her welfare as well as doing his best to make their relationship what it ought to be. 1Pet 3:7 also says he is to give honor to his wife, which means recognizing her value and esteeming her very highly. So, as is evident from these passages, this matter of “headship” is not dictatorship, but rather a loving care and concern while providing leadership for the family. The success or failure of the home rest squarely on the husband’s shoulders.

The husband is given the responsibility of “provider”. As noted in the previous paragraph he must provide leadership which must be in a home separate from his and her parents (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-6). Serious problems result when either parents fail to turn loose the oversight or children fail to turn loose of their parent’s security. Certainly, love, wisdom and good judgment suggest children will counsel with parents; but remember the husband and wife form a separate family with the husband providing the leadership. He must provide for her physical needs, her financial security (Gen 3:19; 1Tim 5:8). Yes, a wife may help as is indicated in the word “merchandise” (Prov 31:18) which Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary says means profit from trade. However, this is **not** the wife’s responsibility, but the husband’s. He must provide for her sexual needs 1Cor 7:1-4. She is not just his “toy” or “plaything”, but his wife, and he must be concerned about her needs even above his. He provides for her spiritual needs. The idea of teaching and training is involved in the words “nourish” and “cherish” in Eph 5:29. He must, as much as is physically possible, provide protection from danger, which is also involved in the words “nourish” and “cherish” in Eph 5:29. The apostle Paul makes this role of “provider” very clear when he says: **“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”** 1Tim. 5:8

Husbands have the responsibility of gentleness. Ruggedness is often thought of as synonymous with masculinity and gentleness with femininity. So, some men avoid being gentle, but think of the term “gentleman”. Gentleness is a God-like quality. Jesus demonstrated the strength of gentleness 1Pet. 2:21-25. He refrained from retaliation when he could have, and most would think justified in doing so. Meekness is a twin of gentleness 2Tim 2:24,25; Titus 3:2. It is strength or power under control. Tenderness and affection are expressions of gentleness Eph 4:32. Restraint and self-control prove gentleness is a quality of strength. Anyone can react with evil for evil, but only the strong can contain their emotions and calmly control both tongue and body. When a husband shows gentleness he will nourish and cherish his wife, while providing for her that which is his responsibility as a husband.

These show a husband’s love for his wife. It is a sacrificial love: “as Christ loved the church”. It is a preeminent love: “as their own bodies”. It is a truly caring love: “even as himself” Eph 5:25-33.

Have You Been Used?

Throughout time, men have allowed God to use them as He sees fit for the furtherance of His plan. Men such as David, Elijah, Peter, and John quickly come to mind. Then we consider the countless unnamed who dedicated their lives to service for God. The Hebrew writer mentions ones who *by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.* (Heb. 11:33-34) The Hebrew writer makes it clear that God was pleased with these men and women because they *diligently sought God.* (cf 11:6) They acted upon their faith. Each Christian must ask, “Am I willing to act upon my faith?” “Am I willing to let God use me?” What kind of man will God use?

God will use the kind of man who trusts in Him even when the majority is against him. In 1 Kings 18 Elijah took on 450 prophets of Baal. Did you read that? 450 vs. 1! Lest we forget, Elijah’s contest on Mt. Carmel was a **huge** effort of faith on his part, as evidenced by his prayer: *Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.* (1 Kings 18:37) God answers Elijah’s prayer in the next verse by sending fire and *(consuming) the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* (18:38) Because of this, the people confessed, “the LORD, He is God.” (18:39-40) There is a lesson here. We would do well to remember that when it comes to doctrinal truth “one plus God constitutes a majority!” We may compare “big churches” to “little churches” and wrongly conclude that the majority has something we do not. But yet, the majority is often in the wrong. When it comes to teaching and standing for truth—we’re not out to win a popularity contest with the world. We’re in it to please God and Him only! Let God use you to loudly proclaim His truth!

God uses those who view problems as opportunities. Note, we did not say “God uses those who ignore their problems and look for other opportunities.” If problems present themselves, personal responsibility dictates that we must deal with them. But, how is our attitude in dealing with such? Remembering God is on our side will help us to have a better outlook on life. It has been said that opportunities are often disguised as problems. Think of Joseph for a moment. In Genesis 37:36 Joseph has a big problem: being sold into slavery in Egypt. Can you imagine the emotions this man went through on the trip to Egypt? Betrayal, intense anger, worries over his father, and fear are only a few emotions he probably experienced. Joseph never turned his back on God—because Genesis 39:2 says *the Lord was with Joseph, so he became a successful man.* Each time a problem presented itself to Joseph; he turned it into an opportunity to glorify God! See Gen. 39:9, 23; 40:16; 25, 38-57. He never let his problems rise to the point to where they caused him to give up on his faith!

God uses those make themselves available. Too many quit before they get started because they feel they are lacking in ability. Each person has his own strengths and weaknesses. Each person can do much for God—in a unique way. **You can do all that God wants you to do!** Think again of Elijah. How is he described in James’ epistle? Js. 5:17a tells us he was *a man with a nature like ours...* But yet he did incredible things for God! He made himself available for God to use Him by looking for opportunities to better serve Him. So should we! If we do, we’ll be amazed at what He will accomplish **through us.** Remember Paul’s writing in Eph. 3:20: *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us* God has work for you in His vineyard. No one should overlook the things God places in the pathway of life. Get busy serving Him today and allow Him to go to work in your life! Have you been used?

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“I Repent”

God desires for all men to open their heart to Him. God wants us to walk in the light – to make truth the pattern of our conduct. We are to *lay aside the old self ...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, (putting) on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.* (Eph. 4:22-24) We must build our lives around the idea that there is nothing more important than pleasing Him. The very essence of our being must be given in love to Him. Think of what Moses said in Deut. 10:12: *What does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* This week I had opportunity to encourage a sister in Christ from Ukraine who has been saddled with the burden of teaching since at this time there are no faithful men within the congregation. Only a Christian for ten months, she approached us with some questions about the usage of the church treasury. Being truly interested in doing things in a way that God would be pleased, she explained a situation she was recently confronted with and then inquired as to whether she had acted accordingly. When we explained to her the pattern in the New Testament – she simply said, “I repent.” Her honesty and humility were evident to all within the room. There is no doubt this sister stands with her heart open – seeking to do her best for God. Oh how refreshing! Think of it: no arguing, no rationalization; no seeking to justify actions. The words, “I repent” have remained in my mind and thus the inspiration for this article.

Too often we close our hearts to God because of stubborn pride. This causes us to look for ways to justify our deeds. How often do we approach God’s word contrasting His truth to our actions and sincerely determine to correct things amiss? How often do we give into rationalization because of *good intentions*? When we follow this line of thinking are we truly following Paul’s admonition in 2 Cor. 13:5 *to test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves?* Examination is useless if the heart is not open to change. Remember James’ teaching in Js. 1:23-24? *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.* Perhaps this is why Jesus talked about the need to become as little children – putting all trust and faith in Him – as a young child does his parents. (Mt.18:3) If we fail to develop the humble and trusting disposition of a child – Jesus says we will not enter the kingdom of heaven. We must learn to let go of the pride. We all cling to it so tenaciously at times.

Pride that is not dealt with effectively will lead one away from Christ. How quick are we to pass the blame to others in order to get attention diverted from self? There is little doubt all humans have faced this problem as it goes all the way back to Eden (Gen. 3:1-13) We must remember passages such as Romans 14:12 - *So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.* 2 Corinthians 5:10 emphasizes that one day all will take personal responsibility for *the deeds done in the body.* We can either take responsibility now to *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling* (Phil. 2:12) or have responsibility laid at our feet at judgment when it is eternally too late. Which choice will you make? Let us be reminded of the example of David when confronted with his sin. (2 Sam. 12:1-13) He was cut to the heart. There was nothing to say but, *I have sinned against the Lord.* (v. 13). In the Psalms we have the picture of a man whose heart begged for cleansing: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.* (Ps 51:10-12)

It takes courage to open up one’s heart. But it is essential because God knows its contents. Jeremiah said, *You know me, O LORD; You see me; and You examine my heart's attitude toward You.* (Jer. 12:3) When we open our heart honestly desiring to change for the better it may be painful at first – but eternally worth it. Oh Lord may we learn to put away pride when confronted with wrongdoing and honestly say “I repent.” May He find in us a heart that is well pleasing to Him.

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Passing The Sword The Book Of Titus

Chapter One:

Protection Of Sound Doctrine: Paul told Titus to put things in order among the churches in Crete. One of the ways to put things in order was through the appointment of elders in every city. The qualifications of elders are mentioned here as well as in 1 Tim. 3.

Paul warns Titus to be on guard against false teachers. He says that their mouths must be stopped. Their false teaching was subverting whole households (possibly churches, since many churches in those days were meeting in homes). Faith does not rest upon the ways and ideas of men, but on the Word of God. So, all doctrines were to be judged by the Word of God. These false teachers were to be rebuked sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. Preachers of today are to be aware of false teachers among the flock and are to withstand them to the face for the well-being of the congregation. Actually, this should be done by godly elders. But where there are no elders, or where the elders are not doing their duty along this line, then, many times it falls into the hands of the preacher to withstand false teachers.

Chapter Two:

Preaching Of Sound Doctrine: "Adorn the doctrine". Titus was to teach sound doctrine as to the manner of life among different categories of people. There were the aged men, the aged women, the young women and the young men. The older men were to be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in patience. The older women were to also be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed by their conduct. Young men were to be sober-minded, in all things showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Titus was to also exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Paul tells Titus that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. Yes, the grace of God has brought salvation to all men. Does this mean that all men will be saved? NO! Notice that this grace of God is a teaching tool. The salvation is found in the gospel of Christ, Rom. 1:16,17. This gospel is the Word of God that has been given unto us by and through the grace of God. This Word of God is the Truth whereby we might be saved, Jno. 8:32. So, we must study it to show ourselves approved unto God and that we might rightly divide the Word. 2 Tim. 2:15. Yes, we are saved by the grace of God but only by studying and obeying His word.

This saving grace was made possible for us by our Savior Jesus Christ, giving Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. These were the things that Titus was to speak, exhorting and rebuking with all authority. He was to conduct himself so that no one could despise him. vs. 15. He was to conduct himself as all young men were told to conduct themselves. vss. 6-8. He was to set a good example, have pure motives, be serious in conduct, teach only and all of the truth; so his life, and his speech could withstand the attacks of false teachers. This is a model outline and is always current for any who desire to teach and preach publicly. Note the three tenses that are used in the last few verses of chapter two: There are Past facts, Present life, and Future hope. There are three incentives for "Adorning the Doctrine of God our Savior": The grace of God (v. 11). The Lord's appearing (v. 13). The Lord's death to redeem mankind (v. 14).

“Home” Needs A Godly Wife

Continuing our study of the home, look with me again at woman – the counterpart of man, and examine her role as a wife. Holman’s Bible Dictionary defines “wife” as: “Female marriage partner” and “husband” as: “The male partner in a marriage.” We again conclude the home God designed begins with one male and one female united for life (Gen 1:24,25). Proverbs 18:22 says “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing. . . .” A wife’s role is one of dignity and honor, not to be looked upon with disdain or thought of as a second class citizen.. But what is involved in being a wife according to God’s plan?

Just as the husband, the wife must leave one family relationship in favor of establishing another. Matt 19:5,6 teaches that the husband must leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, becoming one flesh. It seems reasonable to me that in order for the wife to be joined to her husband like being stuck with glue, (what “cleave” means) she also must leave father and mother. This new relationship must take precedence over any other fleshly relationships. Every wife has obligations to her own family over all others. Marriages suffer when either husband or wife does not leave father and mother.

The wife’s “role” involves subjection to her husband, God’s will from the beginning “. . . and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (Gen 3:16). According to Eph 5:22 this subjection is to be “. . .as unto the Lord.” It involves willful, desirable, beneficial subjection as opposed to assertiveness, dominance or threatening behavior, a role only a Christian can fully appreciate. Eph 5:24 says wives are to be in subjection in everything, therefore this subjection is comprehensive in nature. At no time, no place, and in no thing is it proper for a wife to NOT be in subjection to her husband, which extends even to unbelieving husbands (1Pet 3:1; 1Cor 7:13), with but one exception, as Acts 5:29 clearly shows, our responsibility to God supersedes all other responsibilities. Longfellow in his HIAWATHA beautifully expressed the relationship of the wife to her husband: “*As unto the bow the cord is, So unto the man is woman; Though she bends him she obeys him, Useless each with the other!*”

God said it was not good for man to be alone, so he made him a “help meet” (Gen 2:18,20). The “role” of a wife, therefore, involves her being a “help meet” for man. “Help meet” involves compatibility and appropriateness to her husband’s needs. She is a compliment to him, suitable for meeting all of his needs. She helps meet his physical needs. Because it was not good for man to be alone, she is his companion. God also designed woman to meet the sexual needs of man, therefore a wife also fulfills or meets those physical needs (1Cor 7:1-4; Heb 13:4). She helps meet her husbands domestic needs by being a keeper at home (Tit 2:5); guiding the house (1Tim 5:14); and bearing and caring for children (1Tim 5:14; Prov 31:27). A wife also helps her husband in spiritual matters. She, by her faithful, godly example can bring her husband to Christ (1Pet 3:1-5; 1Cor 7:6). The word “likewise” in 1Pet 3:7 indicates what was said previously about the wife’s conduct (“conversation”) also plays a role in determining whether “prayers are hindered” or not. Such passages as these show conclusively that a wife can either help or hinder the spiritual development of her husband.

Titus 2:3,4 instructs aged women, among other things, to teach younger women to “love their husbands”. This love is not just infatuation or one based on physical attraction, but rather a love that can be learned, based on intellect rather than emotion. This love must be cultivated and expressed continuously. It cannot subsist on romance and emotions alone, but rather takes a lot of diligent effort, in other words, this love is something that must be worked at. It is a love that is based on respect (“reverence” Eph 5:33). The godly wife respects her husband in spite of faults or lack of enabling qualities, simply because he is her husband. Wives are reminded that Sarah called Abraham “lord” (1Pet 3:6). The word translated “lord” here is the idea we indicate when we use “sir” a term or respect.

Certainly this has not been an exhaustive study regarding the role or responsibilities of a wife. However, it is hoped that these thoughts will help you in your further study of what God would have you to be as a wife. The role of woman is God appointed and if a woman is to please God as a wife, she must be aware of her God given responsibilities in that area and submit to them or she is not a Christian.

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Beginning A Library

This month, in considering a library, we are not speaking of filing systems for articles, bulletins and such (although there are several out there to be considered). Nor are we speaking of even filing our books (although that too carries an importance that will not be fully realized until the young preacher has collected a substantial number of volumes). We are simply talking about the beginning booklist that a man needs to assist him. Some look with disdain upon such and we have heard comments to the effect of “Why can’t a man JUST have the Bible? That ought to be enough!” Although this may sound reasonable on the surface, my personal belief is that study and reading from wide sources is so important that the church that is trying to train a young man ought to set aside a “book allowance” of some kind to assist the man... in addition to his salary.

Solomon said, “...the excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.” But, he also said, “The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails...” Ecclesiastes 12:11-12. Although diligent study and research is indeed “wearying”, there is value, depth, and richness to be found in no other way. Proverbs 2:20-21 is where this same wise man says “Wisdom shouts aloud in the streets, she lifts her head in the square...”. The one who thinks ALL wisdom is ONLY found in scripture does himself a disservice. There is wisdom all around that can help one and there are wise and thoughtful men who are not New Testament Christians who can give us fresh perspectives on Biblical truth. We would be naive indeed to think that all spiritual truth and understanding lies with those who can correctly apply Acts 2:38. In Philippians 4:8 the apostle Paul encourages Christians to “dwell on” not just scripture, but “whatever” (repeated 6 times) is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good reputation, excellent and worthy of praise.

Because of these reasons, I believe a young man needs to begin collecting a solid foundation of books for study and reading over the years. Most preachers have their favorites, but since I was asked to do this, I shall use mine. Following are a list of what I believe to be basic foundations stones in any library.

Commentaries

Romans by Whiteside, Romans by Vincent, Acts by Reece (college Press), Hebrews by Mosely, Hebrews by Milligan, Revelation by J.McGuiggan, (From Beneath the Altar) Revelation by McMurray (sorry, but I have to put it in!) Old Test. Commentaries by Keil & Deilitzh, O.T. commentary set by College Press-not the new set, the set that is out of print, but available on CD, New Test. Set by College Press, N.T. set by Burton Coffman, N.T. set by Lenski, N.T. set by Hendrickson, N.T. set by Guardian of Truth Foundation

Research

New Expanded Vines, R.C. Trench’s Synonyms of the N.T., Thayer’s Lexicon, Arndt & Gingrich, International Bible Encyclopedia, Youngs/Strong’s/or Holmans concordance, (by the way anything that can be or is catalogued by Strong’s numbering system will be valuable), Berry’s interlinear for KJV men, Marshalls interlinear for NASV, Bakers Bible Atlas, or any of the Waldron material on the geography of Bible lands.

Topical

Instrumental Music in Worship by Kurfees, Scriptural Elders and Deacons by H.E. Phillips, by Dr.Dobson-Straight talk to men and their wives, Parenting isn’t for cowards, and Dare to Discipline, Strengthening Your Marriage by Wayne Mack, The Minister’s Manual by George Dehoff, Wedding and Funeral Sermons by David Padfield, Is it Lawful by Fisher, Walking by Faith by Cogdill, Anything by Homer Hailey except his teaching on Divorce and Remarriage and even that’s when used as reference material, Life In The Son & Elect In The Son by Shank, The Genesis record by Morris and the Genesis Flood by Whitcomb and Morris, Anything on leadership by John Maxwell.

Additionally one might want to invest in some good software. Bible Maps by Henneke is cool for class teaching. I use the deluxe version of QuickVerse, but I don’t recommend it. The commentaries work backwards from the way one should. It’s a pain. I’ve heard good things about PC Bible and LOGOS looks awesome, but is a little pricey for a young man just getting started.

The above is certainly not an exclusive list, but I believe it’s a solid one that will give one something to build on as well as somewhere to look for help in most any area. Wisdom shouts aloud in the streets. Lift up your head and listen to it.

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Preaching The Gospel In Foreign Fields

Preparing To Go

When one has determined that he will go to a foreign land to preach the gospel, there are preparations which must be made for him to do what he has purposed to do. The extent of that preparations will be determined by both the country into which he is going and the length of time he plans to remain there.

To go into another country whose weather and environment might be vastly different from our own means one needs to inquire as to what kind of inoculations might be necessary for him to take as a precaution against any common diseases there. County health offices can supply assistance along this line. Third world countries are riddled with many diseases and precaution needs to be taken to prevent bringing back such a disease to the US. Malaria, Tuberculosis and hepatitis are quite common in the Philippines. Doctors can advise how best to prevent contacting these diseases. A good medical checkup is in order before one makes the trip.

Then, one needs a US Passport when he enters another country (or reenters the US). If he intends to remain longer than three weeks (at least it is this way in the Philippines) he will need a visa from the country he plans to visit. The Passport is obtained from the US government; visas are obtained from the consulates which the foreign country has in our land. These are not two different documents: one's passport is stamped with the visa, (permission to enter and be there) of the country into which he journeys. These two items are absolute necessities for one to have if he intends to remain in a foreign land longer than three weeks. He will often be called upon to produce his passport as a means of personal identity, or in order to cash travelers checks or personal checks.

It is good to study the history of the country into which one goes. There may be laws which are in force in that land that a foreigner might unwittingly violate so he needs to be aware of such a possibility. Knowing something about the government of the country serves a good purpose when one is there for any length of time. Studying about the country will also familiarize one with customs in that country which are unknown in ours. Violating harmless customs of the country we enter lessens our influence while there and makes us appear arrogant and proud when such is not the case at all.

If one is a "squeamish" eater, he needs to carry along some snacks and food that will help to cut the edge of his hunger. Should he go to the Philippines, he will be able to survive on the food served him for rice and chicken will be almost his daily fare. He does not need to carry water (although he cannot drink the water there) because bottled water is available everywhere. The larger cities all will have their "McDonalds" and other US chains when he hungers for "American Junk Food". And there is the popular Philippines fast food chain called "Jollibee" from which one can safely buy and eat the food. If one is going to work in an area where there are already many brethren, he likely will stay with brethren in their homes. This likely won't be the comforts one is familiar with here in the states, but it will be the best brethren there can supply so accept graciously whatever lodgings they offer.

But, all these things are externals; just incidentals that are to be respected because one has a sincere desire to preach the gospel in another land. Preparation for preaching in another land must also take into consideration what one will teach about while he is there.

Naturally the kind of audiences one speaks to determines what kind of material he will present while he is there. Perhaps he will be teaching preachers and special subjects will be in order. He may want to teach regarding specific subjects or he might wish to teach a book. In my most recent trip to the Philippines, I spent almost a week preaching to four different groups of preachers. The first group was in an area that is being much troubled by the "one-cup" doctrine and premillennialism, so lessons dealing with those subjects were necessary. The second lectures were with a group of institutional preachers and elders so lessons dealing with those controversial subjects were dealt with. The third lectures were with a group of preachers troubled with questions of ethics and morals and lessons along those lines were necessary. My fourth lectures were with a group in which the problems of the "one-eternal covenant" doctrine had to be examined and exposed. Then, the following week the situation was entirely different. I was with two other brethren on an island in which the work is just now opening up and working with preachers who have just recently obeyed the gospel. Lessons to establish them and to help those of the

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Passing The Sword The Book Of Titus

Introduction: In presenting some thoughts on the subjects found in First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus, we come to the ninth installment of this study which is Titus chapter three. We have already looked at First Timothy and the first and second chapters of Titus. Since Second Timothy was written after Titus chronologically we will begin to consider it in our next issue. But, let us now look at Titus chapter three:

Titus Chapter Three:

In chapter one we note the "**Protection of Sound Doctrine.**" In chapter two we note the "**Preaching of Sound Doctrine.**" Here in chapter three we note the "**Practice of Sound Doctrine.**"

In this chapter a discussion of maintaining good works for members in general is the theme. Paul deals with how Christians are to conduct themselves. They were to be obedient to civil authorities. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). Their behavior toward others was to be different from the world in that their lives had been changed. This change was brought about by the kindness, love and mercy of God.

Christians are to be good and they are to be right, but they are not saved by their own goodness. They are saved by following the teaching of the gospel made possible to them by the grace of God. (Titus 2:11-14). The Holy Spirit, by the grace of God, made known to them the way they were to become new creatures. They were to be baptized into Christ for the remission of their past sins.

They were to avoid false teaching and false teachers. They were to avoid foolish questions and genealogies which seemingly were being promoted by the false teachers. Factious people were to be marked and avoided, even to the point of being withdrawn from if necessary.

Paul mentions several people in his final remarks to Titus: Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, and Apollos. He also requests that Titus come to him at Nicopolos, a city in Greece, as soon as possible.

In his closing remarks, he once again mentions to Titus to encourage Christians in Crete to endeavor to maintain good works and to meet urgent needs and to be fruitful. He also refers to those "who love us in the faith." And that "grace be with you all."

Titus is somewhat like First Timothy. Although it seems that Paul had not spent as much personal time with Titus as he had with Timothy. Therefore, it seems that his letter to Titus was not as personal as was his first letter to Timothy. But, of course, both of them are referred to as his children in the faith. They both had been privileged to be taught by Paul personally. His letters to them are to be used by those who desire to spread the word of God today.

There are many responsibilities that preachers have upon their shoulders. They are not only dealing with the souls of the brethren among them, but they also are to strive to save the souls of those outside of Christ. Prayer must be a vital part of a preacher's endeavors to fulfill his duties to God. Prayers need to be offered for wisdom to do the things that are required of him. There will be many different types of personalities that he will be dealing with during the course of his preaching and his endeavors to live the Christian life as an example before them all.

In our next issue, we will take up the Book of Second Timothy, Paul's final letter written before his execution on behalf of the gospel of Christ. We will endeavor to present many thoughts on this final letter in our next three issues of this given year. I trust that you will be able to be with us in these studies as we finish out this year.

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(Continued)

people they are teaching were different in nature than the lessons spoken to preachers the week before. Whatever the situation, it is good that one study and refresh his mind on the subjects he plans to deal with before he goes because the pace is usually hectic and not much time will be available for study once one is on the ground. Simple, fundamental lessons are always in order but remember that your lessons should fit your audiences.

Next: Being understood by your audience

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Gleaning Wisdom From Others

In today's world of easy access and electronic information we are presented with a multitude of opportunities to learn from the experience of others on almost every topic imaginable. With periodicals, books, websites, email list, sermons on tape, video, cd, dvd we can almost always find information to help us in our study of God's Word. We must use these sources carefully or we can stray from the truth. This has always been the case of the concerned student of Scripture. The New Testament writers warned their readers of the need to compare the teaching of men with God's Word **2Tim 3:10-17**.

Another problem that arises from reading and listening to others is misunderstanding. This can cause serious problems not only for the student but also for the writer or speaker. There are some things we must keep in mind when trying to learn from others which will help prevent such misunderstandings and help us to glean maximum wisdom from the teaching of others. Consider some of these things with me.

Listen Most important in learning from others is the art of truly listening to what is said. This involves much more than just hearing the words. Much of the time we only give partial attention to a speaker or writer. If we are to learn without misunderstanding what is taught we must first give close and complete attention to the teacher. We must keep our mind focused on the message and resist the urge to prepare a response while we are listening for an opportunity to present 'our side.' Many disagreements begin with this lack of attention.

Consider Next we must give some time to consideration of the message we have heard. We need to consider both the message and the messenger. We will better understand what is taught if we understand something about the one doing the teaching. All of us are influenced by our surroundings. One that has spent his entire life living in a large metropolitan area could likely misuse an analogy regarding farm life. This could lead to one that is familiar with country living to misunderstand the point being made. The teacher here has failed in presenting his message, but the wise student, knowing his teacher, may be able to gain from the teaching what was intended with consideration and maybe even talking with the teacher to clarify the point.

Context Along with listening and consideration we must also keep context clear in our minds in all of our study. When learning from the teaching of another we need to know if the message is trying to cover the entire subject or just one part of it. Is the teacher only looking at the blessing found in serving God or does he include the work involved as well? Without such understanding we could be led to believe the writer is teaching we are not obligated to work for the Lord. Also in considering context we must again give attention to the messenger's background if possible.

Compare Once we have given our attention to the message and feel we understand to the best of our ability what has been presented we must dedicate time to compare. We must compare every message to what God has left to guide us. Paul commended the Bereans for such comparison **Acts 17:11**. This comparison must be done after we understand what has been taught or we may mistake teaching as false. If we begin comparing a lesson which is dealing with our obligation in salvation before we consider that the teacher is only discussing that one part, we could easily begin to think he is teaching salvation by works which is in opposition with Scripture. Such misunderstanding could easily lead to unnecessary discussion and debate. Many religious arguments have begun because of similar misunderstandings.

Let us all give our best to the study of God's Word. Let us each give diligence in learning from the teachers who have gone before us and those who freely offer their wisdom for our consideration. Let us also be careful in our study so that we can gain as much as possible from what is presented without jumping to quick conclusions which will often lead to misunderstanding and strife. Prepare diligently for your service to God and study carefully that you might be wise in the Way of God.

Extra Articles

As you have probably notice, this issue of StraitWay has a few extra pages. This is due to several factors. This paper is written, edited, and printed mostly by men with full time jobs. Some are preaching full time, others have secular jobs to support their families. Sometimes the writers are not able to get articles to the editor as often as they would like. In fact some of our writers have had increased responsibilities such that they have been unable to submit articles as planned. This has led to the use of several articles I have that Glenn Melton had written in years past.

We have also had some difficulty getting the issues printed, due to time conflicts and technical difficulties. This has led to later and later mailing each month so that, as I am sure you noticed, the June issue was not mailed until the first of July. Because of summer trips, overseas work and other factors several of the articles for the July issue were not received until mid July.

All of these factors led to a decision to simply have one issue cover July and August. I did not want to miss any articles though. You now have the solution, a twelve page "Special (catchup) Edition" of StraitWay containing articles which were slated for the July and August issues. You will find that several of our writers have two articles in this issue. I am not certain that they are in chronological order, but I think you will be able to determine which should be read first, if it even matters.

I also want to take some space to talk about the StraitWay website. If you have visited it during the last several months, you have noticed that I have not been posting the articles there in some time. There are many excuses I could list for not getting them done. I have had other responsibilities to tend, and have been trying to spend more time with my family, but I have been neglecting the website. I just have not taken the time to get the articles ready and put on the site. It is my intention to start catching up this month and have all articles available on the website before the end of the year.

The website is available for anyone to access the articles and use them as best they can in teaching themselves and others the precious Gospel of our Lord. There are brethren in foreign countries using these articles in their own bulletins. At least one preacher has ask, and been granted, permission to translate articles into the language common among the people he is teaching. We hope that this resource will be helpful for many years. It is freely available to anyone with access to the internet. You should be able to easily save and print any article found on the site. Just visit <http://straitway.org> and (soon) you will be able to find all the articles we have printed in StraitWay for the last four and a half years. All articles through the August 2002 issue are available now.

Thank you for your continued interest in the teaching we are trying to do with StraitWay. We hope you continue to find our message useful in your work and service for the Lord. We pray you will be diligent and careful in your continued study of God's Word.

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