

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

SENDING FORTH QUALIFIED LABORERS

Around the year 759 BC, Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord asking a question: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8). Who will take the Word of God and share it with people who so desperately need it? Who will sacrifice their time and talents and forsake the world to devote themselves to the cause and work of God? Who will put their reputation and life on the line to speak uncompromising messages from heaven? Who is willing to endure rejection and be despised for the sake of the gospel? Who will embrace the wonderful truths of holiness and hope? Isaiah heard the call of the Spirit and responded: "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). God is looking for qualified, faithful

people to present themselves a living sacrifice on the altar, dedicating their lives to spread the message of eternity and salvation to the lost



world. God has a unique call and place to fill in the body of Christ for every individual. While the need for ministers, teachers, and missionaries is great, God requires that His ministers be spiritually qualified.

God is seeking for laborers who are examples of what it means to live

holy and blameless lives in this wicked world. "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits (2 Timothy 2:6). To be effective for God, the minister must first have a personal experience of salvation. From this foundation he can speak with confidence and assurance. Before going out to work for God, it is vital that one be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). It is the Spirit that gives direction within the work for which God has called. The Spirit gives comfort, purpose, divine authority, and anointing.

The true man of God will minister with an humble, willing mind and not out of the desire for money, prestige, or power (1 Peter 5:2-3). He is to be an example of the flock of God (1 Timothy 4:12) and is required to meet the Biblical qualifications for a bishop

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

(elder/minister) as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

He must be blameless, of good behavior, of good report, holy, just, temperate, faithful, vigilant, sober, patient, and hospitable. If married, he is to be the husband of just one wife and his household will be in order. He is not to be contentious (2 Timothy 2:24), partial in his dealings with people (1 Timothy 5:21), nor given to alcohol.

It is not only important, but required, that a minister be gifted with the ability to teach (2 Timothy 2:24) and be capable of expounding the doctrines and words of life (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). It is difficult for people to listen to the singer who cannot sing, the teacher who cannot teach, and the preacher who cannot preach. People should operate within the gifting that God has given and be careful not to move outside of it.

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him” (1 Corinthians 12:18). True ministers are called by God, not by appointment of man, nor by personal desire. They are qualified by the Spirit, not by educational credentials.

The voice of the Lord is still calling, the Spirit of God is still seeking for someone to answer the divine commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). There is no higher calling, no more noble pursuit, than to respond to the call of God and labor in the vineyard for souls.

—mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God’s Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God’s people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

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Editorial



How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! —Romans 10:14-15

Thank God for ministers of old who were willing to hazard their lives for the sake of the gospel. They had a heavenly vision and labored faithfully to preach the hope and judgments of God's word. The gospel changes lives and in the darkness of our society, there is still need for the truth to be preached. The religious world is full of false prophets and ministers who are preaching a "feel good" salvation and not preaching the message of true repentance and holiness. The full, unadulterated truth still has power to set people free from sin through the power of Jesus Christ.

This quarter the burden is on the subject of the ministry. There is a great need for qualified laborers to answer the call of God and work in the ministry. There is much hypocrisy in the religious world and great damage has been done to the name of Christianity. Let us be reminded of the Biblical qualifications and hold to them as a body of believers. We must not let a common history, friendships, or family cause us to let down on this Bible standard. It is essential for ministers in leadership to stay humble and dependent upon the Lord. There is an equality in the Church of God and it is imperative when duty calls, that ministers not get overtaken by a sense of self-importance or position.

Ministers go through hard times, but there is nothing more fulfilling than to be operating under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We have been entrusted with this dispensation of the gospel and need to be encouraged afresh to lift our voice as a trumpet and sound with distinction the message of truth. Many times people in the camp are more ready to tear down the preacher than to honestly acknowledge that they do not want the truth. Ministers need to have Holy Ghost boldness and keep on preaching the truth. A compromised message will bring forth compromise and a fanatic message will bring forth fanaticism. It is needful that the ministry swerve not to the left nor to the right.

Ordination is also briefly addressed in this issue. Ordination is a Bible doctrine and it is important that ministers and the saints understand its value. While some shy away from its teaching because it can bring the spotlight on difficult situations, we must be faithful to not let the teaching and practice be lost because of fear. It is a blessing to be able to recognize and ordain ministers sound in doctrine and spirit.

Michael W. Smith

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BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTERS



Acts 1:8 **Filled with the Holy Spirit** (Luke 24:49).

2 Timothy 2:24 **Apt to teach** (1 Timothy 3:2).

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 **Capable** (Titus 1:9).

2 Timothy 2:6 **First partaker of the fruit.**

1 Peter 5:2-3 **A willing mind. Example of the flock** (1 Timothy 4:12).

Acts 20:19 **Humble.**

1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:7-9
Blameless, of good behavior, husband of one wife, household in order, hospitable, not given to wine, not selfish, not a novice, vigilant, sober, patient, of good report, holy, just, temperate, faithful.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: THE MINISTRY

Scripture Reading: *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* —Ephesians 4:11-12

Summary: Ministers, called of God, are to be qualified, capable, and examples of the believers. They are to faithfully preach and warn the people in truth and love under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I. Commission of the Ministry

- A. Matthew 28:19-20 Go and teach.
- B. Mark 16:15-16 Preach the gospel in all the world.

II. Function of the Ministry

- A. 2 Corinthians 5:20 Ambassadors for Christ.
- B. 1 Corinthians 4:1 Stewards of the mysteries of God.
- C. Philippians 1:7 Defenders of the gospel.

III. Ministerial Responsibility (Old Testament)

- A. Isaiah 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not.
- B. Isaiah 62:6-7 Watchmen on the walls.
- C. Jeremiah 23:1-5 Faithful Shepherds.
- D. Ezekiel 3:17-21 Accountable to give warning.

IV. Duty to Preach the Word

- A. Ephesians 3:8-9 Preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- B. Acts 5:19-20 Speak all the words of this life.
- C. Acts 20:26-31 Declare all the counsel of God; Oversee & feed the church, watch, warn.
- D. Titus 2:15 Exhort and rebuke with all authority.

V. Manner of Preaching

- A. 2 Corinthians 4:5 Preach Jesus, not ourselves.
- B. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Not with enticing words of men's wisdom but with power.
- C. 1 Peter 4:11 Speak according to the oracles of God for His glory.
- D. Ephesians 4:15 Speak the truth in love.
- E. Acts 20:20, 27 Hold nothing back.
- F. 1 Thessalonians 2:4-5 Not men-pleasers. (Galatians 1:10-11).
- G. Matthew 10:28 Preach without fear of man.
- H. 2 Corinthians 3:12 Use plainness of speech.

VI. Other Ministerial Duties

- A. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 Warn, comfort, support, be patient.
- B. 2 Timothy 2:15 Study, meditate, and prepare (1 Timothy 4:14-16).
- C. Matthew 10:7-8 Freely give.

Conclusion

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine....But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

—2 Timothy 4:2-5

The Ministry

Divinely Called

It is the Spirit of God that qualifies and calls apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The ministry is given for “the perfecting of the saints...for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13). Jesus commissioned His disciples, as He still does today, to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). It is a serious commission to minister the Word of God, for eternal souls are at stake. “If a man desire the office of a bishop [elder/minister], he desireth a good work” (1 Timothy 3:1). It is not an office to be taken casually or loosely, but ministry is to be the result of a divine call and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.

Qualified Laborers

Ministers are called to be ambassadors for Christ and are to represent Him in every facet of life. It is imperative that ministers “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith” they are called (Ephesians 4:1). They should bring glory to the name of Christ through their spirit, conduct, dress and lifestyle. Ministers who are not qualified according to the scripture should not exercise their ministry until the time that they are measured to the Bible and called of the Lord. Ministers are entrusted to be “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1) and to be defenders of the faith.

The work of God has been hindered worldwide because of false ministers and unqualified people handling the Word of God. Religion has become a business for many ministers. True ministers are servants of the people, laboring not for their own comfort but for the edification of souls. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but

willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3). “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

Watchmen on the Wall

The Old Testament gives very moving and relevant instruction to those who minister. “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night” (Isaiah 62:6). “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1). God has placed ministers as watchmen on the walls to preach the everlasting gospel which is the savor of life unto life and death unto death. If a minister sees the enemy working among the people and fails to sound the alarm and give warning, that minister will be held accountable for the souls that are lost (Ezekiel 3:17-21). If the minister declares the message from God and still people are lost, he is not held liable for their sin and wrong doing. What a serious thing it is to call

oneself a minister of the Lord, for there is great accountability.

Duty to Preach the Word

Ministers are called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8) and to speak “to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20). It is a joy and a privilege to share the message of hope and salvation through Jesus Christ. Ministers are to be as Paul who stated: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Preaching truth will bring opposition from within and without the camp, but ministers are charged to be faithful and to “exhort and rebuke with all

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authority” (Titus 2:15). Ministers should not be preaching to please man but to please God (1 Thessalonians 2:4-5). Messages should be given without fear of man (Matthew 10:28) and of persecution which might follow.

Feed the Flock

God has made the ministers spiritual overseers and they are to fulfill that commission not as lords but as servants and shepherds. They are to “feed the church of God” (Acts 20:28) a balanced spiritual diet.

Ministers are to preach the Word of God and to speak according to the oracles of God for His glory (1 Peter 4:11). Ministers need to be very careful not to preach opinion, mere tradition and history, but to preach from the foundation of God’s holy, unchanging Word.

Many ministers are self-promoting and seek to draw people to themselves through entertainment, charisma, and intellectual thinking. A true minister of Christ recognizes that “all sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5). Christ is to be the center of all ministry and man should never be exalted.

A Balanced Ministry

Anointed, Holy Ghost preaching comes from knowing and walking with the Saviour and being faithful to deliver divine messages that are inspired from God. Paul stated that his preaching was not with excellency of speech nor of wisdom. He preached Jesus Christ not with “enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). While judgment is an integral part of true, sanctified ministry, the foundation should always be one of love. “But speaking the truth in love, [that they] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Some ministers

focus so much on judgment that the deeper, more meaningful message of love is lost. Others focus on making people feel good in love, and fail to minister the whole truth which will bring growth and life to the honest soul. There is a needful balance in the ministry.

A Caring Ministry

Timothy was instructed to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, exhort with all

longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2). It is vital that a minister be faithful regardless of feelings and the trials of life. Ministers need much longsuffering and patience, and should seek deeper levels of the love, joy, gentleness, meekness, etc. of the Spirit of God in ministry. A qualified minister will be there to comfort and support people in their needs and struggles (1 Thessalonians 5:14). He will

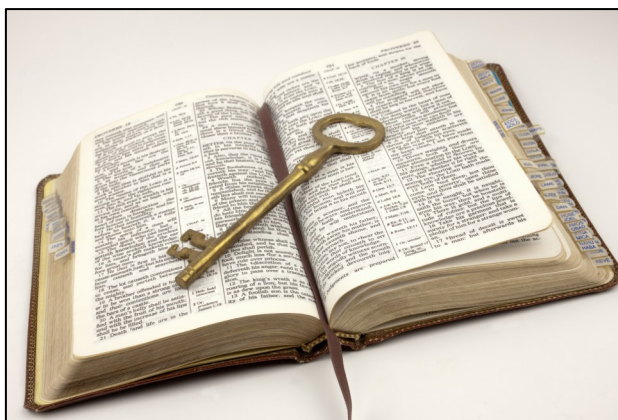
be patient and kind, caring for the flock as Jesus, the chief shepherd, cares for His people.

A Prepared Ministry

As with any job or calling, to be effective, ministers should give themselves to the study of the Word of God. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). It is important to “meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them” (1 Timothy 4:14-16). Ministers should use “plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12) and speak that people would know and understand clearly the will of God.

A Faithful Ministry

May every true minister of the Lord be faithful to the heavenly vision and call of God. May the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit be upon you. Amen.



—mws



DID YOU KNOW?

Statistics about Pastors in the Christian World

- 75% report being highly stressed.
- 91% have experienced some form of burnout in ministry.
- 70% constantly fight depression.
- 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- 70% say they're grossly underpaid.
- 80% of pastors believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families and
- 33% said it was an outright hazard.

(Statistics from: Fuller Institute, Leadership Journal 2013, Schaeffer Institute.)



**A Word
In Season**

Humanity of the Presbytery

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Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; —2 Corinthians 3:5

It is a high calling to be part of the presbytery. Ministers are to be qualified, spiritual leaders and examples; and the body of believers is to esteem them highly and to give honor to their God-given position. It is also very important to remember the humanity of the presbytery. Ministers are not spiritual robots and are not perfect in their humanity. They have feelings, weaknesses, faults, and even fall short in wisdom at times. They are tempted, have frustrations, and can experience high stress in the ministry. It is vital that people give the ministry understanding and room to be human, showing much love and care.



Ministers are not sufficient of themselves and are incapable of adequately doing God's work without the power and ability of the Holy Spirit. Their sufficiency is of God. People too often expect the position and ministerial office to remove the very qualities that make us all human. It is the recognition of one's humanity that keeps a true minister humble and dependent upon the Lord.

The apostles and spiritual leaders of the past had faults because they were human, but that in no way undermined the working of God in and through them. May every child of God and congregation maintain respect and regard for their Spirit-filled ministers—knowing the humanity of the presbytery.

—mws

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD