

# Understanding the Ministry

Somewhere in the world, a person is dying without Christ.

An unhappy couple has just decided to end their marriage in divorce to escape what they consider to be a hell on earth.

Somewhere near you, perhaps in your own community, another family is torn apart by the fear and the destructive force of a terminal disease.

God has a plan and a provision for these people: YOU. You are His arms, His legs, His tool to bring healing, deliverance, and salvation to your generation!

Whether you are called as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher, be confident that God has a purpose for you during these last, great days of the church.

If you share Jesus with that dying man, perhaps he will see the face of the loving Father instead of the jaws of despair.

The deceived couple just might avoid the pain of failure and the rejection of divorce if someone like you shows them the real problem and how to solve it.

The anointing of God could save the life of yet another terminally ill person and bring joy to the weary family members if God sends you to that home with His power to lay hands on the sick.

“And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us! Then I said, Here I am! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8

Isaiah learned that God used people to minister His salvation to every generation. If we seek to understand our ministry, our call, and God’s qualifications, then we can become vessels of honor and glory to God. (See 2 Tim. 2:19-21)

## **SEEING WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY**

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:1-7, “Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, since we have received mercy, we faint not.” Paul had a revelation of the ministry God had called him to. We must also have a revelation.

What do we mean by “ministry”? It’s important to clearly understand the nature of supernatural ministry from God’s viewpoint. The world has clouded the picture, and few Christians truly understand the Biblical basis for full-time ministry, or how this differs from modern ideas about the ministry.

## **WHAT THE MINISTRY IS NOT**

There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that ministry is mechanical. Nor is it merely a professional occupation of business as the world system sees it.

The word professional generally refers to a person who follows a specific occupation or renders a specific kind of service as a means of financial support.

The popular concept that full-time ministry is a business or professional occupation is based on worldly logic and non-Biblical assumptions. We must face the fact that the world system

can never adequately define or understand the minister or the ministry because the system does not understand spiritual things.

Business is defined as the active involvement of one constantly engaged in some activity for profit. It may simply refer to the state of being busy in anything. We use the business to describe a person's official or professional duty, occupation, or vocational function.

Most people think the ministry is just a business. Lumping the ministry in the same arena with non-Christian businesses or professions, they say, "People involved in ministry are financially supported by churches or donations from the public, so they're a business." This idea isn't entirely accurate.

Yes, ministers are usually supported by churches or public donations. But genuine ministers serve God and look to Him as their source. Many times, they sacrifice personal comfort and security to preach the Gospel.

Although the Apostle Paul clearly knew that he had a right to be supported by those he served, however, to avoid hindering the Gospel, he supported himself and his party whenever he started a new church in an unreached region or city. After the new church had matured, he did expect them to give to the poor and support his apostolic ministry. No one could say Paul preached the Gospel for money. (See 1 Cor. 9:1-27; 2 Cor. 11:8-9; 2 Thess. 3:6-12)

The Bible makes it clear that financial gain and power are unacceptable reasons for entering the ministry. (1 Tim. 6:5-14) Yes, a workman is worthy of his hire, and ministers should be properly supported by those whom they serve. But money should never influence a minister's attitudes, decisions, or level of service.

The ministry cannot be compared to a business or profession for another reason: Godly ministers rarely receive financial support equal to their labor or work. When God sends them to a particular place or people, they can't suddenly move and hire themselves out to the highest bidder like a business executive or sales manager might.

Yet, many ministers have been led astray when they entered the ministry by thinking it was an easy way to make some money. Unethical ministers have destroyed countless thousands of people and split churches through covetousness. Should we do away with all ministers because of the few unethical ones? God forbid!

So where did the business concept of ministry come from? It is rooted in secular business principles more than the Word of God. The Word of God is the final authority. Only God's Word brings truth and understanding. Misunderstanding arises when the Word of God is bypassed or dismissed.

Seminaries, Bible colleges, and Universities have contributed to the confusion of ministry with business. Many of them teach that the church is more a corporation than a new covenant community. They see the Body of Christ as a professionally operated business or company (called a church). Its activities and programs are considered products of the company, rather than supernatural ministry to people's needs. It follows that church services can be considered either business meetings or work shifts, rather than a time to hear God's voice and offer Him worship.

If these corporate attitudes are allowed to remain, openly or secretly, they pervert the work of the minister and the ministry. The plan of God for His supernatural Church is hindered by this man-based "systems view" of the ministry.

We literally replace God's ways with man's ways when we presume to make business positions of the five ministry gifts of God.

Decisions should not be made hurriedly during a rushed business meeting. The souls and welfare of God's fold are at stake. Decisions affecting the flock of God demand the wisdom and counsel of God. Nothing less will do.

Supernatural needs in the Body of Christ cannot be met by mere programs or executive action. Supernatural needs are only met by supernatural power, operating in supernatural order through supernatural gifts, obedient to supernatural direction.

Jesus rebuked religious leaders of His day for their extreme businesslike, strictly regimented attitudes and hypocrisy. He said that the Scribes and Pharisees had made their ministry in the temple one of extracting gold from the people instead of teaching people to worship and walk with God. (Matt. 23) Their legalistic, man-made ways made the Word of God "of none effect".

It is true that ministers have to manage themselves and others. They must be able to delegate, administrate programs, keep proper financial and legal records, and deal with productivity. But these business areas must not take priority over the Word of God in the ministry. God's Word provides solid working principles for every area, even these business areas.

### **WHAT DOES GOD SAY?**

God sees ministers and the ministry in a spiritual context. He looks at matters in His own way, from a different and higher viewpoint. While God's ways always lead to life, Proverbs 16:23 warns that man's way leads to death.

The early church used minister and ministry as action words. Our modern society has converted these words from verbs to nouns; from dynamic action words to static labels used for social identification.

The New Testament words for minister and ministry came from the Greek word, diakonia, which literally means "service or attendance as a servant". It refers to all manner of service. (Heb. 1:14; Eph. 4:12; Rom. 12:11) In contrast, the modern English terms refer to title, position, or salary.

It's interesting to notice that diakonia was used to describe the service and function of all New Testament ministries, including the five governmental offices and the supportive ministries we call the ministry of helps.

In contrast, the modern term, minister, is the title of a special person ordained by a denomination or organized religious group to orchestrate religious services and activities. Sometimes, it simply describes the occupation of a professional who occupies the pastor's study or fills a hierarchical position.

The New Testament teaches that all believers are ministers or servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. All believers are to serve with servants' hearts. The Apostle Paul used another word in conjunction with the servant life that conflicts directly with the world's view. In Ephesians 3, he prayed that all in the body of Christ might know their calling.

### **THE CALL OF GOD**

Theologians have pondered the call of God for hundreds of years. Regardless of changing opinions, the supernatural call of God is a Bible reality. Paul's prayer that believers would know their calling establishes three things:

1. There is a call to serve that comes from God, not merely from man or an institution.
2. Each person has a call, although not all are called to serve in the five governmental offices.
3. There are different calls, or else Paul would not have prayed that each would find their own call. He could have simply stated the call and told everyone to do it.

Study Paul's greetings in the following passages: Romans 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:2. He stated that he was an apostle called by God, according to the will of God or according to the commandment of God. Paul knew that God called him. In Galatians 1:15 he wrote, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace". Paul recognized that God called him by His grace.

God calls and chooses because He has a plan and purpose for each person's life. His call is based on His character, not on your ability. Jesus is your qualifier, not your degree or pedigree.

Paul could have boasted of many reasons as to why God called him. He rehearses his abilities in Philippians 3, verses four through eight. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

To Paul, nothing was more important than knowing Jesus and relying upon His grace. It must be the same with you. Always remember Who called you and that all your gifts and abilities have come from Him.

### **THE CALLING BEFORE THE CALL TO MINISTRY**

Before God calls you to one of the five ministry functions, pulpit ministry, He has called you to some other things. You must do these things if you are to fulfill your calling to the pulpit ministry.\*

You are called to be with Him and then to go out. (Mark 3:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:9) Without daily, intimate fellowship with Him, you will have nothing to give the people to whom you minister. Fresh revelation comes from intimate times with the Lord. Remember that the Father seeks worshipers, people who will worship Him with all their hearts, souls, minds, and bodies. (John 2:24; Matt. 22:37) Signs, wonders, and miracles are the results of having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

You are called to be a soul winner, a fisher of men, a witness, and an ambassador. (See Acts 1:8; Mark 1:17; 2 Cor. 4:17-21; Matt. 28:19-20)

You are called to total submission. If you submit yourself to God, then the devil will flee from you. (James 4:7) Your life isn't your own for you were bought with a price.

You are called to serve. Galatians 5:13 says that we serve one another by love. Ministers are spiritual leaders, but that does not mean that we are superior or above the people. (Luke 22:27;

Matt. 20:28; John 13:3-16) Jesus came to serve people. He demonstrated His heart of love and service in His many acts of compassion, when He washed the disciples' feet, and ultimately, when He hung on the cross. Whatever gifts God has given you they are for the service of others. (Rom. 12:6-8)

You are called to holiness. (See 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rom. 12:1-2) Don't confuse true holiness with outward appearances. The essence of holiness consists in conformity to the nature of God.

You are called to peace. Jesus is your peace; therefore, you can walk in peace with your God, your fellowmen, your spouse, and your children. (See 1 Cor. 7:15; Col. 3:15)

You are called to be a disciple. That means a disciplined one. The cost of discipleship is that you deny yourself and take up your cross. Your cross is God's will – not your will – for your life. (Matt. 6:24)

You are called to be light, a reflector of His light to the world. (Matt 5:14)

You are called to be salt. (Matt. 5:13) That means that you bring flavor and usefulness to the lives of others. You keep corruption (sin) out.

You are called to be an imitator of God, a godly person. (1 Thess. 1:6)

You are called to liberty – freedom under authority. (Gal. 5:13)

\*The information in this section was condensed from a tape series, "Vessels of Honor", by Rev. Stephen Rathod. He preached this series of messages to his church leadership so that they would understand the ministry: what the ministry is, the requirements of ministry, and the cost of ministry. This excellent series contains twelve tapes and outlines in a notebook. You can obtain the set from Covenant Family Church, phone 918-428-3875.

## **CONTRASTING VIEWS ABOUT MINISTER AND MINISTRY**

### **World System View**

Minister – noun, the title or position  
Given to a person, place or thing.

Ministry – describes a profession with  
Great social stature; refers to position  
of selected persons.

Minister – one of a minority doing most  
of the work in Christian churches. Qualified.  
and ordained by theological education,  
denominational credentials.

The Hebrew and Greek words for 'call' mean to call out by name. They are used in many places in the Old and New Testaments.

### **God's View**

Minister – meaning to serve, to fulfill a part in the  
Family of God

Ministry – service, as a servant; the New  
Testament activity and attitude of all believers.

Minister – the description of any New Testament  
believer who is serving God (not on the basis of  
education, or degree - but by divine calling.)

Since the Bible puts such emphasis on the call of God, we should also emphasize it in our study and ministry. Regardless of personal opinions or academic discussions, the Word of God

is clear: Anyone entering the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ must receive a divine call from the Lord.

Scriptures to study:

Exodus 3:4 – God called Moses with a voice coming from the burning bush.

Exodus 31:2 – I have called by name Bezeleel....

1 Samuel 3:4,18 – The Lord called Samuel....

Acts 13:2 – Paul and Barnabas were called to do a specific work and then were separated unto that work in the presence of other ministers.

1 Corinthians 1:1 – Paul boldly proclaimed his calling as an apostle of Christ.

Many of the men and women named in the scriptures recognized and discovered success in ministry – even in the face of their failures – by settling and standing upon their divine call. A great number of people in the past elected to enter the ministry as they would the dental or legal profession and later experience the trial of Satan's bite. Some entered the ministry with good motives and methods contrary to the Bible.

### **THE DIVINE CALL IN SCRIPTURE**

The term calling refers to God's supernatural selection and anointing (apart from individual value or ability) to serve the Body of Christ – much like the selection of the tribe of Levi for service in the sanctuary and temple of God. This call is usually followed by a time of preparation and training in that call.

For positive references of God's clear call, see Genesis 45:7; Exodus 3:12-18; and Zechariah 2:8.

There are three ways a man can receive appointment: (1) From God, (2) From man, and (3) From himself. In the Old Testament, to enter any ministry without God's divine call brought judgment from God.

The Apostle Paul clearly described the plan of God in Romans 10:14-15:

14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15) 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!

The order of God's appointment to the ministry generally follows this pattern:

1. Calling
2. Preparation
3. Separation & Sending

This pattern is evident in the lives and ministry of Moses, John the Baptist, and our Lord Jesus Christ. It's also apparent in the lives of the Eleven Disciples and of Saul, who became Paul the Apostle.

To understand the preparation process, look at the Biblical record of God's dealings with His called leaders.

Moses was called and appointed at birth to set the Jews free. God ordained that he be raised in Pharaoh's palace and educated as a prince of the realm. Moses "jumped the gun" and killed a man in a fit of anger, only to wait for years on the backside of the desert to enter into true leadership. Moses' personal encounter with God before the burning bush transformed him and prepared him for his supernatural mission to free the Jewish nation.

Every believer who is called into full-time ministry must have a supernatural encounter with God. You may never see a burning bush or have the Lord appear before your eyes; nevertheless, you must "know that you know" that God has called you into the ministry. It takes supernatural anointing and ability to answer this supernatural call. Anyone who enters the supernatural ministry under their own steam will most likely be "cooked in their own juices" or burnout quickly. The supernatural task simply cannot be done with natural tools or ability.

John the Baptist's supernatural call of God was clearly demonstrated when he leaped in his mother's womb in recognition of the Messiah hidden in Mary's womb.

But it wasn't until after he'd spent many years alone with God in the wilderness that God sent him to prepare the way for the Messiah. During the preparation period in the wilderness, God formed the message in John that transformed the lives of Jew and Gentile alike: "Repent and be baptized, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!"

Jesus Christ submitted to this pattern after the manner of men, even though all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Him. After submitting to His parents and fulfilling His role in later life as the eldest son and head of the family, He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit for 40 days of fasting and prayer. This preparation in prayer helped Him deal with the devil's temptation.

After the preparation in the wilderness, Jesus was sent by God to begin His Messianic mission to redeem man from the curse and restore fellowship with the Father.

Jesus required the original twelve disciples, including Judas the Betrayer, to leave all and follow Him. The three years of physical and spiritual discipleship prepared them for the trials they faced after Christ's crucifixion and ascension. This difficult preparation was the key to their success in turning the world upside down with the Gospel in the First Century.

Saul of Tarsus had impeccable credentials as a teacher of the Law. As a leading student of Gamaliel, Saul had committed much of the Old Testament to memory. He had years of training in classical Jewish teaching and theology, yet, when Saul was called to the road of Damascus, he still wasn't ready to be sent. He spent three years in Arabia and Damascus, receiving the Gospel of Christ directly by revelation from God. After the three years of preparation, he finally returned to Jerusalem to meet Peter and James.

Paul then served an apprenticeship of sorts with his benefactor, Barnabas. The church at Jerusalem separated and sent Paul to the Gentiles. Shortly after that, he began to stand out as God's premier apostle to the Gentile world.

NOTE: The separation process described in Acts 13:2 is different from sanctification. Sanctification refers to God's supernatural separation of all believers unto holiness, for we are not our own, but we are bought with a price. The physical separation described in the

preparation of Moses and Jesus may or may not be a part of a young minister's preparation. Only the Spirit knows.

The Biblical phrase "I sent them not" appears many times in the Old Testament. It describes those who went but were not sent. (See Jer. 27:15, 28:15 and Ez. 13:6) These scriptures describe those who ran without a divine call from God.

Never underestimate the importance of preparation for the ministry. During this time, God burns into your being the nature and essence of your life's work. Some of us must go through a wilderness experience like Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Others are led by the Spirit to Bible Schools, seminaries, and to mature leaders in the church for preparation. The methods may vary, but preparation is crucial to the ministry call.

### **THE HIRELING: MAN WITHOUT A CALL**

Any man or woman who goes into the ministry without a supernatural call from God violates a holy office. In 1 Samuel, Eli's rebellious sons tried to appoint themselves as judges over Israel. Their sinful ways ultimately caused the people to reject the Lord and demand an earthly king. (See 1 Sam. 8:6) Rebellious or immoral leadership in the church nearly always reproduces after its own kind within the flock.

In the New Testament, every believer is a king and a priest before God. But God still chooses to set apart some gifts endowed with supernatural abilities and supernatural authority to build up the church and equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

In John 10:1-15, Jesus warned us to beware of the hireling. These hired shepherds served as helpless drones who fled at the first sign of danger or opposition.

Hirelings like these were rejected by God in the book of Ezekiel after they made themselves fat on the wool and wealth of God's flock, while the flock grew weak and was scattered for lack of true shepherds.

Many man-appointed ministers fill pulpits today. Our largest seminaries and denominations often produce after their own kind: a breed of humanistic theologians with a carnal, anti-Christ spirit.

By exalting the wisdom of man and the strength of their intellect (flesh), they exalt themselves above the Creator. They dictate their standards to God rather than seeking, submitting to and serving Him. In short, they exalt their greater revelation above God's revelation.

Although the credentials and academic degrees granted by seminaries and denominations (or even FCF International) can be useful and helpful in your ministry, they can never replace the divine call of God.

The divine call of God alone brings the anointing and authority to be a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **GIVE PROOF OF YOUR MINISTRY**

Jesus set a pattern to live by – especially for ministers. He said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me..." (Luke 4:18)



If you're truly called, the anointing that comes with the call should show proof of that ministry. Paul told Timothy to make full proof of his calling. (2 Tim. 4:5) Some ministers make full abuse of their calling instead!

Some, like Esau, sell their calling for worldly possessions and gain. Others treat their calling as a hindrance to their lives and families. Still others treat their calling like a hobby, dabbling in it like a youngster with model cars.

Because of these abuses and the potential for disaster, the Lord set some guidelines in the Word to lead us down the straight path. You, as a minister of Jesus Christ, must meet and live within these guidelines to be a faithful minister without reproach before God and man.

Most of these qualifications appear in 1 Timothy 3 and the first chapter of Titus. Don't be fooled. These points are not listed as an unreachable ideal (as the liberal theologians believe). They are simply expected of all ministers of the gospel.

### **MORAL QUALIFICATIONS**

You must be blameless. (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6) You should be above reproach or guilt. Jesus said we could expect to be persecuted and accused of wrongdoing, even as He was. But you should be able to stand before God and man undefiled. You must be blameless because you are a steward over God's house. (Heb. 3:2-6; 1 Peter 4:10, 17)

You must be temperate. (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8) You must exercise self-control to be an able minister of the Gospel. Proverbs says, "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." You must rule your own spirit. Don't be given to extremes and excesses. The context of the Greek implies "one who is temperate, having his passions, tongue, hand, and eyes at command."

You must be sober. (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8) You must be a person of discretion and sound mind. Exercise discipline and wisdom in every decision you make, with a firm understanding of the eternal implications of every thought and word entertained in this life. Cultivate a Christ-like thought life. Only sober minded leaders can foresee what ought to be done. (Phil. 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:6-8)

You must be of good behavior. (1 Tim. 3:3) Somebody is always looking for an opportunity to bring reproach to men and women of God. You must be above reproach in every area of behavior. Your public and private behavior must be orderly, especially since you stand before the public. After all, you're a leader. A good reputation is hard to earn and easy to lose. Lead by your actions as well as by your words.

You must not be a striker. (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7) There is a need for spiritual warfare in the ministry but never physical warfare. Don't be like the minister who led his church board outside during a difficult board meeting to "fight it out." Never exhibit physical outbursts of anger or brawl with others. Any minister or believer who is violent toward others is still carnal and unspiritual.

You must not be a brawler. (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7) This phrase amplifies the previous requirement. Although the minister of God is to be conscientious about the affairs of the Kingdom, he is never to be argumentative with others. This leads to strife. Sometimes, there is a need for confrontation, but this must always be done in love, with the clear goal of restoring peace and righteousness.

You must not be covetous. (1 Tim. 3:3) You must be committed AND contented. The Greek phrase used in this passage refers to “not being a lover of money.” It is important to be content in whatever state you find yourself, whether you have much or have little (as long as you are in God’s will). Too many ministers get covetous or resentful over their financial status. This shows their lack of faith and leads to jealousy. Desire spiritual things, and God will supply your temporal needs.

You must not be self-willed. (Titus 1:7) In plain words, a minister who is self-willed is more self-pleasing than God-pleasing. He is dominated by a desire to please himself at all costs. He is ruled by the flesh and an easy target for the Adversary. Take the letter ‘h’ out of flesh and spell it backwards. A minister must not be self-willed.

You must be a lover of good. (Acts 10:38; Titus 1:8) The Bible says that Jesus “went about doing good, healing all oppressed of the devil.” Hebrews 1:9 says that Jesus loved righteousness (good) and hated iniquity (evil). Good ministers abstain from all appearance of evil because of an inner hatred of evil. They overcome by being lovers of good. (Romans 13:15).

### **DOMESTIC QUALIFICATIONS**

A minister cannot rule over others until he can rule over himself. Neither can he rule over God’s house until he can rule effectively in his own house.

You must be husband of one wife. (1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6) This scripture shows God’s approval of monogamous marriage. (You must note that one of the church’s greatest ministers was single and the author of this injunction). Every married minister, whether husband or wife, must live with their affections and attitudes in proper order. You cannot divide your love, or your marriage won’t be pure. Many have fallen into adulterous relationships because they divided their affections from God and their mate. They committed spiritual adultery first, and then fell into physical adultery.

You must be hospitable. (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:3) This phrase means “to be a lover of strangers.” You must love people regardless of their appearance or character. Never show partiality or give more respect to one than to another. You must be able to show hospitality to people on a personal level.

You must rule your own house well. (Titus 3:4) An additional comment on this verse adds: “having his own children in subjection.” Titus 1:6 brings further light by saying the minister’s children should be faithful, not accused of riotous or unruly conduct. Many ministers fail in their priorities by putting the ministry before their spouses and children. This causes the spouses and the children to suffer. Many ministers have lost their children to the snares of the enemy through improper priorities.

You must not provoke your children to wrath. (Eph. 5:1-5) This injunction is related to ruling the house. If you spend quality time with your children, it will decrease the amount and severity of correction needed. Your family members are the most important people you minister to. Treat your children with respect; never correct them in anger. Always be sure they know you’re correcting them for their behavior, not because you dislike them. Never tease them unmercifully or frustrate them needlessly.

### **SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS**

You must be able to teach. (1 Tim. 3:2) Every minister must clearly communicate what the Word of God declares about living the Christian life. This general ability to teach does not necessarily

mean you must function in the special anointing of a teacher as described in Ephesians 4:11. Why is teaching so important? The steady teaching of the Word is God's way of feeding and nurturing His sheep. It is the chief tool used by the five ministry gifts to build up the body and fuel it for the work of the ministry.

You must not be a novice. (1 Tim. 3:6) The Greek word for "novice" is "neophyte – a young plant." Maturity wrought by experience is important. A young convert lacks the experience essential to leading others effectively. Believers must be developed and disciplined before they are placed in positions of leadership. Seasoned and mature leaders are to help young believers find their gifts and callings during this time of training. Paul took young believers (Timothy, Titus, John-Mark) under his wing as disciples and later placed them in key positions of leadership.

You must have a good report among the unsaved. (1 Tim. 3:7) A minister's success is determined by what the unsaved community thinks of him or her. You must have a good reputation and upright character before the world. You prove the reality of Christ to the lost through your life. Your life either leads others to life, or to become hypocrites. (Jer. 18:12)

You must be just. (Titus 1:8) This Greek phrase denotes "doing what is right, whether it is right by divine standards or human standards." Micah 6:8 declares, "What does the Lord require, but to do justly and to walk uprightly." You must live uprightly before God before you can truly live right before men.

You must be holy. (Titus 1:8) Jesus said, "Be ye holy, even as I am holy." Jesus showed the holiness of God in His life. This cannot be overemphasized. The world is tired of hypocrisy among clergy and their congregations. They're desperately hoping to see some kind of proof that what we're saying is true – that God does change lives. Be pure before God. Walk undefiled, unspotted by the world.

You must hold fast the faithful Word. (Titus 1:9-15) You've been taught the Word of God through the Holy Scripture and through sound doctrine in the churches. Don't be blown about by every wind of doctrine. This includes anything that is deceitful or seducing. If you feel even the slightest bit of uneasiness in your spirit about a teaching or doctrine, beware!

You must be able to exhort and convince in sound doctrine. (Titus 1:9) You must present sound doctrine forcefully with an anointing that produces godly knowledge in your hearers. True exhortation and teaching brings light about God's Word, not confusion! They demand obedience and action, not mere mental assent. True exhortation urges listeners to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only." All exhortation must be accurate, in full agreement with the full counsel of God's Word. It should be in line with the doctrines taught by the Lord and His apostles in the New Testament.

"In patience one possesses his soul." You must show patient understanding toward others. You need godly patience when working to bring sheep to maturity. Don't fall into the trap of expecting people to be perfect. Only God perfects people. He does it through His Word, using people like you to live and teach it with patience.

## Summary

God measures all ministers and ministries by the spiritual maturity of His Son, Jesus Christ. As in all things of the Kingdom, God looks at the hearts of men. Whether you pastor a church of 5 or 5,000, God looks upon your heart. Don't fall into the snare of the devil through the fear of man. On the other hand, don't fall into the pit that transformed Lucifer into Satan: pride.

Ask God to give you quality friendships with other ministers. Spend time with them on a regular basis. Don't be afraid to ask them for help in times of temptation or stress. Their loving counsel and honesty could make the difference for your soul, your family, and your ministry.

If there is no one nearby, please call the International Office. Our staff ministers are here to serve you and stand by you. Our phone number is 506-856-9881.