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The Ministry Gifts

*By
A.L. Gill*

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Lesson Three

Ministry of the Apostle

I Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers...

INTRODUCTION

Definition

An apostle is one who is sent out with the authority to establish churches on a solid foundation of God's Word.

He will strengthen existing churches in foundational doctrines and practical teachings from the Word.

He will minister with boldness and authority and with revelation-knowledge by the Holy Spirit.

He will function in all of the ministry gifting and operate in all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

He will minister from a deep personal relationship with God and will have a "father" relationship to those to whom he ministers.

Signs, wonders and healing miracles will be continually manifested in his ministry.

His ministry gifting will be recognized and received as a relationship of the Spirit to certain churches and other ministries. It will not be a relationship of human organization or denomination. From this spiritual relationship, the apostle will govern and bring any necessary discipline, accountability, stability and protection from deception into the lives of believers, ministries and churches.

The apostle will function closely with the ministry of the prophet in appointing and ordaining elders, confirming God's call on certain believer's lives and establishing them into functioning in the ministry gifting into which God has called them.

He will impart and release believers into operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

The apostle will minister and speak with authority but he will be a man under authority because he is accountable to the other apostles and elders from whom he was sent.

Origin of Word "Apostle"

The Greek word "apostolos" means one who is sent forth.

The word "apostolos" was used in the classical Greek world to refer to an emissary or ambassador. It was used of a fleet of ships that was sent out with the purpose of establishing a new colony. It was used of the Admiral who led or commissioned the fleet and it was used to refer to the new colony that had been established.

The word "apostle" therefore in its usage implied a faithful relationship to the ones by whom they were sent, and faithfulness to the commission and purpose for which they were sent.

Hebrews 3:1,2 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

The apostle was to be an extension and an actual visible manifestation of the one who sent him. Jesus was the great Apostle sent from the Father, to establish the church and to faithfully represent the will of the Father.

Hebrews 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.'

LEVELS OF APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES

Jesus Christ – The Great Apostle

As the Great Apostle, Jesus did not come on His own, He was sent by His Father. He only did what He was sent to do. Those that received Him, received the Father. As the Great Apostle, He became the pattern of ministry for all other apostles.

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus ...

John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Twelve Apostles

The first twelve apostles were called and appointed by Jesus during His earthly ministry. In the book of Revelation, they are referred to as the "twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Revelation 21:14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Paul referred to these twelve as the "most eminent apostles."

2 Corinthians 11:5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.

Other Apostles in New Testament

We know, according to Ephesians four, that Jesus continued to give the ministry gifting of the apostle to the church after His ascension to His Father. There are more than just the original twelve apostles.

➔ *Andronicus and Junia*

Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

➔ *Apollos*

I Corinthians. 4:6,9 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

➔ *Barnabas and Paul*

Acts 14:4,14 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude.

➔ *Epaphroditus*

Philippians 2:25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need ...

➔ *James, the Lord's Brother*

Galatians 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

➔ *Matthias*

Acts 1:26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

➔ *Silvanus and Timothy*

I Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 2:6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

➔ *Titus*

2 Corinthians 8:23 If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

Apostles Today

The ascension ministry gifting that included apostles and prophets, as well as evangelists, pastors and teachers were given by Jesus to His church when he ascended on high. They were to function within the church to prepare God's people "for the work of the ministry." This way the body of Christ could be built-up until all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Since these goals have not yet been fully attained within the body of Christ, all of the ministry gifting given by Jesus are to continue to operate within the church today. This includes the ministry of the apostle and the prophet.

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN APOSTLE

Same as Elders

Since all apostles were elders in the church, they obviously must meet the general qualifications of the elders as given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 (Lesson Two, Qualifications of Elders).

Heart and Love of a Father

An apostle must also have the heart and love of a true father.

1 Corinthians 4:15,16 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

1 Corinthians 13:1,4-7 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Signs, Wonders, Miracles

An apostle must consistently have signs, wonders and miracles occur in his ministry.

2 Corinthians 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Acts 2:43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Walk in Humility

An apostle must walk in humility.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-8 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

Even to the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Authority

An apostle must be willing to speak and write with authority when necessary to correct and bring discipline in the church.

2 Corinthians 10:8-11 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—lest I seem to terrify you by letters. “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

Servant's Heart

An apostle must have a servant's heart and be willing to suffer hardship and persecution just as Jesus did.

Matthew 20:28 ... just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

MINISTRY OF AN APOSTLE

Establishing New Churches

An apostle is sent out from a local church in obedience to the Holy Spirit as a missionary to preach the gospel and to establish new churches and ministries.

Acts 13:2,3 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Laying Foundations

The apostle ministering together with the prophet will, as a “wise master builder,” lay a solid foundation on the revelation of Jesus Christ and His Word upon which a local church will be built.

The ministry of the apostle is primarily to lay foundations upon sound doctrine and to appoint and establish solid leadership in the churches.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with

gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Romans 15:20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation ...

1 Corinthians 9:1,2 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Ephesians 2:20 Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone ...

Establishing Bible Schools

An apostle will establish Bible schools to train believers for miracle evangelism and victorious Christian living. He will recognize the call upon certain believers into the fivefold ministry and train these believers for the ministry that God has called them.

Acts 19:9b-11 ... he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul...

The result of Paul's teaching "daily in the school of Tyrannus" was that all who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord. Obviously, Paul was multiplying himself into the lives of others who in the midst of miracle evangelism were preaching the gospel to all who lived in that part of the world.

Strengthening Existing Churches

As we study the New Testament, we see that while not all apostles were establishing new churches, they were all helping to establish them in the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Jude 1:3b ... I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Appoint, Ordain Elders

The apostles will appoint and ordain elders in every church that they have established.

Acts 14:23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Approve, Ordain Deacons

They will approve and ordain those who have been chosen by the believers in a local church to the position of deacon.

Acts 6:1-6 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples

and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

Confirm God's Call

They will minister with the prophets to confirm God's call on certain believers' lives.

1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

Impart Spiritual Gifts

They will function together with an assembly of elders to impart and release believers into operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit by the ministry of the laying on of hands.

2 Timothy 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established ...

RECOGNIZING AN APOSTLE

An apostle is appointed by Jesus – not by a man, or groups of men. His ministry gifting will be recognized and received by those to whom he will minister. It will not be recognition or acceptance because of a title, or a position that he has received from any organization, association or denomination. It's not to be a relationship of coercion or political structure.

His acceptance will be based on a deep personal relationship in the Spirit to those who are the spiritual leaders of certain local churches.

By New Churches

This relationship will exist with those churches that the apostle himself has established. The fruit of the apostle's ministry will reveal and confirm his ministry gifting.

By Existing Churches

It may also be present with existing churches who were not started on an apostolic ministry or who have lost their relationship with an apostle because of death, incapacity or other reasons as they are led by the Spirit.

Unity

A local church that is already in relationship with an apostle and functioning under his authority may also recognize and receive the ministry of another apostle if that apostle's ministry can help to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. However, as these apostles minister at that particular local church, they will not have the same governing authority as will the primary apostle recognized by that body of believers. These apostles will be careful not to say or do anything that would not be in perfect harmony with the primary apostle who is recognized and accepted by that local church.

Ministry Confirmed

➔ *By a prophet*

Apostles may not be recognized by every local church. Their appointment to the ministry gifting of an apostle was made by God and not by man. However, where an apostle is to be received as an apostle in order that he may function as such to that local body of believers, his ministry gifting will be revealed and recognized. Often God will speak and confirm this through the exercise of the spiritual gift of prophecy operating through a prophet or another one of the elders in that local church.

Paul wasn't received and recognized as an apostle by all.

1 Corinthians 9:1-3 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

The apostles' ministry gifting will be recognized by the believers of the sending church because God had confirmed this to that local church through the ministry of the prophets and the elders.

➔ *By Himself*

The apostle himself will recognize his ministry gifting.

Warning Against False Apostles

The Word of God warns about those who claim to be apostles but who are teaching false doctrine and are leading people astray.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

Revelation 2:2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars ...

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Give a brief definition of an apostle.
2. List five specific qualifications of an apostle.
3. Describe the ministry of an apostle.

GREAT WORDS of THE GOSPEL

***STUDIES IN THE MAJOR
THEMES OF
SALVATION***

by KEN CHANT

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CHAPTER TWO - PART ONE**JUSTIFICATION**

The distinction between law and gospel is the highest art in Christendom, which should be grasped and understood by all who call themselves Christians. Where this is not done, a Christian cannot be distinguished from a heathen or a Jew. So much depends on this distinction! . . . In fact everything depends on the proper separation of these two messages . . . otherwise you will neither know nor retain a true understanding of one or the other; nay, while under the impression of having both, you will have neither. . . . Therefore whoever has mastered this ability to distinguish the law from the gospel, place him at the head of the list and call him a Doctor of Holy Scripture. For without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to make this distinction ⁴

Not everyone would agree with Luther that the distinction between law and grace is the central issue of the gospel; but all will allow that this distinction is a vital part of apostolic preaching, especially of Paul. Centuries before Luther was born, the great apostle to the gentiles asserted that a clear understanding of what it means to be *justified by faith* (apart from your own good works) is a vital key to steadfast, mature, and successful life in Christ.

But what *is* this difference between law and gospel? What does it mean to be “*justified by faith alone*”?

“*Justification*” is a *legal* term. It is used in the NT (especially by Paul) to present what is called a *forensic* explanation of the salvation the Father has given us in Christ. This is in contrast, say, to the *sacerdotal* (priestly) explanation given in the letter to the *Hebrews*; or to the *regenerative* explanation given in your previous chapter. ⁵

In other words, the writer of *Hebrews* explains salvation as something achieved by a priestly sacrifice at God's altar, while John explains it in terms of a new birth; but Paul (when he uses the expression “*justification*”) thinks of salvation as an act of acquittal in a court of law, an acquittal that comes to us solely in response to faith in Christ ⁶ (see Ro 1:17; 3:28; 5:1; Ga 2:16; 3:11,24; He 10:38).

⁴ Martin Luther, in a New Year's sermon for 1532, on Ga 3:23-24.)

⁵ See again the preface and the second footnote of your previous chapter.

⁶ As I have already indicated (see the Footnote immediately above), these ideas reflect various attempts to explain the inexplicable - the height, depth, and breadth of the amazing salvation God has given us in Christ. Neither justification, nor regeneration, nor propitiation, nor any other concept, can fully embrace the wonder of all that God has done for us. But they each explore a different facet of divine grace; they each expose another dimension of divine promise; they each present a new opportunity to appropriate by faith the divine gift. There is, of course, no conflict between these varying concepts - they are not contradictory but complementary.

Our task and joy in this chapter will be to explore the legal aspect of our salvation, to follow what is called the forensic argument, to understand what the Bible means when it says that we are “*justified by faith*” (Ha 2:4; Ro 1:17; 3:28; 5:1; Ga 2:16; 3:11,24; 5:1; He 10:38).

AN ACT OF ACQUITTAL

In all three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and English, a “*justified*” man is one who has stood in the dock for sentencing, but has been pronounced innocent, and therefore released from the charges that were laid against him.

Notice something *very* important: a legal sentence is not an act of power, but simply a verbal declaration. It has three vital limitations -

ACQUITTAL REQUIRES ONLY LEGAL INNOCENCE

You must have noticed how our law courts sometimes condemn innocent people and acquit guilty ones. That is because, in practice, the law does not deal with the *factual* guilt or innocence of an accused person, but rather seeks only to discover whether his innocence or guilt can be *judicially* established. “A criminal trial is not a tribunal for eliciting truth.”⁷ Law courts are in the end concerned only with law.

Thus acquittal in a court of law does not really depend upon the *actual* innocence of the person who is on trial, but rather upon the failure of the prosecutor to prove any case against that person. Consequently, the accused is pronounced *legally* innocent, and is discharged from the court free, and without penalty. He may in fact be guilty. Indeed, the judge, the lawyers, the jury, the spectators, may all *know* that he is guilty; but if his guilt cannot be established by lawful means the judge has no choice but to declare him innocent and to dismiss the case.

In the same way, God knows (and you know) you are guilty of offending heaven's law. God makes no attempt to change that. Instead, he has found a way to declare you *legally* innocent in Christ. You *are* a sinner; nonetheless he justifies you in Christ.

So remember: your justification in no way depends upon you establishing any kind of past, present, or future innocence in the sight of God. You are innocent of all charges, and free of all penalty, simply on the basis of the sentence that has been passed in your favour in the court of heaven.

That leads on to the second vital limitation.

Your justification is -

NOT DEPENDENT UPON MORAL CHANGE

A sentence spoken by a judge has no power to effect any change in a person's *character*; it changes only his *legal standing* within the community. No moral work is done in him. He simply shifts in his relationship to the law from a state of suspicion to one of acquittal. Whereas he once stood accused, now he is reckoned innocent. But *morally* he is still the same person.

Likewise, our justification is an act of *declaration*, not an act of *power*. It is a work of God external to the sinner, not something accomplished within his nature. It has to do with a change in God's attitude toward us and a change in our relationship to his law. Whereas we

⁷ P. D. James, Death of an Expert Witness Book II, Sec. 3.

once lay under the wrath of God, now, being justified, we are admitted to his favour, cleared of all the charges that were laid against us.

There are some who endeavour to attach a moral sense to justification. That is, they view it as arising from, or at least incorporating, an act of divine power within the believer's own life. They associate with justification a transforming work of grace that makes the believer holy.

Now in a little while I will be stating vigorously that true justification *should* lead on to a sanctified and obedient life. But that is a *fruit* of justification, not a basis for it, nor even an integral part of it.

So rid yourself of the idea that you cannot claim to be justified unless a moral change has happened in your behaviour. Especially, discard the notion that before you can declare yourself justified before God, you must effect a moral change in yourself by your own effort.

The constant meaning of “*justify*” (and other parallel words) in both Old and New Testaments, enforces the idea that it belongs without any moral sense in a strictly *forensic* setting. If justification contains anything more than a simple legal significance, then it differs in no material way from sanctification, and many biblical statements become meaningless.

This can be seen in the following -

- (1) In many places a strictly forensic sense is the only possible meaning of *justify* - to give it a moral sense makes the statements ridiculous (see De 25:1; Pr 17:15; Is 5:23; 53:11; Ro 3:20; 4:5,8; Ga 3:11; 5:4).
- (2) The word “*condemnation*” is often used in antithesis to justification; but since condemning a man does not in itself make him wicked, neither does justifying him in itself make him righteous. Both terms express only a person's state in the eyes of the law. In addition to some of the above references (see also Ro 8:33-34; Ge 18:25).
- (3) Expressions equivalent to “*justification*” clearly carry only a legal sense (see Ge 15:6; Ps 32:1-2; Ro 4:6-7; 2 Co 5:19; Ja 2:23).
- (4) A moving example of the transfer of guilt and of innocence from one to another is found in Philemon (see vs. 17-18). Onesimus had greatly wronged his master, Philemon. But Onesimus was Paul's friend. So the apostle asks that all of his own good qualities should be accepted as belonging to the slave. Philemon should receive Onesimus as he would do Paul himself. And, in turn, Paul offers to take all of the slave's guilt to himself, and to discharge any wrong that may have been done to Philemon. Paul's innocence was to be given to Onesimus, and the guilt of Onesimus was to be charged against Paul.

So, to justify a person means simply to set him again in a *right relationship* either to the law or to another person. For us, this means the law of God and God himself. In the case of a person who is actually free from guilt, justification involves simply a vindication of his innocence. But where there has been actual wrongdoing, as in our case, justification can be achieved only by some means that fully expiates that guilt. God has found that means in Christ.

Our position can therefore be summarised -

Although we are guilty and deserve punishment, God, in a legal and just response to the atonement Christ has made, pardons us, clears us from all guilt, and accepts us as being actually righteous in the sight of his law.

Thus, though your guilt may be factually undeniable, your innocence is legally undeniable; God must therefore deal with you as though you had never sinned. Does that mean you should be content to remain guilty in fact and only innocent in law? Of course not! As I have said above, this change in *legal* relationship is emphatically intended by God to lead us on into a change of *life* relationship. Justification does not in itself cause any moral change or inner transformation, but it *does* pave the way for such a change to be wrought later by the Holy Spirit.

Thus the outward imputation of righteousness in *justification* becomes the basis for an inward infusion of holiness in *sanctification*.

Remember this: never base your claim of justification upon whether or not you have reformed morally. Your justification does not depend upon *any* internal change, whether wrought by you or by God. It is a wholly legal matter, based on the just acquittal God has secured for you in Christ.

That takes us on to the third vital limitation: your justification depends upon

A HEAVENLY WORD, NOT AN EARTHLY WORK

Here is the single greatest thing you can understand about justification: *it results from a word already spoken in heaven, not from an act being performed on earth*. The entire transaction is a heavenly not an earthly one, based solely upon the merits of Christ and his substitutionary death. Seeing the cross, and the victory over sin Christ gained there, the Father has spoken in heaven the sentence of acquittal for all who believe in Jesus.

If justification depended upon some ongoing work of mine on earth, then a thousand misadventures could undermine it. But happily, I know it is not my *work* but the Father's *word* that justifies. He has given me a verdict of acquittal entirely because of what Christ has done. The Cross is rooted in history, and cannot be changed; the justifying sentence is recorded in heaven, far beyond the interfering reach of men or demons. Upon those two unassailable guarantees I base my claim of innocence in Christ.

So you and I are left with no other choice except to believe or reject the word the Father has spoken. Upon that simple choice our eternal destiny hangs.

Does that mean there are *no* earthly ramifications to justification? Of course not. It is expected of any person who walks out of a courtroom as a free citizen that he will at once resume all the rights and benefits that are rightfully his. So should you do before God. Peace and joy, access to the throne of God, answered prayer, all of God's promises, are lawfully yours in Christ and cannot be lawfully denied to you. Have you heard the Judge pronounce that sweet word "*Justified*"? Then boldly claim all that belongs to you as a free-born citizen of the kingdom of God!

AUTHENTICITY & AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

by Ken Chant

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CHAPTER ONE

CANON – (II)

The Christian churches from the very first accepted the OT as authoritative scripture, although there were differences of opinion as to the contents of the Hebrew canon –

(A) BASED ON THE HEBREW CANON

Some of the Fathers accepted only those books that the Jews admitted into the canon, while others admitted various books from the Apocrypha. Augustine (354-430), for example, accepted *Judith*, *1 & 2 Maccabees*, *Sirach*, and the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and others.¹ Similarly, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215), a celebrated teacher, quoted both *Wisdom* and *Sirach* as scripture –

The scripture says that “*those who fear the Lord will have a repentant heart*” . . . for “*the fear of the Lord will drive away sin, and there will be no pardon where that fear is lacking,*” says the scripture . . . “*Only a fool raises his voice in loud laughter,*” says the scripture.²

Like Augustine (and other Fathers), Clement mixes passages from the Apocrypha with others from canonical works without any apparent distinction between them. Indeed, late in the 4th century Chrysostom, like Augustine, was still able to refer to *Sirach* as though it were canonical –

“Listen to the scripture that says, “*The bee is small among creatures that fly, but who can produce any sweeter fruit?*”³

The Catholic Church continues to share the view of the Fathers, and so admits the Apocrypha into its canon. Protestants have usually chosen to stick to the Jewish canon (which excludes the Apocrypha), and they tend to adopt the attitude expressed by Martin Luther –

“...the books (of the Apocrypha) are not to be regarded as the equal of Holy Scripture, but are nonetheless profitable and good to read.”...⁴

¹ City of God 18:26, 36; 17:20; plus a large number of other references. In general, Augustine makes little or no distinction between the Apocrypha and the canonical books, and he was especially fond of *Sirach* and *Wisdom*, and quoted from both of them frequently in conjunction with quotations from canonical books.

² Sir 21:6; 1:21,22; 21:20. Cited in The Instructor Bk 1.8; 2.5. The list of references could be multiplied many times. Clement in one place (at least) refers to *The Wisdom of Solomon* as “the divine Wisdom” and quotes it as scripture (The Miscellanies Bk 4.16). He also refers to other parts of the Apocrypha as scripture.

³ Sir 11:3, quoted in a Homily on Ephesians 5:26.

⁴ Quoted in What Luther Says Vol 3; compiled by E. M. Plass; Concordia Publishing House; 1959; footnote to Selection # 4892. Nonetheless, Luther preached a number of times from *Apocrypha* texts, and also frequently quoted them in other sermons and writings.

(B) ENLARGED BY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

To the OT the early church added a number of books that were recognised as the genuine writings of the apostles or of those who had been closely instructed by the apostles –

(1) The first step in the formation of the NT canon was the oral teaching of the apostles and disciples of Christ, who told the stories of Jesus. This oral teaching developed into what has become known as the kerygma,⁵ that is, the message of the apostles, as exemplified in the sermons recorded in Acts and elsewhere.

(2) As the eyewitnesses began to die, the need for a permanent record of the life and teaching of Jesus became evident. Thus **Luke** opens his gospel with the words –

Many writers have already embraced the task of presenting an account of the events that occurred among us. They have recorded the traditions passed on to us by the original eyewitnesses who became servants of the gospel. Because of this, and after carefully investigating everything that happened from the very beginning, I too decided to write a reliable account, so that you, most excellent Theophilus, might be sure that you know the truth about the things you have been told.

(3) There are indications in the NT that while the apostles were still living, and under their supervision, collections of their writings began to be made:

- **Paul** claimed divine inspiration – 1 Co 2:7-13; 1 Th 2:13.
- **John** also – Re 1:2.
- **Paul** intended his letters to be read in all the churches – Cl 4:16; 1 Th 5:27; 2 Th 2:15.
- So also did **Peter** – 2 Pe 1:15; 3:1-2.
- **Paul** quoted the words of the gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke* as if they were scripture – cp. 1 Ti 5:18 with Mt 10:10; Lu 10:7; (although it is more probable, of course, that Paul actually drew his quotation from the same earlier source upon which the two gospels themselves were based).
- **Peter** classed Paul's letters as scripture – 2 Pe 3:15-16 (note also that the phrase "*all his letters*" indicates that at the time 2 *Peter* was written some kind of collection of Paul's letters was already in circulation).

(4) **Paul's** letters are known to have been collected into a single corpus by about 85 A.D., and this collection, along with the gospels and *Acts*, formed the nucleus of our present NT. Churches that had received letters from Paul would want to exchange their letters with those written to other churches (cp. Cl 4:16); and the same probably happened with other apostolic writings.

(5) Subsequent to several of the apostolic letters, the three synoptic gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*) began to circulate, and then, much later, the gospel of *John*. Spurious writings, some of them heretical, some claiming apostolic authorship, also sought the

⁵ Which means "preaching" or "proclamation"; hence by implication, "the gospel". The word is used now as a kind of shorthand term to express the essence of the apostolic message. It is found in Mt 12:41; Ro 16:25; 1 Co 1:21; Tit 1:3; etc.

approval of the churches. Some of those works were valuable, some were a mixture of good and bad, some were quite fictitious or misleading. Many of them have perished, but a number still survive (usually classified as “New Testament Apocrypha”, “New Testament Pseudepigrapha”, or as “Patristic Literature”).

This additional literature created a problem for the early Christians. The widely separated churches from which these writings came, and to which they were addressed, the hardships of travel, the frequent outbreaks of persecution, the lack of information, all led to these writings being sometimes confused with genuine apostolic works. But despite such difficulties, the collections of “New Testament” writings made in the scattered churches were remarkably similar, and the writings of the early church Fathers abound in quotations from the NT books as we now have them.

(6) The NT Writings were not at first put on the same level as those of the OT. *Clement of Rome* (c. 96) quotes often from the OT, but only occasionally from the NT, and he never calls any NT writing “scripture”. However, only 40 years later, *Polycarp* (bishop of Smyrna) is found often referring to the NT books, and giving them an authority at least akin to that of the OT. At about the same time also, *Papias* (bishop of Hierapolis) began to quote from the gospels, using the biblical formula “*it is written*”.

(7) The first recognised “New Testament” was gathered by a heretic! It was a collection of only 12 books put together by *Marcion*, a wealthy ship-builder turned religious leader, after he was excommunicated in A.D. 144. Marcion rejected the OT in its entirety. His list implies the existence of other books that were reckoned canonical by the orthodox churches, but which he scorned. Argument over Marcion’s canon drove the church toward formalising its own list of authentic books, although many more decades were to elapse before the collection would be finalised.

(8) By the time of *Irenaeus* (bishop of Lyons, c. 190), there was general agreement that there are only four canonical gospels, and all other gospels were stripped of their authority. His argument is quaint, but it provides convincing evidence of the status the canonical gospels had now gained –

It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the gospel and the Spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side . . . (The) cherubim too were four-faced, and their faces were the images of the dispensation of the Son of God . . . These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those (I mean) who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer . . .⁶

(9) Around the end of the second century a document called the *Muratorian Canon* contained a list of all our present books except *Hebrews*, *James*, *1 & 2 Peter*, and *3 John*. The Canon also refers to some spurious works –

⁶ *Against Heresies*: Bk 3.11.8. From “The Ante-Nicene Fathers,” Vol. One; ed. Robert and Donaldson; 1979 reprint of the 1885 original; Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids; pg. 428,429.

There are also in circulation a letter to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul . . . and there are also several others which cannot be received into the catholic⁷ church, for it is not suitable for gall to be mingled with honey.

The author then refers to a work at present removed from the canon, but which the church in Rome apparently accepted –

We receive also the Apocalypse of John,⁸ and that of Peter, though some amongst us will not have this latter read in the church.⁹

(10) Clement of Alexandria (c. 200) quoted from most of our NT books, but also from other books that are now excluded from the canon; notably, the Letter of Barnabas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas. This shows that at the beginning of the third century the canon was still not fixed. Some works that are no longer canonical were still being quoted as scripture, while others that are now in the canon were by some either rejected or at least doubted. Among the works that were questioned were the two later letters of John, the second letter of Peter, the Revelation, and a couple of others. Nonetheless, toward the end of the second century there is clear evidence that the churches were recognising in the collected works of the apostles a new canon of scripture that should be placed alongside the received works of the OT. This process of sifting out the available writings continued during the third century, and the canon became ever more widely acknowledged and more firmly fixed.

(11) *Origen* (a renowned scholar and teacher, c. 230) quotes in his writings from every NT book, although he did share the doubts expressed just above about some of them (2 *Peter*, 2 & 3 *John*, *James*, *Jude*). He also mentions a few other writings that were apparently still revered in some churches. At the same time, Origen clearly placed the NT collection on the same level as the OT scriptures.

(12) In the latter part of the second century a new movement sprang up in the church, calling for the restoration of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy – which after the death of the apostles had soon vanished from the churches. This movement was headed by a powerful preacher, *Montanus*, and it gained the name Montanism. The Montanists went beyond the NT use of prophecy, and claimed that God was giving them new revelation of truth. This hastened the process of forcing the churches to determine the NT canon.

(13) By 250 A.D. *Cyprian* (bishop of Carthage) was able to list all the present books of the NT as scripture, except Hebrews, *James*, 2 *Peter*, 2 & 3 *John*, and *Jude*. Those books were apparently given a lesser or uncertain authority, probably based upon doubts about their authorship.

⁷ "Catholic" here means "universal"; it has no connection with the later development of the western and Latin "Roman Catholic" church, in separation from the Greek eastern churches.

⁸ The book we now commonly call the *Revelation*.

⁹ The author of the Canon, of which only a fragment now remains, is unknown, although some think it was Caius, who was a presbyter in Rome around the year 200. He may later have become a bishop. The Canon gained its name from L. A. Muratori, who first published it in 1740. The full text of the fragment can be found in *A New Eusebius*, ed. F. Stevenson; S.P.C.K., London, 1968; pg. 144-146.

(14) The position in the fourth century is shown clearly in the following quotation from the early church historian, *Eusebius* –

It will be well, at this point, to classify the New Testament writings already referred to. We must, of course, put first the holy quartet of the *Gospels*, followed by the *Acts* of the Apostles. The next place on the list goes to Paul's *epistles*, and after them we must recognise the epistle called *1 John*; likewise *1 Peter*. To these may be added, if it is thought proper, the *Revelation of John* . . . about which . . . the views of most people to this day are evenly divided . . . These are classed as Recognised Books. Those that are disputed, yet familiar to most, include the epistles known as *James*, *Jude*, and *2 Peter*, and those called *2 & 3 John* . . .

Among spurious books must be placed . . . (*he lists several books*) . . . together with the *Revelation of John*, if this seems the right place for it; as I said before, some reject it, others include it among the Recognised Books. Moreover, some have found a place in the list for the "Gospel of the Hebrews",¹⁰ a book which has a special appeal for those Hebrews who have accepted Christ. These would all be classed with the Disputed Books, but I have been obliged to list the latter separately, distinguishing those writings which according to the tradition of the Church are true, genuine, and recognised, from those in a different category, not canonical but disputed, yet familiar to most churchmen . . .

(Then there are) writings published by heretics under the name of the apostles . . . To none of these has any churchman of any generation ever seen fit to refer in his writings . . .¹¹

(15) By the second half of the fourth century the genuine apostolic writings had nearly all been separated from the spurious, and an almost universal agreement had been reached concerning the canonicity of the 27 books that still comprise the NT. All other writings were rejected on the ground of inadequate inspiration. Included amongst the apostolic writings were the gospels of *Mark* (because he recorded what he had learnt from Peter) and of *Luke* (because of his close association with Paul).

The anonymous letter to the *Hebrews* was also included because of its evident inspiration and worth. Likewise, the question of the apostolic authorship of the other disputed letters had been resolved in the affirmative; and the *Book of Revelation* was accepted (despite doubts that it came from the pen of the apostle John) because the church agreed with its claim to be a "revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to his servants" (1:1).¹²

Thus *Athanasius* (Patriarch of Alexandria) in an Easter letter written to the churches in his diocese in 367, listed all the books of our present canon, and gave reasons for the need of a canon. He also expressed a sensible approach to the OT Apocrypha –

¹⁰ A work written before 150 AD, of which only fragments have survived.

¹¹ Eusebius, born about A.D. 260, ordained Bishop of Caesarea A.D. 314, a friend of the Emperor Constantine, wrote his *History of the Church* in 10 books, probably in A.D. 325. The above quotations are taken from Book 3:24,25 – translated from the Greek by G. A. Williamson (Penguin Classics edition). Eusebius probably died A.D. 339/340. The work of Eusebius is of inestimable value to students of church history.

¹² Note: the author of the *Revelation* does not claim to be the apostle; he simply calls himself John (1:1,4); and the letter to the *Hebrews* is ascribed to Paul only on the grounds of tradition – the text itself is silent on the matter.

It seemed good to me also . . . to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that anyone who has fallen into error may condemn those who led him astray; and that he who has continued steadfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance.

There are, then, of the Old Testament, twenty-two books in number; for, as I have heard, it is handed down that this is the number of the letters among the Hebrews . . . (*here he gives the list of books*) . . .

Again it is not tedious to speak of the books of the New Testament. These are . . . (*here he gives a list identical in content to our present NT*) . . . These are the fountain of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these . . .

But for greater exactness I add this also . . . that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the *Wisdom of Sirach*, and *Esther* and *Judith* and *Tobit*, and that which is called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and the *Shepherd*. But the former, my brethren, are included in the Canon, the latter being merely read.¹³

(16) Nonetheless, that there was still some confusion is shown by the *Codex Sinaiticus*, dated around the mid-4th century, which included in the canon the *Letter of Barnabus*, and also the *Shepherd of Hermas*. A few decades later, another document, the *Codex Alexandrinus* excluded the *Shepherd of Hermas*, but included two letters that were presumed to have been written around the year 100 by an early bishop, Clement of Rome.

(17) Two church councils were held at the end of the 4th century, the *Council of Hippo* (393), and the *Council of Carthage* (397), both of which issued lists of canonical books identical to our present NT, except that some scholars still questioned the *Revelation*, and doubt continued to be expressed about Paul's authorship of *Hebrews* (although its canonicity was accepted). The witness of those councils is very strong, because there is no question about the immense efforts they made to establish the authenticity of each document. Nothing was approved for inclusion in the canon about which there was substantial doubt – either as to authorship or inspiration. Generally speaking, only those books were included that were endorsed by the universal testimony of the churches and by the experience of Christian people. *Jerome* (c. 342-420), for example, although he thought the *Letter of Barnabus* should be included in the canon (because Barnabus had been a companion of Paul), declared that he was willing to accept the canon as it now stands.

(18) From that time, the canon remained virtually unquestioned until the Reformation in the 16th century. At that time, *Martin Luther* classified the NT books into

- the most valuable (*John, 1 John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Peter*)
- the least valuable (*Hebrews, James, Jude, Revelation*)

¹³ *Letter #39*; from "The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," Second Series, Vol. Four; ed. Schaff and Wace; 1978 reprint of the edition of 1891; pg. 551-552.

➤ of mixed value (*the remaining books*).

Luther called the *Revelation* a “dumb prophecy” – which may not have been so pejorative as it sounds, but probably meant that it had nothing of value to say, or that its meaning was undiscoverable. He called *James* “a right strawy epistle”, although grudgingly acknowledging that it did say some good things.

Likewise, **Zwingli** accepted the entire NT canon, except for the *Revelation*, which he thought should be torn out of the Bible. Other Reformers also questioned *James*, *Jude*, *2 Peter*, *2 & 3 John*, and the *Revelation*.

Calvin, after some wavering, finally endorsed the full canon as we now have it. Indeed, none of the Reformers was able to remove any book from the NT, nor add any to it, although they did succeed in restricting the OT to the 39 books of the Hebrew canon. Their pronouncements have determined the content of Protestant Bibles until the present time.

Succeeding generations have found no reason to question seriously the choices made so long ago – in fact the passing years have confirmed the basic soundness of the criteria upon which those ancient Councils and the Reformers made their decisions. The canonical books were recognised, and remain so, because they possess a self-authenticating power that cannot be resisted or denied –

In other words, the books of the NT are not labelled canonical because they were collected; they were collected because they are canonical.¹⁴

Their canonicity is built primarily upon recognition of their inherent worth. Barry Chant has pointed out that just as the greatness of a work of art lies in its intrinsic beauty and power, and not because certain critics call it great, so the books of the Bible have greatness and compelling power within themselves.¹⁵ The church has simply recognised that greatness.¹⁶

(C) CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE CANON

(I) At the risk of tedious repetition, I feel it is important to stress again that while God is the ultimate author of the canon, the task of writing, preserving, editing, and collecting it was still given to men and women – and this task occupied at least 1500 years. That is a long time. During that period many social and political upheavals occurred, and scores of people were involved in the formation of the canon. You may get a better sense of what this means if you imagine that the first pages of the Bible were written in 400 A.D. and the last pages only this year! Such a book could be properly understood only if each part of it were read in the light of the social setting in which it was produced. One of the incredible things about the Bible is that there is so little difference between its various parts; on the contrary, a marvellous uniformity of spirit, emphasis, and message runs through its great diversity of literary style and social settings.

¹⁴ Barry Chant, in an unpublished college text, Authority of the Bible.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The above account of the forming of the biblical canon is brief and simplified. If you wish to research the subject in greater detail, begin with the articles on the canon in any good Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia. See also related articles, such as “Bible”, “Text and Versions”, “Apocrypha”, “Papyri and Ostraca”, “Bible Criticism”, “Pseudepigrapha,” etc.

(2) Christianity claims to be a “revealed” religion, hence there is an urgent need for a God-given canon –

If God has broken the silence in order to disclose his will to man, it must be possible to know with sureness where that disclosure lies. The canon guarantees this; it marks off the boundary between what is revealed, and what is not, that is, between what is human and what is divine.¹⁷

(3) That canon, once recognised, must be held sacrosanct –

The early church did not exercise such vigilance over its canon for no purpose. There is no doubt that the books accepted were regarded as a priceless heritage, and the modern church dares not jeopardise that heritage without the strongest evidence that those who first regarded those books as authoritative were mistaken.¹⁸

(4) Ultimately, questions about the apostolic authorship or endorsement of a particular writing fall before one criterion: is the work inspired by the Holy Spirit? Believing that there is a body of inspired writing, the task of the church is to locate those works, recognise them, gather them together, and preserve them at all costs. If the canon is lost, the church is lost. To ensure its preservation, thousands of martyrs have bravely yielded their lives. We owe them a debt beyond all calculation, and by faith we are confident that our present Bible proves they did not die in vain. Turning to its pages we soon discover for ourselves that it is indeed a God-given book, in which every part breathes with the life of the Holy Spirit.

(5) However, despite this evidence of divine inspiration, it is still imperative, when you are reading the Bible, to remember that it is a collection of books written over many centuries, moulded by many hands. This book has come to us in its present form only after fierce debate and many passionate attempts either to add to or to prune its contents. The Bible did not suddenly appear on the human scene, like some great novel, or a treatise on philosophy, composed by a single author. It is a book born out of the laughter, tears, prayers, pain, conflict, and labour of many generations. It is a book stained with blood, yet illuminated by love. It has in it the throb of living experience. It must be read with a feeling for the people and events that it mirrors. Yet always, behind what is merely local and temporary, there is a timeless message that will speak to the human heart for as long as men and women are born.

¹⁷ The Jerome Biblical Commentary; Geoffrey Chapman, London;1971; art. “Canonicity” by James C. Turro & Raymond E. Brown; pg.516.

¹⁸ Donald Guthrie. I have lost the source of this quote.

CHRISTIAN LIFE

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CHAPTER ONE

LOVING GOD'S WORLD

The most distressing problems many people face stem from their own inner attitudes, how they relate to themselves.

Sometimes their folly comprises a distorted self-love; or else they indulge in an excess of self-hate.

Still others suffer from a love-hate relationship in which they cannot decide whether they like or loathe themselves.

There are comparatively few who achieve that place of easy and gracious harmony, of balanced well-being, which Paul described by the Greek noun "*epieikeia*": "Let all men know your *epieikes*" (Ph 4:5).¹⁹

Translators have difficulty with *epieikeia*, because there is no exact English equivalent. It occurs seven times in the NT, and it is variously translated as: **gentleness, moderation, forbearance, lenience, considerateness, unselfishness, magnanimity, tolerance, fairmindedness, graciousness, big-heartedness.**

In addition, *epieikeia* also has the sense of suitability, patience, probity, clemency, equitableness. Quite a variety!

Perhaps Matthew Arnold came close to capturing the idea Paul was expressing -

"But there remains the question: what righteousness really is? The method, and secret, and sweet reasonableness of Jesus."

That last phrase, "sweet reasonableness," is one that comes very close to the meaning of *epieikeia*. It is the pathway of tolerant moderation. It avoids extremes - or at least, seeks to avoid them, whenever it is sweetly reasonable to do so!

The man who possesses *epieikeia* is magnanimous to himself and others; he is not a fault-finder but a virtue-seeker; there is a graciousness about his life; he walks serenely, a little amused by human follies; he is disposed to be gentle with weakness, lenient with failure, forbearing toward delay, fair-minded toward opposition; he is not harsh nor intolerant, but considerate; he is not governed by emotion alone, nor by cold logic alone; his method, his secret, as it was Christ's is to be ruled by **sweet reason!**

¹⁹ Its grammatical form in this place is that of a substantive adjective, which is read as a noun.

Contrasted with this intelligent moderation, this sweetness and reasonableness, is the life-style of many Christians who settle on one extreme or another, or who fluctuate incessantly between the two. Their lives are unbalanced, immoderate, and lacking grace. They are unhappy with themselves, with God, and with God's world.

I want to look at these extremes in three areas of the Christian's inner personal relationships, and then show you how to negotiate your way through these extremes by choosing the pathway of *epieikeia*.

- **YOUR ATTITUDE TO THE WORLD**

The Two Extremes

What a problem "the world" is to many Christians! And what astonishing steps many of them take in an effort to cope with this problem! Those steps veer from an extremity of abuse to an extremity of asceticism.

There are those who "abuse" the world

The pleasures of eating and drinking, of sex and play, of culture and entertainment, of work and wealth, exercise a compulsive attraction over them. They greedily indulge themselves, denying nothing to their appetites.

The end result of such satiety is self-disgust and the weariness excess brings.

Just as Amnon fell sick because of his passion for Tamar, and violated her, but then found that he despised her - so these abusers of the world lust after their pleasures but then are driven to hate the thing they craved.

Paul describes them:

"Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things" (Ph 3:17-19).

The simple fact is, no Christian should be in bondage to any appetite save a hunger for righteousness.

We are called to live as free people in Christ, slaves to nothing but the will of God. The world is there for us to use but not **abuse** - see 1 Co 7:31, AV, "And they that use this world, as not abusing it."

The same passage in the RSV reads: "Those who deal with the world should live as though they have no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away."

Christ also said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4).

There are those who "abandon" the world

At the opposite extreme from those who too readily give themselves over to worldly pleasures are those who too readily deny themselves pleasures that are lawful - the **ascetics**.

These people try to isolate themselves as much as they can from all that they choose to call ‘worldly’. They develop a deep sense of guilt over the pleasures of eating and drinking; they spurn cultural and sometimes intellectual development; they are reluctant to devote any time to simple enjoyment of life; they may condemn most forms of entertainment, such as sport, the theatre, music, art, films, fictional literature; wherever they can, they avoid involvement in secular life and ignore any opportunity to hold public office.

They think that this withdrawal from life and from dynamic contact with the society in which they live, is an expression of their full surrender to God; they think that this kind of separation marks them off as exponents of holiness; they believe that it is in harmony with the NT doctrine of sanctification.

But is it? What does the NT mean when it bids us to be “separate” from the world, to be “users” but not “abusers” of it?

What “Separation” Means

See 2 Co 6:14-7:1

That passage contains some exciting promises, breathtaking in their sweep, and in the joy they offer. God says

I will live in them and move among them

I will be their God

they shall be my people

I will welcome you

I will be a Father to you

you shall be my sons and daughters says the Lord God Almighty.

If you think about those promises you will realise how broad is their scope. To live in fellowship with God, to know the moving of his Holy Spirit, to be recognised as his beloved children, to be welcomed by him, is to have access to every spiritual resource and to be guaranteed an answer to every prayer.

Here is divine provision! Here is all strength and power! Here is care and protection! Here is the anointing of God! Here is fullness of joy! Here is the essence of all that your heart desires!

But the promise is qualified. Its realisation does not depend solely on God. The recipients of the promise have a part to play. The promise belongs specifically to those who heed the injunction:

“Therefore come out from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you ... (vs 17)

That demand for separation certainly indicts self-indulgent²⁰ abusers of the world; but when it is rightly understood it just as certainly indicts self-indulgent ascetics.

The true definition of “separation” is given by Paul himself through the rhetorical questions he placed before the Corinthians (vs 14-16) from those questions we learn that we should be -

1. Separate From Sin

“What partnership does righteousness have with iniquity?”

It is self-evident that true Christians can never be comfortable with sin. All who name the name of Christ must depart from iniquity. To pursue sin wilfully while claiming salvation in Christ is to risk total alienation from God (He 10:26-31; 12:25). The injunction is urgent: **“pursue holiness, without which no one can see God”**

All that is identified as sin we must abhor and utterly cast off from ourselves. But here arises a difficulty. Sin, we are told, is very **deceitful**. It is easy to become hardened by this deceitfulness so that sin is no longer recognised as such.

I have known people to become so deluded by their own self-justifications that, to them, lying is preferable to truth, adultery becomes pure, cheating is exonerated, slander becomes honourable, and God himself is made the author of their iniquities. They turn righteousness into sin and sin into righteousness.

Perhaps you think that is an exaggeration? But the apostle gives a strong warning against this very peril:

“Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end” (He 3:13-14).

If you want to avoid becoming unknowingly enmeshed in sin, the rule is simple: **cleave to the scriptures**. Do not be governed by your own feelings or rationalisations, nor by any voice or impulse which speaks contrary to scripture. The Bible, wisely and responsibly interpreted, is the only reliable guide to righteousness:

“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Ti 3:16-17).

Resolve, **at the deepest level of your being**, that you will be governed by scripture alone; that the single authority over your life will be God’s word; and that you will heed only those voices which speak in harmony with the Bible.

²⁰ I was about to write “self denying ascetics”, but a second thought caused me to change the adjective to self-indulgent”, for both groups do in fact yield a larger obedience to the demands of the carnal nature than they do to the demands of scripture. Neither the abuser nor the ascetic is true to God’s will. Perhaps it should be mentioned also that I am using the word “ascetic” in a general way to describe any Christian who withdraws from the world to an excessive extent; that is, a Christian who has a false idea of what it means to be “worldly” and “holy”. Some forms of asceticism are plainly from God. John the Baptist, for example, was an ascetic; but he, and others like him, fall into a special category, and their asceticism arises from a specific command of God, a divine call.

Admittedly, that resolution is easier to make than keep, for there are many instructors (among them this Chapter!) which seek to interpret scripture to the people of God - some truly, and some falsely. Each one of us is also capable of reading the Bible through the distorted perspective of prejudice and self-will, thus extracting from the sacred page ideas that are foreign to it.

Evasion of deception by false teachers, by self-delusion, or by immature understanding, depends finally upon the growth of wisdom that experience brings. But a firm commitment to make scripture alone your real mentor is the best beginning toward attaining that wisdom.

2. Separate From Darkness

“What fellowship does light have with darkness?”

(a) Do not love the world

“Darkness” may be a synonym for many things, but I am going to limit it here to that aspect of “the world” which John referred to when he wrote -

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever” (1 Jn 2:15-17).

We are told not to love the world. But what world? The world of politics, art, music, sport, literature, science, school, family, government?

Before we can be separated, we must know precisely what we are to separate from. Nor are we left to guess. John himself defines the “world” he is talking about: it is the “world” that contains **“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.”**

“Lust” and “pride” - those are the characteristics of the world toward which the Christian’s heart must remain cold. It is the world of fornication, of malice, of covetousness, of arrogant self-will. It is the world produced by Satanic wiles and human rebellion. It is the world antagonistic to the goodness of God, scorning the mandate he has given the human race to go and subdue the earth and to fill it with fruitfulness.

All that men do in obedience to that mandate, or in the proper use of God’s gifts, whether done consciously or unconsciously, is excluded from this God-rejected world. In other words, the expression “world” is used here in a limited sense. It does not mean the whole earth and all that is in it, but only that part of human society and behaviour that is at war with God.

Paul offers similar distinctions. He describes those things that characterise the forbidden “world”; he calls them “works of the flesh”: **“immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like”** (Ga 5:19-21).

I have met Christians who would not enter a theatre to see a good film or play, because they judge those things “worldly”, yet who are shamelessly selfish and greedy; they would disdain a supposedly “worldly” jazz concert, or a symphony, but fail to notice their anger and envy.

They are so proud of their “holy” avoidance of what they mistakenly call “the world” that they never discover how worldly they really are in the scriptural meaning of the term. They strain out gnats but swallow camels. They are latter day Pharisees.

A concert, a book, a meal, a pleasure, an activity, a sport, a relationship, a job, a garment, may all be proper in some settings and improper in others. Any one of those things may sometimes be a focal point for lust or pride, but at other times they may be innocent of guile. To make a blanket rule, “thou shalt not enter a theatre, nor seek public office, nor read a novel, nor wear jewellery, nor watch TV, nor follow a sport, nor eat such foods, nor drink such drinks” (and the like), is not holiness but immature legalism.

Paul gives a better criterion: *“Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things”* (Ph 4:8).

Notice the pronoun “whatever”, repeated six times. “Whatever” meets the standards set by the apostle, whether inside or outside the church, is a fit object for Christian contemplation. “Whatever” embodies genuine excellence, “whatever” is praiseworthy, may be confidently pursued.

It seems to me that this all-embracing pronoun banishes completely the false dichotomy many Christians create between the “secular” and the “sacred”. That distinction does not exist in scripture. An important group of references reveals a better approach

(b) Secular versus sacred?

Many Christians are still imbued with the suspicious fear many ancient philosophers had of the physical world, including natural pleasures and the human body.

The biblical authors did not share this aversion -

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps 24:1)

That statement is typical of the joyful celebration of God’s world found everywhere in scripture. There is indeed a “world” that lies in sin; it is the world of corruption, the result of man acting in rebellion. But the larger world remains God’s. Our beautiful earth and all its fullness still rests under the divine benediction: “Behold, it is very good” (Ge 1:31). Man is still fulfilling the divine mandate when he goes out into that world, seizes its “fullness”, and shapes and subdues it to create his homes, his cities, and his culture (Ge 1:28-30). That ancient mandate is still operative and it is still being honoured by God.

Paul quoted Ps 24:1 in an interesting connection:

“Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience; for, ‘The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’” (1 Co. 10:25-26)

It is plain that Paul had not surrendered the earth to the ungodly! Everything in it, except sin, was still God’s, and could be received by Christians with thanksgiving.

Paul related that principle specifically to food, but there is no reason to doubt that he would have applied it to any matter about which people had unnecessary scruples. Whatever was sold in the market place of life could be purchased, so long as it conformed to the criteria of truth, honour, justice, purity, loveliness, graciousness, excellence, and worthiness (Ph 4:8). To raise questions on the ground of conscience about such things is to call unholy what God still pronounces holy.

Paul goes on to ask: “Why should my liberty be determined by another man’s scruples? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?” (vs. 29-30).

Again he is speaking about food, but the principle is readily applied to a wide range of pursuits, activities, and pleasures that more scrupulous souls seek to ban. He concludes: “Whether you eat or drink, **or whatever you do**, do all to the glory of God” (vs. 31).

If the earth and all it contains is the Lord’s; if Christians are bidden to receive all things with gladness, including the produce of the land and of the city; if Christians are free to enjoy all that is true and lovely, gracious and excellent, honourable and worthy; then any attempt to distinguish between sacred and secular is misinformed. If these things are all God’s, then they are all sacred, whether fashioned by godly or ungodly hands. Fallen humanity obeys God unwittingly, **but it obeys him nonetheless! All that he gives me, by his own hand or by the hand of men, is sanctified by my faith and by my thanksgiving.**

However, Paul does lay down another guideline

There are things good in themselves, in which I could normally participate freely, but which may sometimes not be expedient or profitable, or which may offend another person -

“‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour ... (Many) look after their own interest, not those of Jesus Christ ... ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be enslaved by anything” (1 Co 10:23,24; Ph 2:21; 1 Co 6:12).

Paul is very bold when he writes, “All things are lawful for me.” There are not many exclusions there! He takes it for granted that things sinful and corrupt are omitted; but otherwise virtually everything in the world is permitted to him. He has a wonderful liberty of conscience. He is not haunted by gloomy apprehensions of “worldliness”!

But there are some imperatives by which he decides his actions day by day

will this thing be helpful or deleterious to him; will it promote or hinder his health and true happiness, and especially the interests of Christ; will it tend to build up or cast down?

will this thing draw him into self-seeking, or will it enlarge his affections toward others and enhance his ability to help them; is it a pleasure simple and innocent, or is it gained at the expense of others; is it a sensible recreation or an act of greedy self-indulgence?

will this thing strengthen his liberty in Christ, or will it bring him into physical, mental, or spiritual slavery?

will this thing violate the law of love which obliges him to be careful of his neighbour's feelings and not to cause offence deliberately? In a case such as that he would not so much as eat a plate of meat until the sensitive person was no longer present (1 Co 8:7-13; 10:28-29).

“All things are yours, whether ... the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's” (1 Co 3:21-23).

In connection with the events and opportunities of day by day life, that is one of the most satisfying verses in the Bible. **God has given us his world to enjoy!**

Whatever is a proper part of human experience the Christian should be able to embrace with a pleasure far beyond anything the ungodly know. Nobody should enjoy as Christians can all the pleasures of eating, sleeping, loving, working, playing, giving, receiving - in a word, the real pleasures of life. Above all people, Christians should find happiness in music, literature, art, and all forms of cultural expression. Even death and the unknown future are part of the zest of life for those who recognise them as God's gift.

All things are mine! The ungodly may not realise it; but if they build a great city, they build it for me; if they sing a lovely song, they sing it for me; if they create a noble sculpture, it is designed for my pleasure; if they erect a fine hospital, establish a well-stocked market, set up a just government, invent a useful machine, write a good book, print a truthful newspaper, establish a responsible radio station, send an informative TV picture - whatever they do that is good, **God gives it all to me!**

This is my Father's world; those things are all my Father's creations (though wrought by ungodly men as his unknowing servants); I am free to take from them what I will with thanksgiving and to bring him glory in their use.

Are you not as free as I?

(This study is continued in the next Chapter)

PARENTING ON PURPOSE

Stan E. DeKoven, Ph.D.

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Chapter 4

The Word on Disciplining

In Proverbs 23:13 it says, *“Do not hold back discipline from the child. Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.”* Most parents say, Amen! Verse 14 continues *“You shall beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from hell.”* Also Prov. 13:24 says, *“He who spares his rod, hates his son. But he who loves him, disciplines him diligently.”* Then Prov. 22:15 says, *“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”* Another, Prov. 26:3 says, *“The rod of correction is for the back of a fool.”*

Many have read these scriptures and have gained from it that it is very important for parents to punish one’s children with spankings. How many parents have been taught this? How many present day parents were raised in the same fashion? Most Christian parents have become convinced that physical discipline is the most important form of discipline for a child. Well, it certainly has its place, but must be kept in proper biblical perspective. The word rod in Hebrew means correction or discipline. If a parent withholds discipline (discipline means to train or teach), if a child is not taught or trained in right living, they will be spoiled.

In the reference above where it says, *“The rod of correction is for the backside of a fool,”* it is in that case a literal rod. But it is for the back of a fool or one who is in absolute rebellion against authority. It was one step away from taking them to the edge of the city and stoning them to death. There was an example of this not too long ago, as seen in the in the young man who was punished in Singapore. Everyone who visits that country knows that they have some very rigid rules. Some of their rules seem strange to the mind of an American. For instance, one can actually receive a five hundred-dollar fine if they fail to flush their toilet. This young man should have known about the possible consequences of violating their laws. Unfortunately for the young man, he was apparently a typical arrogant American. He must have determined that he would not get caught desecrating property and if they did he would just say he was an American and they would let him go. I am sure he learned, as have all foreigners entering Singapore, that whether the rules seem right or wrong they will be enforced, and swift punishment of the “rod” if one is convicted of being a fool will be administered.

As a father, I would not want my child to receive a beating, but I hope my child would not be doing something that would necessitate such discipline. Absolute rebellion against known authority is foolish and demands a strong response. Even the eminent psychologist James Dobson agrees that defiance deserves a strong parental reaction. Absolute defiance against legitimate authority deserves physical correction because there appears to be a direct nerve connection from the buttocks to the brain. However, only if it is clearly rebellious defiance, not mistakes, should such severe discipline be given. Most of what children are corrected for with physical discipline is for behavioral mistakes, or is out of their own frustration. How this occurs and what can be done to correct an inappropriate response will be explored in detail

later. The tragic fact is that parents can unknowingly teach negative and destructively violent patterns when physical correction is poorly and inappropriately administered.

Now, let's look at two more passages of scripture. Mark 10:13 presents Jesus blessing the little children. Through these scriptures one can see a clear picture of God's plan and purpose. Verse 13 says, "*And when they were bringing children to him so that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.*" Obviously, Jesus was enjoying himself. He was more than welcoming to the children and gladly received them.

This was probably not the first time this had occurred, and was most likely a common custom of Jesus. It was not common for Rabbi's or master teachers to touch children or have much to say or do regarding their care. As is true in the vast majority of cultures today, parenting was the active responsibility of the mother. Mom's dealt with children, dads were occupied with philosophical hyperbole. In the passage of scripture referred to above, Jesus is breaking an old model and establishing a new pattern and priority. The new model can be summarized in the statement, "When Jesus saw this, he was indignant." He wasn't ignorant. He was angry. He was most disappointed at his disciples' lack of sensitivity and awareness of Kingdom priorities. How dare they stop what Jesus was doing? The disciples were missing the whole point. Their primary responsibility was to watch Jesus, observing His way of operation, so that in the future the disciples could repeat similar patterns. The disciples appeared to be more concerned with image, as it were a political/religious correctness than to see the fulfillment of the purposes of God.

Essentially, Jesus was modeling what discipleship is all about, and further what attitude towards children is required for parenting on purpose to be effective. Most parents would love to have their children follow their positive patterns, and emulate them in the future. If a parents' focus has been to have their children not to become like they are, there must come a shift in thinking. Many parents carry in their mind a defensive, negative, resistant posture. Rather, parents need to declare, "I want to be the kind of person that would be pleasing to God so that my children will follow me, and thus their lives will be much better than mine." What a vastly different paradigm (belief system that one operates from) shift this is. This modified form of thinking will most certainly change their perception of their role as parents. In other words, if one is able to parent with a purpose, they must be willing to change.

Jesus goes on to say (in the authors paraphrased version), "permit the children to come to me, do not stop them, allow them to keep coming. Do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." In Jesus' teaching he is saying to them, look, you need to see children from a different light. Do not view them as little more than a nuisance to the work of God. But see them as I see them; see them as the Father sees them. Children are what the Kingdom is all about. These children are precious, important, to be loved, nurtured and of course as parents, one's ultimate responsibility is to bring children to Jesus, never to hinder them. The greatest hope for all mankind is to learn from the parent of all parents, God the Father as demonstrated through Jesus Christ.

The Blockage

An unfortunate truth is that the inconsistent lifestyles of the average Christian (and more tragically, many spiritual leaders) actually hinders peoples desire to know the Lord. Just as children look at parents as God-like figures, so they look at their parents' behavior in church versus home. Where inconsistency is consistent, the child must decide which is real. Generally, they will believe the parents' action more than the words. Also, children observe

their pastors and other leaders in the church, seen as surrogate fathers and mothers, second only to God Himself. For this reason, it is vital to encourage consistent patterns in parenting and in ministry to children, to provide proper care for the emotional and spiritual needs of the child. Children's programs are not developed so that the parents will attend church, undisturbed. The ministry to children, conducted within the local church, and their care is the primary focus of parenting on purpose.

Jesus continues his instruction "Let them come for the kingdom is as such as these. Truly I say to you, 'whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter at all.'" Then it says, "And he took them in his arms and began blessing them, laying his hands on them." Jesus was comfortable enough with himself and with children to touch them in loving ways. Children need to be touched, they need to be loved, and they need to be included. Jesus modeled this loving affection towards children so His disciples and subsequently all of His followers throughout the ages would follow His pattern. It is through loving, appropriate touch, which affirms and builds the self-esteem of children.

Inclusion

I remember many, many times, observing our children as they would sit amongst the adults as conversations were occurring. Some of the other parents would become somewhat annoyed when I allowed their presence. My children would merely sit, saying nothing. But occasionally we would observe them becoming noticeably giddy and excited. It wasn't because they understood what was going on, they generally had no clue. The giddy joy of childhood manifested because they were included in the family circle. This made them feel very, very significant and worthwhile, setting in motion the learning process of relating in the adult world.

They belonged. One of the greatest needs in society is a sense of belonging. Often church life segments or divides children from their parents. This model did not exist until the 1960's. If one were to review history, churches had Sunday school programs that were evangelistic outreaches, generally held on Saturdays. They started with the Salvation Army as outreaches to children. Up until then, families came to church as a unit. Children learned to behave in church from mom and dad, who were right there with them. If a child was crying or acting in a disobedient fashion, they were carried outside for attention. When the crying was over, the parents would bring him or her back to join the family and the family of God. In theory, Children's Church programs have their place. They are excellent for outreach purposes as well as for parents that are unable to care for their children, or are seeking God themselves. For the rest of the body of Christ, it would be most appropriate to mature enough to take greater responsibility for the care of the precious children.

Another Example

Whenever we were invited to visit a couple who said, "by the way we really do not want the children to come," we would politely excuse ourselves from the event. Except for special occasions, if the children were not welcome, we did not go. Sometimes parents need to be out on their own, but as much as possible, the children need to understand that they are of high priority to their parents. If gain a proper sense of their importance, not omnipotence (it must be in balance), there are much fewer problems with them in the future. Jesus was providing to our generation a model to follow. Children should be cared for. Include them, bless them, and put loving hands all over them. Make them feel loved, warm and special. It pays great

dividends, but it does not matter if it pays a dividend, do it because the Father loves them, and out of obedience to the Lord and His word.

Another Passage

Paul teaches, repeated in more than one place, the importance of marriage and family life. A brief review of the key passage from the book of Ephesians (5:22-33) will provide his very important slant on this most important issue.

Paul is writing to a Greek church that most assuredly did not have the foundation of faith as expounded in the Old Testament canon, the law and the prophets. He is writing to men and women with a philosophical/cultural belief system that reduced the worth of children, and treated the function of parenting as a necessary evil. As Greeks, they had been raised with humanistic, Hellenistic and materialistic models of rampant infidelity and easy divorce. Broken homes were the norm, child sexual exploitation common. Paul emphasized in his writing the importance of biblical models, teaching the importance of husbands loving their wives, wives submitting to their husbands, showing respect and honor to one another. He also speaks to the needs of children. But first, the whole teaching in proper context will be most helpful to a full understanding.

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. 31 For THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 5: 22-6:4, NAS)

Even a cursory review of this passage tells the church of the importance of the family in God’s economy. The care for children flows from the heart and purposes of the Lord Jesus through the parents (who hopefully are living in a healthy relationship with one another) to the children. More will be said about the parents later. For now the focus is on the children.

Chapter 6:1 says, “Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.” It is right for children to obey their parents, a task that must be learned from an early age. Again, to obey is better than sacrifice. All of one’s burnt offerings, all the time put into church, all the money given to charity does not matter unless one is obedient to the Word of God. Therefore,

parents are to teach one's children to obey. But recognize, it is not easy for children to obey when the rules are either inconsistent or parents are unreasonable, especially in light of their developmental skills. If a parent were to ask a seven-year-old to do a certain task that is beyond their capability, the child will become discouraged. The children will either quit or not do what is requested because they are not capable of the task.

When children are asked, or urged, to function above their ability, and the children exhibit an inability to do so, parents often react by saying, "I told you to do it," and deal with the child as if they have a discipline problem, when most likely they do not. If a child is not developmentally ready, has not been properly trained to be able to do what they are asked, he or she will learn discouragement and failure, anger and resentment. Parents may assume that the child knows what they are saying and the meaning of the message or request. That is not a good assumption. Parents must ensure that they communicate with their children clearly, so that they will understand what's expected. Further, the parent should also see to it that their child has the capability of doing what is requested. If they know what's expected, and they are developmentally able to accomplish the task, and it is reasonable, one can reasonably assume that the child should and will obey. If they do not, then it may become a discipline problem, which will have to be addressed. The topic of discipline will be discussed in great detail later in this volume.

The Bible says, "*Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise.*" To honor means to show due respect. Children must learn to show their parents and all caring adults, the respect that is due them. For example, as I teach, I share stories about my mom and dad. They know what the stories are and have given me permission to share. If my mom and dad were to walk into a seminar of mine, I would still share the same stories and they would laugh right along with everyone else. I would never introduce them as the "two crazy folks that I lived with." I would introduce them by saying, this is my father, his name is Ron, and this is my mother, her name is Louise. I would honor them as my parents and speak of them with a positive sense of pride. I love and admire them for the people they are and for the fact that they are my parents.

This does not mean that I approved of or am happy about everything that they did. It does not mean that I feel good about all the decisions they made in terms of their discipline of me when I was a child; I do not. Many times their discipline was inappropriately applied. The wrong committed was done out of ignorance, not out of maliciousness. Having dealt with the past years ago, with ample forgiveness allowed, we love each other now more than ever. I will always honor them, for in spite of what has happened in the past, or may occur in the future, they still deserve honor. In doing so, I become eligible to receive God's promise for me and help establish a positive role model for the next generation.

Pass it On

All parents must teach their children that a person has a right to express their feelings, but must learn to do so with respect. It is alarming how many children do not know how to introduce their mother or father publicly. They have never learned how to properly address other adults or children. If one lives in the South, from Texas on, in the area of the United States known as the Bible belt, every little boy and girl knows exactly how to introduce their parents. They use yes ma'am, no ma'am, and yes sir, no sir. They are taught that respect is expected. Showing such respect to an elder is a core value of the culture, and a primary component of their lifestyle.

Of course, families from the South can be as dysfunctional as families from any other part of the country, sometimes worse. But, they do have a basic understanding of respect and honor. The system of respect sets the stage for true love to develop. Respect is the foundation of true love. God wants all adults and children to, “show honor to our parents, that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.”

Then the passage addresses fathers. When it says fathers, it is not just speaking about the biological father. It can be mothers as well, or any adult in a position of authority or influence in a child’s life. “*Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4 NIV). In Col. 3:21 it says, “*Fathers do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.*”

Parents provoke their children to anger when they have either asked them to do something that they are not capable of doing or have set an expectation on them that is too great for them to handle. This creates initial frustration, leading to anger.

Children become easily frustrated. Children will express anger because they are children. Exasperation is not the normal frustration that children and teenagers experience. The type of anger which leads to discouragement (internalized, unresolved anger and hurt), can be created when parents lay trips on their children, requiring them to do things they are not capable of. Another way in which parents can discourage their children is to force them to live up to certain standards that are impossible for them to achieve. When parents’ lack understanding about the specific needs of their child, in terms of their place and time of life, (such as the importance of peer relationships during the teen years) the stage is set for acted out anger often called rebellion.

In some cases parents will provoke their children to anger by knowingly or unknowingly violating their natural boundaries. For instance, a child who is physically or otherwise abused experiences a tremendous violation of boundaries. The child is rightfully going to be angry. Since children do not know how to respond to parental abuse, they tend to internalize its message of rejection and betrayal, becoming discouraged, living in denial and ultimately facing a life of depression or other symptoms. These symptoms generally require significant pastoral care and counseling. Thus, fathers or parents must be careful not to discourage their children. Conversely, children are to be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). This means to provide, to the best of ones ability, unconditional love and discipline. These two key components of parenting on purpose will be discussed in detail in a later section.

The goal of all parenting is to raise a child to be mature enough as adults to respond to life as responsible citizens. Maturity includes the ability to delay ones gratification, work towards greater goals, be other oriented rather than self-absorbed, etc.

In order for parents to establish patterns of maturity in their children, it requires a concerted effort, provided over time and according to the developmental needs of the child, as discussed in the next chapter.

“These words which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your sons, to your daughters, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Leaven-Like Evangelism

HARVESTIME INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

This course is part of the Harvestime International Institute, a program designed to equip believers for effective spiritual harvest.

The basic theme of the training is to teach what Jesus taught, that which took men who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc., and changed them into reproductive Christians who reached their world with the Gospel in a demonstration of power.

This manual is a single course in one of several modules of curriculum which moves believers from visualizing through deputizing, multiplying, organizing, and mobilizing to achieve the goal of evangelizing.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE MESSAGE

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Write the Key Verses from memory.
- Define "Gospel of the Kingdom."
- Summarize the basic elements of the Gospel.
- List four ways the Gospel is universal.
- Explain why the Gospel is powerful.

KEY VERSES:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:3-4)

INTRODUCTION

God has a special plan for reaching the world with the Gospel. Jesus revealed this plan when He told His disciples. . .

. . . Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

This verse reveals several things about God's plan of evangelism:

- Jesus Christ is the content of the message.
- Disciples are the messengers of the Gospel enabled by the powerful force of the Holy Spirit.
- The whole world is to be the recipient of the message.

In this lesson you will learn about the content of the Gospel message. In Chapter Four you will learn about the messengers of the Gospel who are believers empowered by the Holy Spirit. Chapter Five explains how the messengers are to communicate the message and Chapter Six concerns the people who are recipients of the message.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Jesus said:

And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14)

The message of evangelism is the Gospel of the Kingdom. The word "Gospel" actually means "good news." When we speak of the Gospel in a Biblical sense, it refers to the good news of the Kingdom of God and salvation through Jesus Christ.

In Romans 1:1 the Gospel is called the "Gospel of God." In Romans 2:16 it is called "Paul's Gospel." In Romans 1:16 it is the "Gospel of Christ." There is no contradiction in these verses because God is the author of the Gospel, Christ is the theme, and man is the recipient.

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE GOSPEL

In I Corinthians 15:1-4, the basic elements of the Gospel are given by Paul:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4)

The basic Gospel message is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, and He rose again according to the Scriptures. In its narrowest sense, the Gospel can be summarized in the message of John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

In its widest meaning, it includes all that Jesus taught His disciples:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. . . (Matthew 28:18 and 20)

Men must be told about the Kingdom, challenged to enter it, and trained how to live as Kingdom residents.

The Gospel we preach is not a social gospel to reform society, but the Gospel of God to redeem sinners. The message of the Kingdom must include a call to repent from sin:

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the Gospel. (Mark 1:14-15)

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)

(If you do not understand the basic principles of the Kingdom of God, obtain the Harvestime International Institute course, "Kingdom Living.")

A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The most important word in the Gospel is the word "whosoever." It was used by Jesus (John 3:16), Paul (Romans 10:13), and John (Revelation 22:17). The Gospel is for all men of all races, cultures, tribes, and nations. It is a universal message for four reasons:

1. Sin is universal: Romans 3:23
2. The offer of salvation is universal: I Timothy 2:4
3. The command to repent is universal: Acts 17:30
4. The invitation to believe is universal: Romans 10:9-11

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

There is great power in the Gospel message. Paul said:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. (Romans 1:16-19)

These verses reveal why the Gospel is powerful. It is powerful because:

- It is the revelation of God's power to man.
- It brings salvation to all men, regardless of race, color, or creed.
- It reveals that which may be known by men about God.
- It reveals the judgment and wrath of God against sin.
- It reveals the righteousness of God.
- It shows how to be justified (forgiven, restored in right relationship to God) by faith.
- It is the basis of the faith by which we live.

THE DEMONSTRATION OF POWER

The Gospel must be preached and taught, but it must also include the demonstration of the Kingdom of God in action. Jesus told His followers:

. . . as ye go, preach saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. (Matthew 10:7-8)

The message of the Kingdom is not in words only. The demonstration of God's power must accompany the verbal presentation. This was evident in the example set by Jesus:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (Matthew 9:35)

And the people, when they knew it, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. (Luke 9:11)

The demonstration of power--miracles and healing--is the Kingdom of God in action. It is to be part of the message of evangelism. Paul said:

For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (I Corinthians 4:20)

SELF-TEST

On a separate sheet of paper answer the following questions

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.
2. Define the "Gospel of the Kingdom."
3. What are the basic elements of the Gospel?
4. List four ways the Gospel is universal.
5. Explain why the Gospel is powerful.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. For further study about the Kingdom of God, obtain the Harvestime International Institute course entitled "Kingdom Living."

2. Read II Kings 4:29-37. This is the story of how Elisha raised a child from the dead. Read the background of this story in II Kings 4:8-17. This child was a miracle baby, given in answer to Elisha's prayer and the request of a woman of Shunem who had shown the prophet kindness. The record of the child's death is given in verses 18-20. The exact cause of death is not given. It is possible it was from some type of stroke since the child complained of his head.

This story is a natural example from which spiritual truths regarding evangelism can be drawn. Evangelism is like raising the dead because you save people from the eternal destiny of spiritual death. The Bible says the soul that sins will die, that the wages of sin is death, and that sinners are dead in transgressions and sin.

The following spiritual applications can be drawn from the story in II Kings 4. In order to raise the dead. . .

I. You Must Have Faith:

A. (Verses 20-21) The mother did not just accept the child's death. The tendency would be to weep, call professional mourners, and prepare the body to lie in state.

B. Instead, (verse 21) she laid him on Elisha's bed, shut the door, and went to get the prophet. To understand this, you must read the account in I Kings 17:17-24 where Elijah raised a child from the dead. Taking the child to the prophet's chamber was an act of faith recalling the miracle done by Elijah. She did not wait for the prophet to take him in. She took him in, expecting a similar miracle.

C. God has raised dead men from the beginning of time. Take unsaved people, just as they are, to the place of a miracle.

D. (Verses 22-23) Note her faith when she said in answer to her husband's questions, "It shall be well."

E. When you begin to act on faith, it increases. By the time she neared the prophet, her faith had increased. (Verse 26) When Elisha sent his servant Gehazi to question her, she no longer said it "shall be well." She said, "It is well."

II. You Must Make Haste: Note in verse 22 the woman said, "That I may run." You must make haste to raise the dead because souls are dying in sin.

III. You Must Break With Tradition:

A. (Verse 23) Her husband questioned, "Why are you going?" It was not the traditional time to go to the prophet. It was not the new moon or sabbath.

B. You may have to break with tradition to evangelize in the demonstration of power. People may tell you, "This is not the way we do things."

IV. You Must Have Compassion:

A. (Verses 25-27) The dead will never be raised by "Gehazis" who have no compassion. When the woman came in search of life, he had no compassion and would have sent her away.

B. The prophet showed concern. He asked, "Is it well with you and your husband and the child?"

C. There are people who have struggled "up the hill" to get to us. They are vexed and falling at our feet, yet we thrust them away. We send them to secular counselors, drugs, or rehabilitation centers.

V. You Must Go Where They Are:

A. (Verses 29-31) To help those dead in sin, you must go where they are just as Elisha went to the young child.

B. We cannot send powerless men (like Gehazi) or substitute measures (represented by the staff). To raise us from the death of sin, Jesus came into this world. He came where we were.

C. The mother would settle for no substitutes. Dying men and women can settle for nothing other than the power of God that is able to breathe new life into a dead soul.

D. When the woman shared her need, Elisha first sent Gehazi to minister to the child. But again, "Gehazis"--even "Gehazis" who hold the staff of God, will never raise the dead. Gehazi went ahead of Elisha and the woman, and laid the staff upon the child, but there was no response.

E. If you are to raise the dead, you must follow the master's example. Read I Kings 17:17-24. Elijah, who had been Elisha's master, set the example for raising a dead child. If Elisha had followed that example, he never would have sent Gehazi with his staff to try to do the job.

F. Elisha thought that God's power could work without his personal presence and efforts. We take doctrinal or practical truth and lay them upon the spiritually dead, but we do not personally become involved with them. We try many methods apart from personal involvement, but we will have no more effect upon a lost soul than did Elisha's staff.

G. The letter of the law without the Spirit will never raise dead men. Life will not flow as long as leadership is placing an indifferent hand and staff upon dead men and women.

VI. You Must Recognize The Seriousness Of The Condition:

A. (Verse 31) Gehazi did not really believe the child was dead. He reported back, "The child is not waked." But the child was not asleep. It was dead. Gehazi was not really convinced but spoke as if it were only asleep.

- B. (Verse 32) Elisha knew the child was dead.
- C. Unbelievers lost in sin are not just sleeping. It is a serious condition. It is spiritual death, and they will never be raised until we recognize this.

VII. You Must Not Be Defeated By Failure:

(Verse 31. . . "The child is not awakened.") The first attempt to raise the dead failed. When you fail in one attempt, do not give up. Do not infer from failure that you are not called to the task. The lesson of failure is not withdrawing from the mission, but changing the method. You must follow the method of the master.

VIII. You Must Resurrect Life In The Inner Chamber:

(Verse 33) You must go into the "inner chamber" of prayer, shut the door, and intercede for dying humanity.

IX. You Must Be Endued With Power:

A. As he entered into that inner chamber, Elisha already knew the source of his power. Some time before this event, the mantle of Elijah had fallen upon Elisha. He knew his source of power. It was tried and proven.

B. By yourself, you cannot bring the dead hearts of men and women back to life. God is the source of your power. The mantle of His Holy Spirit has fallen upon you with a baptism of power.

X. You Must Know The Objective:

Your objective is not to cleanse a dead body, embalm it with spices, or cover it with fine linen. These are all improvements, but you still have a dead body. Your objective is not to teach morality, self-improvement, cover sin, or change society. Your objective is new spiritual life!

XI. You Must Be Alive Yourself:

A. (Verses 34-35) After prayer, Elisha stooped over the corpse and placed his mouth upon the mouth of the dead child. He placed his eyes upon its eyes, his hands upon its hands. The warm body of the man of God covered the cold body of the child. If you are to raise the dead, you must come into contact with death. When Jesus would raise us from death, He died Himself. If you will raise the dead, you must feel the chill and horror of that death.

B. One would think the grown man would have to contract himself on a child, but instead it says he stretched himself. Reaching out to dying men and women is a stretching experience. You must leave the comfort of your home and security of your Christian friends and environment. You must go out of your way.

C. As he covered death with life, the warmth of his body entered the child. If you are dead yourself, this will not happen. Placing one corpse upon another is hopeless. It is vain for dying people to gather around another dead soul.

XII. You Must Settle For Nothing Less Than Life:

A. Verse 34 indicates that the flesh of the child became warm. But Elisha did not just settle for this sign of life. It is not lukewarmness we are after, but life! Not mere emotionalism, but true revival.

B. Elisha walked back and forth, waiting and no doubt calling upon God. Then he stretched himself upon the child again. This time, the child sneezed seven times. (The word "sneeze" actually means "gasped"). As he gasped, new life entered his body, then his eyes opened. When dead men and women gasp into their beings the convicting and renewing power of the "mighty rushing wind of the Holy Spirit," they too will experience the new life that flows from the resurrecting power of God. Elijah called his servant and the woman: "Take up thy son." The dead had been restored to life!

Samples

ASSESSMENT

EXPLANATIONS

1. You are not expected to answer the questions from memory. Make full use of your lessons to find the answers.
2. Bear in mind that this book is intended to be a fairly advanced course of study, so you may not find the examination an easy one. However, all of the questions are closely related to the material in your lessons, and by careful thought and study you should obtain a good grade.
3. **The examination is a two part exam. Part 1 uses the “multiple choice” method and Part 2 is a short essay.**
4. The “multiple choice” method and it is difficult in this method to avoid all ambiguity. In other words, if you think of the questions apart from your lessons, it is possible that there may be more than one answer. But within the context of what is taught in your lessons, there is in fact only one correct answer for each question. So always answer the questions in the light of what your lessons teach.
5. Remember than an examination of this sort is not designed to test your personal beliefs, but your knowledge and understanding of what is written in your lessons. You may not agree with all that you find in the lessons; but even if the required answer to a question conflicts with your personal beliefs, you should still seek to answer each question according to what the lessons say.
6. Enclosed with this examination you will find an answer sheet. All of the questions can be answered by filling in the appropriate squares on that sheet.
7. When you have completed the examination, please write your name and address in the space provided on the answer sheet, then return the answer sheet (but not the questionnaire) to the College office.
8. If you have any queries, or would like tuition advice on any part of the course, please don't hesitate to write. The College staff will be glad to help you.
9. Your answer sheets will be graded and returned to you as quickly as possible.
10. The final part of this exam is a 500 to 1000 word essay on the subject “What is the relevance of the five fold ministry gifts in the church today”.

See the notes on How to write an essay at the end of this exam

The scriptures in the Minis' try Gift manual and in this test are based on the Now International Bible. Test answers are also based on this version.

1. Which one of these answers is not a goal that every fivefold ministry gifting should have?

- A. Prepare God's people for works of service
- B. Build up the body of Christ
- C. Bring the body to unity in the faith
- D. Teach all knowledge of the Son of God
- E. Bring all to a place of maturity
- F. None of the above

2. What word(s) is missing from this scripture in Romans 12: 4 , 5?

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many one body and each member belongs to all the others.

- A. Are
- B. Form
- C. Fit into
- D. Seem as
- E. Transcribe
- F. None of the above

3. Which ministry gift did Jesus not fulfill?

- A. Apostle
- B. Prophet
- C. Pastor
- D. Evangelist
- E. Teacher
- F. None of the above

4. What word(s) is missing from this scripture in Ephesians 4:8?

This is what it says: When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave..... to men."

- A. Ministries
- B. Gifts
- C. Callings
- D. Help
- E. The Holy Spirit
- F. None of the above

5. "One sent forth, a sent one" is the definition of which gift?

- A. Apostle
- B. Prophet
- C. Evangelist
- D. Pastor
- E. Teacher
- F. None of the above

6. According to 1 Corinthians 12:27,28, who appoints those who are to be a part of the ministry gifts.

- A. Council of elders
- B. God
- C. The Pastor
- D. Board members
- E. All of the above
- F. None of the above

7. What is another word for the function that is translated in the Bible as 'bishop'?

- A. Elder
- B. Ruler
- C. Pastor
- D. Shepherd
- E. Deacon
- F. None of the above

8. According to Paul, which one of these is not a qualification of an elder?

- A. Temperate
- B. Self-controlled
- C. Lovable
- D. Respectable
- E. Gentle
- F. None of the above

9. What word(s) is missing from this scripture in 2 Timothy 2:2?

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be _____ to teach others.

- A. Caring enough
- B. Able
- C. Equipped
- D. Qualified
- E. Willing
- F. None of the above

10. What two offices were established by God in the local church?

- A. Pastors and elders
- B. Overseers and Bishops
- C. Elders and Deacons
- D. Elders and bishops
- E. Overseers and elders
- F. None of the above

11. An apostle is also .

- A. An elder
- B. A father-figure
- C. A servant
- D. A & B
- E. All of the above
- F. None of the above

12. What word(s) are missing from this scripture in 2 Corinthians 12:12?

The things that mark..... - signs, wonders and miracles - were done among you with great perseverance

- A. An elder
- B. An apostle
- C. A messenger
- D. An evangelist
- E. A preacher
- F. None of the above

13. Which answer describes two areas of ministry that the apostle operates in?

- A. Functions in all ministry giftings and teaches all doctrine
- B. Functions in all ministry giftings and has a father relationship
- C. Has a father relationship and manifests great sign and wonders
- D. Walks in spirit of humility and is a servant
- E. All of the above
- F. None of the above

14. According to Ephesians 4:11-13, how do we know the ministry gifts are to still be in operation today?

- A. We haven't all reached the unity in the faith
- B. We haven't all reached unity in the knowledge of God
- C. We're not all mature
- D. We haven't attained the whole measure of the fullness of Christ
- E. All of the above
- F. None of the above

15. Which ministry gift is this a definition for? "One who speaks for God"

- A. Apostle
- B. Prophet
- C. Evangelist
- D. Pastor
- E. Teacher
- F. None of the above

VISION CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

ON WRITING AN ESSAY

This document deals with writing a small essay of around two thousand words. For longer documents, see our guide, *On Writing a Thesis*.

PRESENTATION

Your essay should be typed if possible, with the lines double-spaced. If this is not possible, then it must be written neatly in ink. Essays that are illegible or unreasonably difficult to read will be returned unmarked. Include a title page, containing your name, the title of the essay, and the date of its completion. Make sure that each page is correctly numbered, and staple or bind the sheets together.

RESEARCH

Even for a short essay you should try to do some research beyond your primary text book, including the study of sources that give a contrary view. If you find it difficult to come up with a theme of your own for your essay, then read a book of at least 200 pages on the subject you are studying and write an overview of the book, with at least three quotes from it. Ask yourself these questions: *Do I agree with all that this book is saying? Do I disagree with some parts of it? Does it contain information that I did not find in my primary Vision text book?* Then include the answers to these and other questions in your essay.

STRUCTURE

Your essay should have a clear beginning (an *introduction*), followed by the body of your argument, and then the conclusion. Copy the style of your VCC text books in the layout and use of headings in your essay. Your introduction should tell what the essay is going to be about, followed by at least two or three main headings in the main argument. This layout will help readers to know what you are trying to teach. Make sure to back up your statements with scripture. The assessor will be looking for three things in particular: *quotes from the book(s) you have read on the subject; supporting quotes from scripture; and some original ideas of your own.*

DOCUMENTATION

A bibliography (list) of the books, magazines, or other sources you have studied or used in writing your essay must be placed at its end. List all your sources of information. Each listing must contain the author's name, publisher, year of publication, page number, and any other relevant information. Also include particulars of any Bible version that you have quoted from. *Endnotes* or *footnotes* must also be used to identify each particular quote (again, follow the style of your VCC text books).

ORIGINALITY

We do not expect your work to be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgment). However, you should include as much original thought or experience as you can. But remember that an essay is not a personal testimony, or biography. Use anecdotes about your own life, or about other people, sparingly.

STYLE

Write in a generally formal style, avoiding slang, or colloquial expressions; but don't be too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Use active sentences as much as possible, not passive. For example, the paragraph just above could have been expressed *passively* thus: "It is not expected that your work will be entirely original." It reads livelier when it is cast *actively*: "We do not expect . . ." But sometimes a passive structure is less obtrusive, as in the first part of the previous two sentences.

METHOD

Follow this procedure. Some of these things may not be applicable to you now, but will be good to know as you progress to higher levels –

- read all you can about your topic, taking notes as you read, and jot down an outline, or preliminary plan, of your essay
- gather primary ideas, based on your own experience and thought
- make sure that your notes contain full details of each book, source, or interview, etc, from which you have drawn material
- if your essay contains quotes from, or passages that closely echo, other writings, make sure to note this in footnotes and/or endnotes (see your text books for examples of how this should be done)
- organise your notes to match your outline (you may find it useful to put each group of notes on separate sheets of paper)
- write a first draft of your essay
- put it aside for two or three days
- get someone else to review it for you
- revise and correct your first draft
- if necessary, repeat the previous three steps, once, twice, or three times
- type out the final version
- type the number of words in your essay on the title page (but unless you have a computer, don't count the words individually; but work out the average number of words on one page, then multiply that by the number of pages)
- send the completed essay to the appropriate office (national, or regional).

FORMATTING

The purpose of the following formatting options is to provide a standard that will assist the student to adopt an academically acceptable standard which will be reflected in their professional life and at the same time made the task of marking the work completed somewhat easier. **If these simple formatting options are not followed the work will be returned to you unmarked.**

Pages:..... A4 portrait

Margins:..... 2.5 cms top, bottom, left and right

Binding edge:..... 1 cm left

Footers and Headers: 1.5 cm Font to be 10 points Times New Roman

Endnotes: 12 points Times New Roman

Footnotes: 10 points Times New Roman

Headings:	Arial of an appropriate size and taste.
Paragraphs:	Double spaced with an extra line of space between the paragraphs
Body text:	12 points Times New Roman
Embedded Scripture:	12 points Times New Roman Italicised indented 1 cm from left and right margin
Embedded quote:	12 points Times New Roman. Plain indented 1 cm from left and right margin
Poetry, Song:	12 points Times New Roman, each line centred.
Header:.....	Must contain the subject course number title and name of student on every page and be underlined
Footer.....	Must contain the page number and number of pages on the outside edge of each page

WORD COUNT

The word count requirement is the number of your own words. We do not count:

1. Embedded scripture
2. Quotes
3. Endnotes,
4. Footnotes,
5. Bibliography
6. Title page

The benefit of this lies in your ability to present your paper with the required word length and your freedom to refer to outside material to support your paper.

Student Study Guide

To be completed in partial fulfillment for the course requirements of:

The Ministry Gifts

Based upon the text:

The Ministry Gifts

by: A.L. & Joyce Gill

Study Guide Developed by:

The Staff of Vision International University USA

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*Lesson One***The Ministry Gifts****I. Summary:**

In two or three paragraphs and in your own words, summarize the theme of this lesson, and make a personal application as is appropriate:

II. Questions on Lesson One:

Please refer to the instructions for answering the questions. Answer the questions in your own words and be sure to add scripture and non-biblical references where possible and include text book Ref (Sub Heading & Paragraph)

1. List the five ministry gifts according to Ephesians 4:11.
2. What are the functions of these five ministry gifts according to Ephesians 4:12-16?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28, who appoints those who are to be a part of these ministry gifts?

III. Lesson Reflections:

In two or three paragraphs and in your own words please relate what new insights you have gained from reading and meditating on the information contained within this lesson.

*Lesson Two***Elders and the Fivefold Ministry****I. Summary:**

In two or three paragraphs and in your own words, summarize the theme of this lesson, and make a personal application as is appropriate:

II. Questions on Lesson Two:

Please refer to the instructions for answering the questions. Answer the questions in your own words and be sure to add scripture and non-biblical references where possible and include text book Ref (Sub Heading & Paragraph)

1. What two positions were established by God in the local church?
2. What distinctions do we see in the Scriptures between elders, overseers and bishops?
3. Describe the functions of elders in the New Testament churches.

III. Lesson Reflections:

In two or three paragraphs and in your own words please relate what new insights you have gained from reading and meditating on the information contained within this lesson.