
Deacon/Elder Lecture Series



**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

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WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91129

JOSEPH W. TKACH
PASTOR GENERAL

Dear Pastors of God's Church:

I am pleased and excited to introduce to you this new Deacon/Elder Lecture Series! Never in God's end-time Work has it been more urgently needed than now, as the Church is leaping ahead in growth in all areas.

Much prayer, thought and effort have gone into producing this material for the benefit of God's Church, and I want every one of you pastors to understand the importance of this program and give it your full support. It will ultimately be of tremendous benefit to you!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong long ago saw the absolute need for an educated ministry in God's Church. That led to the founding of Ambassador College to provide solid leadership in the local congregations. Now, as Church growth again seems about to explode, we must reemphasize the necessity of having capable, trained, well-grounded men to care for God's precious flock.

John 4:35 has become a kind of rallying cry for God's Church. Here Jesus stated: "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

And in Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus told us: "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

This Deacon/Elder Lecture Series is for just that purpose -- to better train the laborers God has provided to reap His harvest in these closing hours of this evil world. God's Church must speak the same thing all around the world. Our procedures and policies must be uniform, our biblical understanding harmonious. This new program will help promote these purposes.

Now, I know that all of you pastors are extremely busy already. I know from personal experience the demands that are placed on the local ministry's time. You may be thinking, "Oh, no, not another set of classes to conduct." But this material will actually give you more freedom and flexibility, by training qualified people to care for many of the less critical needs you have in overseeing your congregations. This program is an investment we all must make in the stable, positive, growth-oriented future of God's Church.

personnel, even those who might be ordained in the near future), and to stress that it is a lecture program as opposed to other forms of instruction. Further, other titles that included phrases like "training" or "leader" were avoided lest people (erroneously) conclude it is intended to be a stepping stone to greater rank. It is intended rather as an aid to greater service to God's people in humility and meekness.

I am aware that some of you have already developed your own deacon or elder training programs. Generally, you have done a fine job with them. However, for the purpose of building unity, and to ensure that we all speak the same thing, it is imperative that you immediately cancel any such program and begin on schedule with this new lecture series from Headquarters. You will immediately see the value in having the entire leadership in the Church simultaneously receive the same instruction, and you will appreciate the enthusiasm that this generates among the men and women. If, however, you have created training materials which you feel are extremely valuable, please send them to us at Church Administration. We will review the materials and add to the new lecture series as appropriate in the months to come.

III. Purpose

The purposes of the series are numerous:


- A. To train the local deacons and elders how to serve God's people more competently.
- B. To teach them how to serve with greater humility, meekness and in a more and more harmonious and supportive attitude toward their pastor.
- C. To let deacons and elders experience the greater joy that comes through better service.
- D. To gain more time for the pastor. This is done in two ways:
 1. By saving him the time he himself would need to prepare these lectures on important subjects.
 2. By, in time, allowing him to delegate in confidence those duties which can be handled by his local leaders if they are well-trained.
- E. To build unity in the Church through us all speaking the same thing.

IV. Goal

The goal is to complete this series of lectures in a time period of from (two to three years), with each congregation teaching the same lectures at the same time.

V. Participants

These lectures are intended almost exclusively for already ordained elders and deacons and deaconesses. (The obvious exception is the ministerial trainee. He should also participate.) A few lectures are limited to elders only. And one or two (only) allow you to include unordained sermonette speakers. Those lectures which exclude deacons(esses) or include speakers are marked with appropriate instructions. Please abide by these guidelines.

 All Church-member spouses of deacons or elders should attend. Nonmember spouses are not included.

Every church area has leading men and women -- perhaps ones even very near ordination -- whom the pastor may want to include in the lectures. We are directing that this not be done. Experience has proven that allowing unordained persons to participate creates feelings that these meetings are stepping stones to ordination or perhaps a sort of social distinction. We wish to avoid such wrong feelings and have therefore chosen this policy with your overall best interests in mind. When and if they are ordained, they will be included in the program.

The question often arises about the husbands of deaconesses, when the husband himself is not ordained. The deaconesses' husbands should be invited to attend, as long as they are members of the Church.

VI. Lecture Materials

This lecture series includes three basic types of material. The first is, of course, a series of lectures. These lectures cover a broad variety of important topics and have been read, edited and approved by Headquarters. (This does not imply they are perfect. Please see below for information on how to make suggestions.)

Some of these lectures are revised forms of certain lectures given in the former Leadership Training Classes. Many are brand-new material written especially for this series. Most will require one lecture to give; some will require two. If they require two lectures, they have been divided and will be sent in two parts at separate times.

The second part of these materials is the Difficult Scripture Outlines. These are simply what their name implies -- short, brief explanations of so-called difficult scriptures given in outline form. Their use will be explained below.

The third part of these materials is Doctrinal Outlines. These are short explanations of basic doctrines which will be used to help insure local church elders and deacons are on a sound doctrinal footing.

The basic format of this series is as follows. Beginning immediately, each pastor will receive one lecture, one difficult scripture explanation and one doctrinal outline each month. Each elder and deacon will receive both the difficult scripture and the doctrinal outline but not the lecture.

The pastor will hold meetings once each month to give the lecture and review the scripture and doctrinal outlines. Although he should normally be the one responsible to hold these meetings, he may OCCASIONALLY delegate the responsibility to his salaried associate pastor if he feels the man is ready for the task. Occasionally, you may even wish to share the class by giving the lecture yourself, and then have the associate take the remaining portion or vice versa.

1 Each meeting should be begun with prayer. Then the pastor should give the lecture from the outline in about one to one-and-a-half hours' time.

2 He should then review the difficult scripture outline in about 20 minutes. How he does this is a matter for his personal style to dictate. It is suggested that he use an interactive approach such as question-and-answer, by using mock visit questions, etc. These questions help to ensure that the men do indeed understand the problem presented in the scripture, as well as the proper manner in which to effectively and concisely explain the correct meaning.

3 Finally, he should summarize the doctrinal outline in about another 20 minutes, asking for questions, making clarifications and perhaps asking a few questions of his own to make sure that his men understand the material.

It is important that we remain within the time constraints listed above. The maximum length of the class will be two hours and 15 minutes. You must be careful not to add too much to the lecture, or talk extemporaneously so long that you run overtime, hence discouraging the participants.

Tests per se are not a part of this series. It has been felt that tests tend to intimidate some of the deacons or

elders, especially the less formally educated ones, and even then may not be a true gauge of one's knowledge or level of service. SELF tests will be included with some of the materials, but they are for the person's own use only and should not be gathered or graded. They are simple and are intended only for review. Please do not supplement the materials with tests of your own. Rather simply review the material with them, and periodically explain to them the importance of reviewing it themselves.

At the end of the meeting, not the middle, you should have a fellowship time which in most cases should include a potluck snack and refreshments. This will provide the class members the opportunity to visit with one another, as well as with you, and to share the valuable information that they have learned. This will be a very enjoyable time, but will have to be flexible depending upon the church area's schedules and activities, and the responsibilities of the participants. You may have a break in the middle but it should be brief and not include food, etc. This is to avoid becoming sidetracked before the working part of the meeting is done.

We strongly recommend that the first class be held, if possible, in the pastor's home. We realize there may be extenuating circumstances which would prevent this. The location of subsequent classes should be rotated among those class members whose homes are adequately large and have the proper facilities. This will depend upon the numbers in your church area. You might prepare a sign-up sheet and ask for volunteers. Please be careful not to offend anyone by demanding that someone host a class. Neither do we want to give the impression of favoritism by overlooking someone who would be interested in hosting.

VII. Giving the Lectures

These lectures are outlines, not finished articles, and thus should be spoken from as if they were notes, and not read verbatim. They are on the whole quite detailed. Therefore, the pastor should set aside preparation time before the meeting to completely read, study and MARK the outlines so he is ready to deliver them effectively. Decide which scriptures you will read out loud, which you will only cite and which additional ones you might wish to add from your own experience. Pray about the lectures before you speak. Make them, as much as possible, your own. This, of course, will take time but it will take only a fraction of the total time that would have been necessary to compose them yourself.

Please use balance in your actual delivery. Since they are outlines, you should feel free to fit your unique personality and perspective and illustrations into the

framework. But you should not deviate materially from the basic content and change the lecture's meaning or purpose.

Every program such as this is, of course, designed with the "average" church area in mind. A lot of pastors don't have average church areas. For example, how can one pastor who has three small but widely separated churches deliver three lectures, etc. each month?

Use common sense in tailoring these instructions to your particular area. For example, if you have two churches many miles apart, consider meeting midway between them, or having everyone travel to one church one month and the other the other month. Or, perhaps you should tape the lecture and have an assistant play it in the other church area on alternate months -- they will have you "live" one month and taped the other. Other workable solutions exist to special problems. Use your imagination, but try to stick to the ideal as much as possible. If you have questions about your particular case, call Church Administration for advice. Mr. Tkach feels the pastor's personal involvement is vital here.

VIII. Work Load

✕ It is obvious that the implementation of this program will require an outlay of time each month. Some pastors will naturally feel that they don't have the time. Therefore here are some keys to finding the necessary time:

Priority -- Mr. Tkach strongly feels that this program must be a priority in the pastor's time schedule. If you make it a priority, then your schedule can be shifted appropriately.

Delegation -- Effective delegation is vital to a pastor's job in this busy era of the Work. Certain jobs simply must be handled by subordinates. When we have determined what our priorities are, then the decisions of what to delegate become more clear. But remember, delegation requires your overall direction and control. Mr. Tkach sets a strong example of balance here.

Long-Term View of Benefits -- This program is not intended to eat up your time. IT IS INTENDED TO SAVE YOU TIME -- LOTS OF IT -- IN THE LONG RUN. Well-trained helpers simply can and do make life easier for the pastor. Take this as an opportunity to invest in the future -- yours, your elders' and deacons' and the whole congregation's. You will be glad you did.

IX. Unique Feature -- Sermonette Assignment

Another feature of this class will help to build unity into the Church as a whole. At least once a month, we will expect you to assign one sermonette during church services to cover the difficult scripture that is being studied and expounded in the class that month. In this way, as you can see, all church areas will be receiving the same material within the same time frame. This will also provide for interesting discussion and fellowship at Sabbath services, as brethren travel and visit other churches.

ASSIGN.



X. Suggestions

We are confident that you will find this lecture series to be very helpful and of high quality. Further, it has been written to accurately reflect Church teaching, administration, doctrine and tradition.

Still, it is not and cannot be perfect. If you have suggestions, please write them up in a brief and diplomatic manner and submit them to Church Administration. We will be producing this program over a longer period of time, so feedback in the early stages will be important. Suggestions will be considered and incorporated when Mr. Tkach and those advising him think they have general merit. Of course, not all suggestions can be used, but all will be appreciated.

XI. Final Comments

I hope you can be as excited about this new series as we are, and that you will display that excitement and enthusiasm as you inaugurate the program. Please encourage the deacons, deaconesses and elders, and their mates, to be very enthusiastic about this program and be wholeheartedly involved with it as they learn to better serve the brethren of God's Church, and to prepare for the potential future growth of the Work.

Thank you again for your diligence and hard work. We hope this material is very helpful to you and to God's people worldwide.

UPDATED
VERSION
3/17

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 1

God's Government and Your Role in It (Part I)

I. Introduction

- A. Chaos! That one word, better than any other, describes this world's political state of affairs. In country after country around the globe, people enjoy no stability of administration or government.
- B. One powerful example at this time is Lebanon, which is a virtual whirlpool of conflicting and bickering splinter groups, each desiring to inflict its brand of living on the others.
- C. Even in countries with relative stability, like the United States, certain "normal" fluctuating forces like the economy, the tax structures and changes of the party in power keep us all on the edges of our seats wondering what will happen to us and our loved ones next.
- D. It is plain that this worldwide chaos is caused, in the end, by one thing and one thing alone -- the absence of a sound, worldwide government that can give order, predictability and peace to this troubled world.
- E. But while the world must wait until the Millennium to learn of God's government, we in the Church should -- no, must -- fully understand it now. And we must not merely understand it in academic theory, but we must understand how we as leaders in the Church can apply it in practical terms today.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain the principles and functioning of God's government, along with your part in it as leaders in the Church.

III. Need

Most of us can probably recite a few of the most important principles of God's government. Because we can, we might make the wrong assumption that we fully understand God's government and then skip on to study other things. Such an attitude is an error of the greatest magnitude, for

more problems in the smooth running of God's Church -- including the functioning of the local church, with its elders and deacons -- can be traced to ignorance of the way God's government must work than perhaps any other cause!

Here are some of the reasons we all must seriously consider a lecture on this topic.

- A. God's government is different from man's governments, no matter what their types. When we learned in school how the government of our country works, we learned nothing of God's government. We must therefore be taught about it. See John 8:23 and 18:36 -- Christ stressed that He was not of this world, nor is His government like this world's, nor from it.
- B. You must work within God's government, since you are a leader in it. To smoothly and harmoniously work within it, you must know how it is to operate. Otherwise you will frustrate yourself and others.
- C. You influence others by it, since, again, you are a leader in the Church. Since God's people will be affected by how you operate, you must be sure you are operating correctly.
- D. You are a representative of it. This means that both those in the Church and outside of it will learn about God and His government by seeing you. How can you represent it correctly unless you understand it in every detail?
- E. You must be able to teach it. Obviously, many sermons, sermonettes, Bible studies and counselings touch directly or indirectly on God's government.

IV. One Possible Definition of Government is "the System by Which the Common Affairs of the People Are Guided"

- A. Those in this world mostly separate their religious life from matters of civil government. They give God a small niche in their lives, probably on one day of the week. In fact, the United States government prides itself on the fact that church and state are separated fully.
- B. But God's government defines a total way of life. It therefore impacts everything that we do. Numerous scriptures show it is a way of living. See Acts 9:2, 18:26, 19:23, 24:14.
- C. We must constantly bear this truth in mind -- that God's government is all-encompassing -- as we study

this topic, so we can grasp the full import of it in our lives.

V. God's Government Now, Compared to God's Government in the Millennium

It must be stressed that the subject of how God's government will work in the world tomorrow is a different topic from the one being discussed here. We are examining how God's government should function in the Church -- specifically how it must function in the local church area now, in today's world.

- A. In this age Christians should be "in" the world but not "of" it (John 17:11-16). This means, in other words, that our body is here in this world, but our mind and our thoughts are not.
- B. In the Millennium God's government will be set up here officially, and hence mankind will be both "in" and "of" that world -- God's world.
- C. Therefore, we are now only talking about the place where Christ's government now exists -- the Church.

VI. The Offices of Authority in God's Government

Every government governs through its officers. Officers are persons charged with the authority and responsibilities necessary to implement the government. It is good to review what these offices are so we can properly respect and obey those who have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:17).

A. God the Father

The supreme commander of the universe. Christ flatly stated that the Father is greater than He (John 14:28). When we compare verses like John 14:9-11 and John 10:30 with a scripture like I Corinthians 15:27, we see that God is not greater in type (they are both God), but in rank or office.

B. Jesus Christ

The head of all things to the Church (Ephesians 1:19-22, 5:23, Matthew 16:19). These verses prove that the statement that "Christ is the head of the Church" is a literal and living fact, and not merely a platitude.

C. The Apostles

From the beginning of the Church, the apostles have held a rank superior to the other ranks of ministry.

Apostles are, after Christ and with the prophets, the very foundation of the Church (Ephesians 2:20). I Corinthians 12:28 -- notice that apostles are "first" -- i.e., superior in rank.

D. The Ministry in General

After apostles, we have the other various ranks of ministry. In accordance with the lists given in I Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11-12 and other verses, the Church has established the following offices:

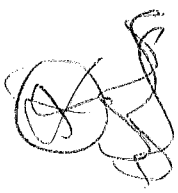
1. Evangelist -- Traditionally the number holding this rank has been small. Often those holding this rank have been ministers for many years and have had broad experience. Many ordained as evangelists hold jobs that require them to supervise numerous other ministers or head an administrative department of some size.
2. Pastor -- Typically, a pastor-rank minister (to be distinguished from "church pastor," who may or may not be of pastor rank) is a minister of greater experience or responsibility than average.
3. Preaching Elder -- This is the rank eventually held by most church pastors. A man should be able to preach publicly. One who is of this rank is considered a "full minister" in that he may fulfill all of the obligations normally required of a minister without direct supervision.
4. Local Elder -- This refers to the first rank of elder, or minister, employed by the Church on salary. In recent years men have usually been ordained to local elders as their first rank of ordination, although they may later be ordained higher.
5. Local Church Elder -- This is similar to a local elder but refers to a local elder not employed by the Church on salary (Titus 1:5). It is an office of service to one's local church under the authority of the pastor.
6. Deacon and Deaconess -- Although not an office of the ministry, deacons and deaconesses are an important part of Church government. Their office is one of dignity and should be accompanied by spiritual maturity. The office is instituted in Acts 6:1-4. Qualifications for the office are found in I Timothy 3:8-13. Acts 6:1-4 makes plain their responsibilities are mainly in areas of temporal (physical) service.

7. I Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11-12 mention the office of "prophet." Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong stated that the office of a New Testament prophet is to reveal a message from God to an apostle. See, for example, Acts 21:10-11. Since no one has fulfilled this role in this era of the Church, none have been recognized.

E. Conclusions Regarding Rank

It is plain from the Bible that God is the author of rank, and that rank means an order of descending authority and responsibility. The teachings of some churches that all ministers are of equal authority is simply not biblical. On the other hand, it is quite plain from numerous scriptures that God's ministers should not "exercise lordship" in a condescending or high-handed manner over each other, but should love one another in a spirit of humility (Matthew 20:25-28).

They should be helpers of the brethren's joy and thus be gentle, patient, kind and understanding. They should follow Christ's example: "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench" (Matthew 12:20, New King James).



In recent months, Mr. Joseph W. Tkach and Mr. Larry Salyer have repeatedly stressed that the ministry must deal tenderly with God's children. We in Christ's service must not fail to give diligent heed to these important directives. These instructions should set the tone of our job as ministers.

F. How Ministers Are Chosen

Governments of this world choose their officers by improper means, such as through voting, grasping power through force, showing favoritism or returning political favors. In the case of churches of this world, many allow their ministers to choose the ministry as a mere career, as one would choose to be a plumber or carpenter. Ministers in the true Church are (chosen by God) (Hebrews 5:1-4, John 15:16) by making their fruits and calling obvious to those already in authority (I Timothy 3:1-7).

Ministers are ordained into service through the laying on of hands by ministers of superior rank. This ceremony shows the submission of the newly-ordained to God's government, as well as the two-way bond of respect, humility and love among God's entire family of ministers. It also reminds us of the extra measure of God's Spirit He gives us as we serve Him (I Timothy 4:14).

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3/87
3/31/87
MEETING no 2

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 2

God's Government and Your Role in It (Part II)

I. Introduction

In the last session we covered differences between man's government and God's government, and defined the offices of authority in the Church.

In this session, we will proceed with the principles by which those in authority govern. Since God's government is His Family, we are really seeing how God's Family is to operate. Remember, too, Mr. Joseph Tkach stresses that God's government for His Family should be (love in action.) God's love plus His Family equals His government. *

II. Underlying Principles of God's Government

Every government, be it of man or of God, has a philosophical base -- that is, underlying principles -- that the government works within. For example, a democracy upholds the principles of equal representation and majority rule. Communists believe in working as you are able and being paid as you need. God's government also has foundational principles. Here are some of the main ones.

A. Authority From the Top Down

God's way is not a democracy. The authority is not from the people or from the bottom up, like in the United States. Such a system has many evils, since in the end it responds to the bottom (Isaiah 3:12). Instead, authority is from the top down. Guidance, therefore, comes from the most qualified in the universe (God) down to those in the Church.

B. Teaching Is From the Top Down

God is the great teacher. He teaches through His government, and He does so from the top down. Truth is revealed to His apostles and passed downward by faithful men (II Timothy 2:1-2, 4:1-3). The ministers must see themselves as a conduit through which truth is to pass from God through Mr. Tkach and headquarters to those below, rather than as sources of truth independent of Pasadena. The people, in turn, are students of those above them, and not committees to vote on beliefs and determine Church doctrine.

This is a much-misunderstood point, even among elders. Elders and assistant pastors are not there to teach or educate the pastor, even though we all should be easily entreated and willing to learn from those under us. But when it comes to God's truth and way, He teaches from the top down. This does not mean that the man above is always more spiritual or even more knowledgeable than those under him (although he probably should be), but merely that the pastor is the conduit through which God's instruction will come, if the pastor, as he should be, is properly plugged into headquarters.

This analogy of a conduit is an accurate illustration of how God works, and should be deeply considered by all. It eliminates the need to evaluate the personality qualities of the one over you, since you can know you will learn what you should, providing the pastor is, in turn, faithfully passing on, not his own ideas, but the truth he learns from those in the spiritual conduit above him.

C. God Is at the Top

The important truth that the government is from the top down is anchored by the fact that God -- not men -- is at the top of the government. This fundamental truth should never be forgotten (I Samuel 8:1-9). As previously shown, God the Father is supreme commander of the universe, and Christ is the head of all things to the Church.

D. God Uses Men

One reason God uses men is to train them for responsibility in the world tomorrow. Another reason is to allow some imperfections to exist which test the faithfulness and submission of those governed. God wants to see if we will submit to men (within His law) even though none are perfect.

Although God is the head of the Church, He does indeed use men, and powerfully, in spite of the fact that all men are imperfect. Read the powerful statement of Moses in (Numbers 16:28). Again, consider the "conduit" analogy to understand how God can use an imperfect man as long as he is faithful.

E. God's Government Is Based Upon His Law (Romans 7:12, Deuteronomy 4:1-8)

This should be self-explanatory, but unless we force ourselves, we naturally tend to accept man's law as correct.

F.

God's Justice System Is Vastly Different From Man's, of Whatever Description

God's justice system is based upon reward, punishment, repentance, forgiveness, grace and faith. Man's system may, like in the United States, depend upon being caught, tried, being "innocent until proven guilty," convicted and punished (maybe). God's system finds a sinner guilty until he repents, then he is forgiven and made innocent. Meditate from time to time upon the utter superiority of God's way and see how it applies in the Church.

G.

God's Government Is Based Upon Love -- Outgoing Concern -- And Treating Your Neighbor As You Would Wish to be Treated (John 13:34-35)

Man's governments are based upon "the survival of the fittest," or upon the "adversary system."

H.

God's Government Is a Government of Faith

In man's government the people rebel or vote their officials out of office if they disagree with policies. The United States uses a system of checks and balances, watchdog committees and inquiries. In God's system, we view God as the real head and the one to set up our leaders and remove them if need be. We have faith that God is able to govern His people through those whom He chooses.

I.

God's System Is One of Perfect Representation

Even in a democracy, the people cannot always reach their leaders with problems. In God's government, the ministers exist to serve the people, and each person can get to his minister when need be. Also, any person can -- and daily should -- "go to the top" of God's government in his prayers to the Father (John 16:23-24). Indeed, communication between the Father and His children is so good that He can read our minds via His Spirit even though we may be in so much turmoil because of a trial that we cannot phrase our prayers properly (Romans 8:26).

J.

God's Government Has a Unique Purpose

Man's governments exist too often just to enhance people's standard of living -- to gain wealth, mostly. God's government has greater and different emphasis. It exists to educate God's people, to spread the Gospel and to serve as the embryo of God's government, which will spread over the universe and expand forever (Matthew 24:14, Isaiah 9:6-7). It exists to establish God's Family in love throughout the universe.

III. God's Government and the Local Ministry

It is vital to the successful running of the local church that each minister fully understand how he fits personally into Christ's government. Here we examine the role of the pastor and his assistants and elders in the local church government.

A. The Pastor

The pastor is sent from Pasadena to administrate the church.

1. He must operate within God's law and the prescribed limits of his authority. He is given greater latitude than many members may realize, but his bounds are clearly defined in various policy statements from Pasadena.
2. He is to teach as he has been taught (Titus 1:9, Colossians 2:5-8). He is not the originator of new truth or new approaches, but a faithful steward entrusted with the truth of God (II Timothy 2:1-2).
3. He must do the will of those who have sent him. Even as Christ did not do His own will, but that of the Father who sent him, a pastor must seek, not his own goals, but the will of those who have sent him (John 4:34, 8:28).

Note: It is often assumed that a minister is sent to "do the best job he can." This is not the case. The best any human can do falls far short of God's way of doing things. A minister is sent to implement God's way, not his own way -- even his own "best." This is not merely a matter of semantics. Solomon said that even when men do their best -- that is, when they do what seems to them to be correct -- that their efforts will end in death (Proverbs 14:12). God has not appointed us to the role of minister because of our great intellect or insight, but because He believes we will implement Christ's way, although it seems like foolishness to the carnal mind (I Corinthians 1:18, 23).

4. The pastor, and all in the authority chain, must know when to pass a decision upward to men of superior experience and rank. In God's government, the judge himself is to be aware of his limitations and send a decision up the lines. Read Deuteronomy 1:17 and 17:8 regarding matters "too hard" to decide.

B. Assistants and Elders

Assistants and elders likewise are not in the church area to implement their own ideas, to teach the pastor or to express their individuality. They, too, must:

1. Teach as they have been taught (John 12:49).
2. Do the will of those over them (who, in turn, are doing the will of headquarters, which does the will of Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, who does the will of Christ, who does the will of the Father). In this way, God's will is conducted faithfully from the Father through the pastor and elders to the people.

Note: For the pastor, assistants and elders to teach as they have been taught, and to faithfully carry out the will of their superiors through Christ, requires each man to humble himself and glorify God. The temptation for anyone in authority is to exalt his own knowledge, ideas and ways of doing things while, perhaps, gloating on his own accomplishments and qualifications. Even Jesus Christ did not dwell upon himself but upon the Father. He said: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). Further, He said, "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7:18). And again, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). ✓

C. Going Above Chain of Command

? When, if ever, should an elder or assistant or deacon go over the head of the man above him in God's chain of command?

From what has been said, it can be seen that the pastor is a key link in any church area. Therefore it is a rare case when an assistant or elder should go around his authority. Here are some guidelines for when it is proper:

1. An assistant or elder should not go over his pastor's head:
 - a. In matters of mere personality difference. For example, he is a sloppy dresser.

- b. In matters of administrative style within the broad guidelines headquarters allows. For example, he puts members' addresses on long sheets instead of neat cards like most men do.
 - c. When the minister has made an innocent mistake or slip of the tongue. For example, he gave a wrong answer to a tithing question but did so without intending to err.
2. An assistant or elder (may) go over his pastor's head:
- a. When the pastor intentionally teaches doctrinal error or heresy. For example, he says the Holy Days are nice but not commanded.
 - b. When the pastor clearly and markedly departs from the administrative policies outlined by headquarters. For example, headquarters says he can take two weeks off to see his family, but he takes two months without permission.
 - c. When the pastor commits a serious sin that threatens his spiritual life or the well-being of the congregation. For example, the pastor commits adultery and it comes to your attention.
3. Caution is in order here -- remember that when one goes over his superior's head, he should be in a good attitude and correct in his facts. No matter what the outcome of such a move, someone's reputation will be damaged -- either the pastor's or the one who takes such action (in case he is wrong). God's government allows such actions, for it is through this means that we can be sure we are never cut off from God by an intermediate weak link in the chain of command. Still, it is a serious move and should (not) be taken lightly or done capriciously.

An important passage in this regard is Matthew 18:15-20. These verses say we should go to a brother who sins against (us) and confront him diplomatically, before deciding it is necessary to go to those over him.

- ~~X~~ Strictly speaking, these scriptures apply to a case when a brother wrongs you (personally), not when he wrongs someone else. A minister of superior rank may conceivably misuse his role and sin without sinning against his subordinates. In such a case, it would (not) be appropriate to go to

him first. For example, a minister who commits adultery could be reported directly to Mr. Salyer. The sin is against God and the Church, not you. However, some sins do affect you personally, such as when he demands you to take some ungodly action. You should go to him first in such a case.

In summary, although Matthew 18:15-20 only demands that you confront a person who sins against you, it is almost never wrong, and often preferable, to go to him first even when he hasn't sinned against you personally. Doing so will almost always resolve the problem!

Note: ~~Those in any position of authority in God's government should make it clear to those under them that they expect them to appeal to a higher authority when necessary.~~

IV. Conclusion

In this lecture we have broached one of the most important topics of the entire Bible. It is impossible to cover every detail of Christ's government and to address every possible situation. Yet, with an understanding of these simple details and a submissive and proper attitude, God's Church can shine as a smooth-running beacon of solidarity in the midst of a world of chaos!

28/4/87
C.O. 1275

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 3

Setting Priorities and Organizing Your Life to Serve God

I. Introduction

- A. "Simplify your life!" -- That brief but meaningful instruction has been given to all of God's Church by Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach.
- B. Mr. Tkach is quoting a directive that Herbert W. Armstrong gave during his life. Mr. Tkach explains this expression to mean that we must SET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT during this critical time before Christ's return. Mr. Tkach strongly confirms this principle as one of the four "mandates" he is putting before the Church.
- C. Truly, it would be virtually impossible for either Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Tkach to make the point more strongly than they have THAT WE MUST BEGIN TO ORGANIZE OUR TIME AND PRIORITIES GOD'S WAY IF WE ARE TO DO GOD'S WORK.
- D. We as leaders in God's Church must realize our responsibility to take the lead by setting our lives in proper spiritual order.

II. SPS

In this lecture we will learn how to set right priorities and organize our lives to serve God and His people the most effective way possible.

III. Need

We have often heard sermons and sermonettes or other lectures admonishing us to set our lives into spiritual order. This fact can cause us to confuse hearing with doing. We can become numb to the need to sort out our priorities and daily schedules. It is good, therefore, to review the reasons why we should focus on such things as priorities and schedule planning.

- A. Herbert W. Armstrong and Joseph W. Tkach have mandated that we should.

We in God's Church believe that Christ is the head of the Church and that He governs through His apostles.

The apostles at the helm in this era of God's Church have both directed that we stop and consider how we spend our time.

The apostle Paul gave this command to the churches in his own day. Read Ephesians 5:15-16 and Romans 13:11. God intended that His Church take Paul seriously then, and He intends that we take Mr. Tkach seriously now.

B. The time for God's Work is short and the job is big.

Preaching the Gospel to the world for a witness is a big job (Matthew 24:14), and we do not have forever to do it. This means we must be focused on our Work and efficient in doing it. Remember Romans 9:28, which states that God will do a "short work" on the earth.

C. Individually, each of our own lives is short.

No matter how long God's Work has left to do His work of preaching the Gospel, each of us has a finite lifetime. Life is short, and the days fly quickly by. Read Psalm 103:15-16. We must therefore "redeem the time."

Remember that the time for us to prove ourselves individually is now. Read I Peter 4:17. Judgment is on each one of us now. Therefore we must give earnest heed to the truth (Hebrews 2:1). We simply cannot allow ourselves to lazily wander through life without a sense of purpose and structure, hoping against hope that we will blunder into God's Kingdom by default. It will not happen.

D. This is the age of distractions.

This world is full of fantastically interesting diversions that can -- if allowed to become out of balance -- simply distract us from our primary goals. Although it is part of human nature to become sidetracked by life's little problems or pleasures, this modern electronic age exacerbates the problem with TV, movies, hobbies and a thousand other (sometimes worthy or worthwhile) diversions.

Therefore we must constantly be vigilant to focus on our primary goals first, and then, after that, allow ourselves to indulge in whatever good pastimes may be profitable in a lesser way.

Read Matthew 13:1-23. Remember how the tendency of people is to be diverted by the "care of this world" (verse 22).

Read Matthew 24:37-39. The end time will find people acting as they did in the days of Noah -- deeply concerned about material cares but oblivious to the important matters of life.

E. God made man to be goal-oriented.

Man functions best when he is focused on a clear goal and directed to a carefully defined purpose. To be so focused requires clear priorities.

Mr. Armstrong so believed in this principle that he made it the first law in the booklet The Seven Laws of Success.

Christ clearly ratified this principle of focusing on a goal when He commanded us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

F. We as leaders in the Church must set the example.

⊗ Mr. Tkach has repeatedly stressed that a LEADER LEADS BY DOING. We who serve the local churches in such key, visible roles are simply ignoring our duty if we fail to heed the directive to set priorities in our lives. See Hebrews 6:11-12.

Special note: Extra detail has been spent showing WHY we need to organize our lives. This is because experience shows many know what to do but lack motivation to do it. When we see the need clearly, then we will motivate ourselves.

IV. False Priorities

Before we discuss how to properly set priorities and organize your life God's way, it is helpful to see common mistakes made by many people who profess to have their lives in order but do not. Below is a partial list of some such false priorities. They are not in any particular order. Also, please note that many of these can be worthwhile pursuits in their proper place, but simply should not crowd out the more important matters that pertain to salvation.

A. Material gain - Possessions are needful but should not be our primary goal. Obviously one must make a living, so a deacon's or local church elder's job should not suffer. But remember that Christ said to beware of covetousness, for a man's life consists of more than what he owns (Luke 12:13-21).

- B. Sports -- Exercise is important, but being the best racquetball player in the district is not. Remember I Timothy 4:8.
- C. Hobbies -- Having a diversion from one's work can be good in balance. But for some, their hobby is their life. This is clearly wrong. The same goes even for outdoor pursuits like hunting, camping, etc.
- D. Status -- Some people place more value on how others look at them than how God looks at them (III John 9).
- E. Overwork -- Nothing in this lecture should be taken as a prod to nor endorsement of overwork. Overwork -- when one neglects his family, his health or other important personal responsibilities for the sake of a job -- is a vice and not a virtue. It is a sign that one's life is not properly ordered. Relaxation and entertainment are important parts of every person's life and should -- indeed, must -- be planned into your schedule. Even Christ took time out to rest and pray (Luke 5:15-16)

V. Setting Priorities

The first step in setting one's spiritual life in order is to clearly define what is important and what is not, and in what order. No one has enough time in his or her life to do everything one can think of to do. Therefore, common sense tells us we must list our priorities and discipline ourselves to follow the list.

Mere lip service is not enough. Probably everyone hearing this lecture could make up the following list from memory, but how many could really state that their lives truly reflect these priorities?

- A. The Kingdom of God -- This must obviously be our first priority. Christ commands it in Matthew 6:33 and elsewhere.

Included within this priority are the spiritual tools we must use to reach the goal of the Kingdom:

1. Prayer
2. Bible study and meditation
3. Fasting

- B. Health -- Often we take our health for granted or relegate it to a much lower priority. But the hard reality is that unless we are healthy we cannot care for any of the following priorities, let alone seek

the Kingdom of God effectively. This does not mean that our physical health must take more time than the following priorities, only that without health we cannot fully achieve the others.

- C. Our family -- Today in our society the family is often taken for granted, and sometimes virtually ignored altogether. This must not be so among leaders in God's Church.

A leader in God's Church is commanded to rule well his own household and have his children in subjection. Read I Timothy 3:4-5. Obviously this is a directive to make your family a priority.

Remember that God is a family name, and our goal is to enter God's Family. If we ignore our family so we can go fishing with the boys, we are making a fatal mistake. Read Ephesians 3:14-15 and see the emphasis on God's Family.

Mr. Tkach has stressed the importance of our families, and the tremendous truth that God's Church must be a family.

- D. Our job -- for those employed by the Church, this means that our service to God's people comes next. For those not so employed, this means that making a living and supporting one's family must come before even service to the Church in cases of irresolvable conflict. ~~11 Thessalonians 3:10-12 makes plain we ought to work to support ourselves and our loved ones. See also I Timothy 5:8.~~

- E. Service in the Church -- Service is a high priority and of great importance. A person who carefully plans his time -- AND LEARNING TO PLAN YOUR TIME IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS LECTURE -- will have a lot of time to do such serving.

- F. Education and self-improvement -- Some people feel that once they have studied their Bible for half an hour, they have received all the education they need. This is not true. All should be actively involved in constant reading and study of other types.

In fact, it is this very truth that led to the creation of this lecture series in the first place.

It is to be hoped that this study will develop greater skills for service in God's Church. This would include more Bible study and study in areas such as history, vocabulary, speaking skills, managing people, etc.

as were poss.

READ BOOKS


- G. Recreation -- This includes all other activities like hobbies, sports, entertainment, etc. This probably needs little comment because we can all think of dozens of things to do with our so-called "extra time."

IMPORTANT -- Rest, recreation and entertainment are necessary parts of life. To ignore these areas is harmful mentally and physically. All leaders in God's Church must realize that rest and a break from normal routine are vital, in balance, to their well being and thus, in the end, to their service to God.

VI. Organizing Your Time

- A. A plan that organizes your time is called a schedule.

Having the proper priorities is the right place to start when trying to organize your life, but without a schedule such priorities are mere platitudes. It is your schedule that disciplines you into maintaining the priorities you have chosen. When you deviate from your schedule, you probably deviate from your priorities.

 Special note: The schedule we are discussing here will in no way dictate bedtimes, times to get up, etc. These are for you to decide based upon your own needs and body clock. But what will be done is to show how to create a practical schedule coupling right priorities with an organized plan to implement those priorities. If you have no such schedule, then your priorities are probably out of control.

- B. How to organize your time.

The proper way to organize your time is to start with the largest segments of time and work toward smaller segments. Therefore the following section will break your time down into large and small segments and suggest how you can use the time to best advantage to live God's way and serve His Work.

VII. Schedule Suggestions

- A. Your lifetime -- The largest segment of your time is your entire lifetime. When we set our priorities, we automatically organize this.
- B. A year -- The next smaller segment of time is a year. God is the author of the year. When we begin our planning by the year we automatically conform to God's system.

When we plan our year, we should, of course, gear our plans around the Holy Days. God's Holy Day plan is a yearly plan. Review Leviticus 23. When we organize our life -- such as our vacations, trips and even our job -- around the Holy Days we automatically set our priorities right for the year.

Israel was organized around God's Holy Days and we should be as well.

C. A season -- There are, of course, two types of seasons: 1) the Holy Day seasons and 2) the weather seasons.

1. Holy Day seasons -- In our planning and organizing for the year, we must do more than merely note the yearly time or cycle of the Holy Days (as mentioned above). We must also remember that the Holy Days fall into certain clumps or groups also called seasons.

A leader should include this knowledge in his planning. For example, the pastor or elder is instructed to preach certain topics in their correct seasons (II Timothy 4:1-2). A deacon should realize that the need for his services may increase dramatically during the Passover season or during the fall Holy Day season.

2. Weather seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter) -- Solomon wrote that there is a time for every right endeavor (Ecclesiastes 3:1). A little planning can go a long way toward helping you use your time to best serve the interests of God's Work without slighting your own needs.

For example, you may find the pastor has planned a YOU trip for next summer. Perhaps you could help if you are able to get time off work without penalty. Maybe your employer will allow you time off if you work extra for him during the Christmas holiday season. Planning in advance like this can be beneficial. This is just one hypothetical example to show how considering the season can make you a better planner.

D. A month -- A month is a natural and God-made division of time.

In ancient Israel, the beginning of the new month was celebrated with special ceremonies that called attention to the fact of passing time (see Numbers 28:11).

Note: These new moon days never had the same status of God's commanded Holy Days and need not be observed today.

Nonetheless, planning month by month is a natural and wise practice. For example, some pastors meet with a core of church leaders every month to plan the next month's social activities, etc. Such planning, whether done in formal meetings or not, is to be encouraged both in the Church and in our own individual lives. It will 1) tend to avoid conflicts in our schedules and 2) allow us to focus on the important spiritual and church-related events in our lives without ignoring our personal responsibilities in other areas.

- E. The week -- The week is one of the most basic units of time management. Again, God is the author of the week. It is a picture of God's 7,000-year plan for man.

The Sabbath is the focal point of God's week and is a commanded observance (Genesis 2:1-2, Exodus 20:8-11). When we view our weekly lives in terms of the Sabbath, we again automatically focus first upon those points that should be our priorities.

- F. The day -- The final unit of time we will discuss here is the day. Often, it is the only unit of time we think of when we think of our need to schedule our time. BUT ONCE WE HAVE ESTABLISHED OUR PRIORITIES AND PLANNED OUR YEARS, MONTHS AND WEEKS, THE PROPER USE OF OUR DAY BECOMES CRYSTAL CLEAR.

No attempt will be made here to dictate personal schedules. Matters such as bedtimes and times to get up are for each person to decide according to his needs, body clock, etc. But a number of important principles need to be brought out.

1. Sleep -- Sleep is an important part of the day. Each of us needs to learn how much sleep we need and discipline ourselves to get it. No one is an aid to God's Work if he or she is exhausted.
2. Prayer -- Prayer, along with Bible study and occasional fasting, is one of the BIG THREE tools that God has given us to stay in contact with Him. They MUST have priority in our schedules.

No two people will pray at exactly the same times during the day, or even the same length of time. The Bible recommends praying more than once a day; David prayed at least three times a day (Psalm

55:17). See also Daniel's example in Daniel 6:10).

In addition, both experience and the Bible show the wisdom of praying in the morning -- before we have begun the rigors of the day, which tend to strain our attitudes. See Mark 1:35 for the example Christ set of rising early to pray. See also Psalm 5:3, where David speaks of morning prayer.

Obviously, this will not hold for all schedules. A man who works the night shift from midnight to 8 a.m. would be exhausted and ready for bed when the rest of us are rising to pray. Perhaps his "morning" will be late in the afternoon when he gets out of bed. But the principle of praying before you start out your daily routine, whenever it begins, is sound.

3. Bible study and meditation -- Bible study should be a daily habit. When possible, setting it at the beginning of the day can help you start off the day with special inspiration. However, Bible study in the evening, when the mind is clear of the clutter of the day, can also be beneficial. If unexpected pressures cause you to miss your Bible study at times throughout the week, then look forward to the Sabbath when you should have extra time to drink in of God's Word. You have an added benefit when you take time to reflect on how to apply God's law in your life. This is the only appropriate form of meditation.
4. Fasting -- Perhaps once a month is a good average. Health factors or special emergencies may dictate less or more often, etc.
5. Exercise -- Many of us neglect this area of our lives. On the other hand, some few get sidetracked into so many sports activities that they become a false priority.
6. Your family -- An important subject of its own. Mr. Tkach has been stressing this subject at great lengths.
7. Your job -- Obviously the bulk of your day must be spent at work.
8. Self-improvement -- As stated earlier, each person should devote some time to furthering his or her education, such as through reading, in areas of interest that directly relate to the higher

priorities of life, such as an office in the Church, a vocation, etc.

9. Rest and relaxation -- None of us can remain physically or mentally healthy without a breathing spell sometime during the day. And from time to time, we need to plan for extended periods of rest, relaxation and time with the family.

VIII. Other Considerations

Setting priorities and establishing an organized schedule go a long way toward using your time wisely. But there are other ways to make the most of your time and hence your life. The following points list a few additional -- but critically important -- tools.

- A. God's help -- We need God's help in everything we do. But we often forget to ask for that help in physical matters such as the use of our time.

Benjamin Franklin said that he worked all his life on organizing his time, but that he never fully succeeded. He had to continually strive for "order," as he termed it. None of us will be able to stick to our schedules perfectly, either. In fact, many of us will not do well at all at first. This is part of human nature. Remember these verses:

Romans 7:23-25 -- We can make resolutions to use our time better, but of ourselves, we really cannot do it. Realize that we must go to God for help.

John 15:5 -- If we try to do it on our own strength, we will fail. We need to learn this in everything that we set ourselves to do. It is only through God that we can accomplish anything of true and lasting importance.

Hebrews 4:16 -- It is God's will for us to learn to order our lives around Him, and He will provide the help we need if we go to Him for it. But we must be earnest (see Matthew 7:7, Luke 18:1-8), and we must go all out to put forth the maximum effort (Luke 13:24).

Matthew 15:21 -- This is what we are striving for -- to have God say to us "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

- B. Focus on a few things -- Some people use their lives to become a jack-of-all-trades but master of none. Those of us who have been called to be leaders in God's Church have received the most precious of all callings. We should therefore make it our goal to

become experts in our responsibilities, even if it means that we aren't going to be the best basketball player in the local YOU adult-team division. That is, we must focus our efforts on the true priorities and see this as an exciting and worthwhile life's project.

- C. Concentration -- Although we focus our efforts, we will accomplish little unless we divorce our thoughts from peripheral subjects while we concentrate on the issue at hand. Herbert W. Armstrong was legendary -- by his own admission -- for having a one-track mind. All of us should be one-track-minded to the degree that we concentrate upon the issue at hand while doing it.

For example, trying to prepare a sermonette and listen to the football game on the tube just won't produce the best results. That is one reason why Christ commanded that we go to a place alone to pray (Matthew 6:6). He knew that distractions would hinder our concentration when we try to talk to Him. The same is true in every area of our lives.

- D. Intensity -- Although we may focus our efforts and concentrate, halfhearted efforts don't produce quality results. Plain old hard work is a learned discipline that we all must acquire if we are to use our time and not simply pass the time. See II Thessalonians 3:10-12.

- E. Delegation -- Those who are leaders in God's Church must lead, but that does not mean they must do every little chore themselves. Many things can and should be delegated. Christ and the Father have indeed practiced delegation when they called us to assist in their Work. Delegation is a subject unto itself and would be a good topic for outside reading. It requires a careful balance between knowing what to delegate and knowing how to control those to whom duties have been entrusted.

IX. Conclusion

- A. "Simplify your life" -- Mr. Tkach and Mr. Armstrong have said this to God's Church on numerous occasions.
- B. They explained this to mean that we should set right priorities and use our time wisely for the best benefit spiritually.
- C. We who are leaders in God's Church must implement this important mandate in our personal lives, to the end that we may set the example and serve the Church as God desires.

Review
2/6/5/8

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 4

How to Give a Sermonette or Sermon

I. Introduction

- A. "Talk is cheap," goes the old saying, and many times it is true. People too often have a lot to say but say little of value, or do indeed say important things but say them poorly.
- B. But the time allotted to a speaker for a sermonette or sermon is far too important to be wasted because of improper preparation or delivery.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how to properly prepare and give a sermonette or sermon.

III. Need

- A. A speaker is using the important time of many people and must not waste that time by doing a poor job.
- B. The truth of God is a precious commodity and must not be used haphazardly or without proper thought or skill (II Timothy 2:15, II Peter 3:16).
- C. The job a speaker does -- be it good or bad -- reflects upon him and will enhance or deter from his effectiveness with the congregation in other areas.

IV. A Reminder

Each local church pastor has been given authority by Headquarters to schedule speakers for sermonettes and, occasionally, sermons as he deems appropriate to the needs of the congregation and the abilities and talents of the speaker.

It is important for each man to realize that he may not speak as often as other men in other areas or even in the same church area. Nor will every man, or perhaps most men, ever give sermons. Therefore men should not judge, envy or compare among themselves about speaking opportunities they do or do not have (II Corinthians 10:12, Philippians 2:1-4).

V. Purposes of a Sermonette

- A. In Sabbath services, the sermonette serves as an introduction to the services. It gets the minds of the people off the physical and onto the spiritual, and prepares their minds for the sermon.
- B. It serves to edify the audience on a limited subject (more on this later).
- C. It serves as speaking practice for the speaker. †

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WHENEVER
PRACTICAL,
EVEN AS
GUEST.

VI. Purpose of a Sermon

The sermon is the main teaching or preaching session on the Sabbath.

VII. Length of Sermonettes and Sermons

- A. For Sabbath services, unless the minister in charge allots extra time, 10-12 minutes is a good length for a sermonette, and 15 minutes should be the maximum.
- B. For a sermon, the usual time is about one hour and 15 minutes, but may be slightly more or less. Split sermons are usually about 40-45 minutes.
- C. Going overtime on the length of Sabbath services is to be avoided. This means that time limits for both sermonettes and sermons should be strictly observed.

VIII. Selecting a Topic

- A. Selecting a good topic is the first step in preparation for speaking. Unfortunately, many new speakers make mistakes at this critical point and cannot help but give poor messages as a result. Here are some important don'ts regarding the selection of a topic for a sermonette.
 - 1. Don't select a topic that is too broad -- i.e., one that tries to cover too much material in too little time (e.g., "The Scope of God's Plan From Adam Till the Return of Christ" is too broad).
 - 2. Don't pick a corrective subject. Within the short time limit you would only offend the audience. Besides, correction is not your job, but the pastor's.
 - 3. Don't come up with a new topic that you have not heard expounded before or one that is speculative (it may be heresy!).

4. Don't pick a subject that is grandiose or incomprehensible and make it into a big production. No matter how eloquent you are, the sermonette will be a flop if no one understands or is helped by it.
5. Don't pick a subject that is rightly one that should only be given by the pastor (e.g., it would be wrong for you to speak on a subject that the Pastor General's Report instructs the local pastor to give unless he assigns all or part of the topic to you).
6. Don't pick an extremely sensitive subject or one that might offend new people. Such subjects require greater experience and skill to present than you may now possess (e.g., a sermonette on homosexuality would be a poor choice for these reasons).

B. Here are some dos when picking a sermonette subject.

1. Do pick a narrow subject that can be handled within the time limit.
2. Do pick a subject that the congregation seems to need and not merely one you wish to give. Still, it is important to feel strongly about a subject, and the two factors of their needs and your feelings must be balanced.
3. Do remember that some in the congregation are new and would like to hear basic explanations on various practical topics.

C. Try to pick a sermonette topic from one of the following categories.

1. Difficult scripture explanation
 - a. Example: I Timothy 4:4 -- Does it justify eating unclean meats?
 - b. Example: John 14:2 -- Does it prove heaven is the reward of the saved?
 - c. Example: Luke 17:21 -- Is the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men?
2. Instructive
 - a. Example: How to use your second tithe.

- b. Example: Should you accept birthday or Christmas gifts?
- 3. Exhortative (to correct some minor problem or exhort in a positive way)
 - a. Example: Be on time to services.
 - b. Example: Too much noise during services.
 - c. Example: Get in your prayer at the Feast of Tabernacles.
- D. Topics for sermons will probably be of the same general types but can be more comprehensive and detailed.

IX. Preliminary Considerations

- A. Even before setting a pencil to paper, a speaker should analyze his audience so his talk will relate to the people, occasion and mood.
- B. The speaker should remember that his talk will be worthless unless inspired by God. He should therefore pray about it before he composes it and before he gives it (Proverbs 3:6).

X. Organization of a Sermonette

A. SPS

After deciding on a topic, write out the Specific Purpose Statement, which states the one point that you want to get across to your audience.

B. Body

- 1. In a sermonette, the body should consist of only a few (from one to three) points or thoughts that are part of the main point.
- 2. A sermon will be more complex, having more thoughts or points, all of which should relate to the main theme.
- 3. All points or thoughts should be organized in a logical manner (such as chronologically, historically or geographically) and be of the same type and of the same general weight or importance.
- 4. Remember that the basis of the talk should be the Bible and not outside material such as poetry, psychology, philosophy, "success" literature or

even your own pet ideas. Of course, some outside research material or supporting quotes can be proper in balance.

C. Conclusion

1. Summarize by giving the SPS in different words or by phrasing it differently than you did before.
2. Make an appeal for action on the exhortation or instructions you have given.
3. Plan your last sentence. Memorize it if necessary.

D. Introduction

After planning the SPS, body and conclusion, now go back and plan an appropriate introduction. A minister must have a type of salesmanship. He must make a sermon interesting if he expects people to accept it and listen -- even as a man selling merchandise has to sell people on it.

1. It must be related to your main point in such a way that it logically leads to the SPS.
2. It must grab the audience's attention and make them want to listen.
3. Some types of effective introductions are:
 - a. Use a short anecdote or cite a recent happening or news event.
 - b. Give some startling facts or figures.
 - c. Ask a moving question or questions.
 - d. Present a challenge.

XI. Delivery of the Sermonette or Sermon

- A. In your delivery, try to include the following qualities:
1. Warmth and friendliness.
 2. Intensity to drive home the point (but don't overdo it or be artificial).
 3. Show a zeal and interest in the topic.

4. Use humor if you are able and it is appropriate to the topic at hand.
 5. Strive to be natural and sincere.
- B. Try to avoid these common pitfalls:
1. Avoid dirty jokes, off-color stories or allusions to sex.
 2. Although ridicule and sarcasm has its place and can be effective in the hands of a proficient speaker, it can easily be overdone and cause negative reactions.
 3. Don't use negative examples of people in the congregation.
 4. Don't speak evil of world leaders in a belittling sense (Romans 13:1-7).
 5. Don't use yourself as an example. If you show yourself as a good example, you will sound self-righteous. If you use yourself as a bad example, you may lower your credibility in the eyes of the audience.
 6. Don't sound superior or self-righteous.
 7. Don't try to impress everyone with your speaking ability. You are not an evangelist and cannot speak like one! Don't think you should try to "save" the audience in this one talk.

XII. Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, the proverb that "Talk is cheap" can indeed be true. But with proper preparation and delivery, a sermonette or sermon in the hands of skillful person, led by God's Spirit and armed with His perfect truth, can be like "apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

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Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 5

Serving God With Your Substance

I. Introduction

- A. "Money makes the world go around" -- we have all heard that expression. And when speaking of this world's system of doing things, it is probably true.
- B. Of course, money is not the basis of God's system and should not "make our world go around," but nonetheless how we view and use this world's money goes a long way to determine how we will use the true riches of eternal life in God's Kingdom.
- C. Money can be dealt with and used either man's way (the way of this world) or God's way. As leaders in God's Church we must understand and apply God's way of handling our finances in the midst of a confused world that uses money wrongly -- so wrongly that it seems the entire world virtually turns on its financial system and principles.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain the principles involved in paying tithes and offerings.

III. Need

God is working out His purpose of bringing billions of children into His Family to share in the rulership of the universe. In this life we are developing the character and mind of God, which we need to fulfill our future responsibilities. We must learn to put God first in every area of our lives. How we handle our personal finances will, to a large degree, determine our position and reward in God's Kingdom -- and, for some of us, may even determine whether we will be in God's Kingdom.

Luke 16:10-11 -- What we do with the comparatively small amount of wealth God allows us in this physical life shows what we would do with the vast power, authority and wealth we would inherit as His children in ruling the universe. This is one of the major areas of our lives in which we are being tested, evaluated and judged every day by Jesus Christ (I Peter 4:17).

Matthew 6:21 -- Just as our faith is demonstrated by our works, we demonstrate whether or not our hearts are in God's Work by how we spend our money.

Managing our finances God's way will help us qualify for a position of authority in God's Kingdom. Failure to do so may disqualify us for any position.

IV. How Are You Handling Your Finances?

A. Don't Be Materialistic in Your Approach to Life

God wants all of us as His people to prosper (III John 2). He wants us to enjoy the physical things of this life (Ecclesiastes 5:18). But He doesn't want us to set our hearts on pleasures, pastimes and material pursuits. It is a matter of our attitude and approach.

I Corinthians 7:31 -- God allows us to use, but He does not want us to abuse, the physical things in this world. He wants us to realize they have a part in this physical life for character development, but then they pass away.

II Corinthians 4:18 -- That which we can see, taste, feel, hear and smell -- that which we can discern with our physical senses -- is not the reality. The physical things around us, which mean so much to us and appeal so strongly to our physical senses and pulls of the flesh, are only temporary. These things will eventually be destroyed with this world, when God has finished using this physical earth as a training ground for adding children to His ruling Family (II Peter 3:10-13).

Therefore no physical thing is of lasting value, and the pursuit of physical comforts and accoutrements, food, clothing and pleasures should not be our primary goal in life -- should not consume the majority of our time or fill the majority of our thoughts. What we will retain after this physical life is God's Spirit and the character we have built, not the physical possessions we have accumulated (I Timothy 6:6-10).

Matthew 6:19-23 -- God counsels us to lay up treasures in heaven -- to set our affections on things above, not on things on this earth (Colossians 3:2). We do this by putting our treasure -- our money -- into God's Work, rather than lavishing it on ourselves out of proportion. We must be single-mindedly seeking God's Kingdom (Matthew 6:24). It is impossible for us as carnal human beings to set as a major goal the attainment of material things -- the status symbols,

creature comforts and physical pleasures of this life -- and at the same time to wholeheartedly seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness.

The point is to focus on your motivation. Are you serving yourself or are you serving others? Of course, there is a balance to achieve. Everyone needs time to be alone with family, but consider the overall picture.

Isaiah 55:2 -- Have we been spending too much of our money for "that which is not bread" -- that which will be of no eternal value and profit? Have we been giving in to the pressures of this materialistic society in which we are living, or can we say honestly before God that we are seeking His Kingdom first in every way -- including the way we manage our finances?

B. God Knows Our Needs

Matthew 6:25-31 -- God doesn't want us to be anxiously concerned about our basic needs of food, drink and clothing. How much less, then, should we be concerned about other things in this physical life that aren't really needs?

Verse 32 -- The spiritual gentiles of this world -- those who don't know God and who don't have the goal of someday becoming God -- seek after material things. But we, as converted children of God, whose eyes have been opened and enlightened, should not be overly concerned about things pertaining to this physical life. We should realize that God will provide for us.

The point to remember here is not to seek materialism to the detriment of your budget. There is no need to go in debt to buy a boat or a new car just to maintain an image of prosperity.

C. Live by Faith

Matthew 6:33-34 -- God promises us that He will provide for our needs if we seek His Kingdom first. He wants us to learn to live by faith. We must trust Him to provide for our needs. It isn't natural to trust God and exercise faith, but that is what we must do if we set ourselves to manage our finances God's way. As a way of life, God wants us to look to Him and trust Him in everything. Our attitude must be that of faith and complete confidence in God.

This should be our attitude and approach in managing our finances. We must, first of all, set our hearts on God's Kingdom and His Work -- not the things of

this world. Second, we must have faith in God that He will provide all our needs and also any additional material blessings He decides we really should have (Psalm 34:10)

V. Obey God's Financial Principles

We have seen what our attitude and approach should be. Now let's look at some specific principles we must follow in managing our finances God's way.

A. Pay Your Tithes Faithfully

Malachi 3:8 -- Do individuals in God's Church steal first, second or third tithe? Sadly, some do. Every year before the Feast, we discover that some members have stolen from their second tithe, either by failing to save it or by borrowing from it. There are many more whom we don't discover, but God knows. Surprisingly, even some leaders in the Church -- even men being considered for ordination as deacons or elders -- have not faithfully paid even their first tithe. These, according to Malachi 3:9, are cursed with a curse. They will be cursed financially now, and if they don't repent, they will be cursed for all eternity.

Others pay their tithes, but grudgingly. With this kind of an attitude, they, too, probably cannot be fully blessed financially.

Job 41:11 -- Remember, God owns everything -- even you (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Your income and everything you own belongs totally to God. He requires you to pay the first tenth to Him through His Work. The second tenth He commands you to save in order to keep His feasts. A third tenth He requires you to pay every third year out of a seven-year cycle as a form of welfare to help widows, orphans, strangers and His ministers. Then, once you have discharged these obligations, God gives you the rest. However, God still has prior claims on part of it.

B. Remember the Poor

Leviticus 19:9-10 -- God made special provision in Israel for the poor and needy to acquire food. This was a command from God. He is just as concerned about the poor among His people today. Many places in Proverbs show God's concern for the poor (Proverbs 19:7, 21:13, 28:27).

How can we give to the needy today? One way is by faithfully saving and sending in our third tithe, if

applicable. If we are not in our third-tithe year, or if for some reason we are not required to save third tithe (as in the case of elders), then certainly some freewill offerings to the third-tithe fund would be commendable. Of course, we can and should help the needy directly on a one-to-one basis when that is wise under the circumstances.

Luke 14:12 -- There are other ways we can give to the poor. We can invite them to dinner on occasion. We tend to invite for dinner only those whose company we enjoy, or those who will return the invitation. That is not wrong, of course, but you'll be blessed if you also entertain the needy.

C. Lay Up Treasure in Heaven

After you have faithfully paid your tithes and even given extra to the poor, realize that you still may not have put your treasure into God's Work. The tithes are not yours, and the other, even though commanded of God, did not go into the Work of preaching the Gospel. In one way of looking at it, therefore, it is through our offerings that we lay up treasure in heaven.

Notice: In Malachi 3:8, God says He is robbed of tithes and offerings. This means regular offerings as well as the special offerings God commands for the Holy Days (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). Offerings are an absolute requirement, just as much as tithes are. The difference is that God sets the amount for His tithes, but He leaves the amount of the offerings up to us. This is one gauge that can indicate just how much our hearts are in the Work of God!

Those who do not have their hearts in the Work of God are not growing spiritually, while those who do have their hearts in the Work grow steadily and continuously. We saw the principle in Matthew 6:21 that where a man's treasure is, his heart will be also. Those who are not putting their treasure into God's Work do not have their hearts in it. God does not need our money, but He has given us the tremendous opportunity of being a part of this end-time Work, which is preparing the way for the return of Jesus Christ.

VI. Insure Your Future by Investing in God's Work

A. Give According to Your Blessings

Luke 21:1-4 -- God is not concerned with the amount, per se, of our offerings. He wants us to give an

offering that reflects the degree to which we have been blessed, that reflects our awareness and appreciation of His blessings. Most of us in God's Church have been blessed above measure in every way -- not just physically. But by nature we tend to be unthankful for most of the blessings we receive. Instead of naturally desiring to show our gratitude through our offerings, the more we get, the more we naturally tend to desire.

Deuteronomy 16:17 -- The principle of giving offerings is that we should give according to the blessings God has given us. As God increasingly prospers us, we should increase our offerings in proportion to the increase we receive, if not more. God is not asking us to give what we don't have. But often we can overlook what God has given us because our motivation has become oriented toward getting.

II Corinthians 9:6-7 -- Here is an important principle to understand with regard to our liberality in giving offerings. If we don't show God our gratitude and appreciation for our blessings by "sowing bountifully" -- by giving generous, liberal offerings -- then we'll reap sparingly. Or if we give grudgingly -- if we give liberally because we know we should but would prefer to spend it on ourselves -- or if we give in order to get blessings, we also "reap sparingly."

If a farmer has a bumper crop of wheat, sells it and lives it up on the profits, failing to invest in seed and machinery for the next year, he will fail. So it is with you. If you have spent your extra money lavishing physical things on yourself and have neglected to invest sufficiently in God's Work through your offerings, you will not prosper financially.

If you are not being blessed now as a result of not sowing generously in the past, you have to break the cycle. You have to begin to give more, realizing that you aren't being blessed because you have sowed sparingly. This may, for a time, require a sacrifice, but if your attitude is right, you have an absolute guarantee from God that He will prosper you.

B. Go Into Partnership With God

God is in the business of bringing children into His Family. He is carrying out this business through His Work on earth, and He has called us to have a part in it. He has called us to become partners with Him. It should be a source of real joy and pleasure to us each payday as we have the opportunity to invest in God's Work. It is the only concern on earth that will

really pay off. Investments in God's Work, which are our offerings, will pay off in blessings here and now, and for all eternity in God's Kingdom.

Don't make the mistake many make by figuring out their budget and then determining their offering on the basis of how much they have left over. This is not how God would have us determine the amount of our offering. Offerings are second in importance to our tithes. In order to give according to the blessings we receive, we must determine our offerings before we start planning on how much to spend on ourselves.

Many have found that a percentage basis is a good way to determine this. You could set aside a certain percentage for a Holy Day offering, and a certain percentage for your regular offering. In this way, as your blessings increase, the amount of your offerings will increase as well.

Then, as God continues to bless you, you may find that you can increase the percentage of your offerings. By putting your offerings first rather than last, you'll find that God will bless you increasingly, and you'll have the rewarding experience of continuing to increase your offerings.

VII. Put God and His Work First

We can't buy our way into the Kingdom of God. It is a gift of God. But by managing our finances God's way and by striving to invest as much as possible in His Work through our offerings, we are building character that will qualify us for a position in that Kingdom. By proving ourselves faithful in that which is least, we show that we will be faithful in much in the future.

This, then, is the crux of managing our finances God's way. God requires that we pay tithes, give to the poor and give offerings. In these matters, our only choice is whether we will obey God. But the amount of offerings we give in comparison to what we could give clearly shows our attitude and approach to managing our finances.

If we put physical things ahead of God's Work, our hearts are not in God's Work, but those physical things.

God plainly sees whether the emphasis in our lives is on acquiring and enjoying material things, or on putting our treasure into His Work as a type of investment for the future. He can clearly see whether we are living by faith and trusting Him to provide, not only our needs, but also any special blessings He might want to give us, or whether we are constantly "making provision for the flesh" in our approach to managing our finances.

Put God and His Work first and you'll truly "reap bountifully" -- in physical blessings here and now and, more importantly, in the everlasting spiritual blessings that come from developing character and qualifying for a high position in God's Kingdom.

VIII. Conclusion

Money does indeed "make the world go around." But we as leaders in God's Church need to step off the money merry-go-round of this world and stand instead on the solid footing of God's financial system.

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Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 6

The Elements of Common Sense and Good Judgment

I. Introduction

- A. "Common sense is indeed a most uncommon trait," wrote one modern-day sage. And he was right. Who, after all, could help but notice that one great reason for the sad state of affairs in society today is the lack of plain old common sense?
- B. The fact that common sense is not very common forms a challenge for those called to serve God's people in leadership positions. It seems that God's people probably lack common sense (like most everybody else) and therefore need the blessing of practical counsel and positive encouragement from the ministry. It also means that the leader himself will have to develop this common sense and good judgment to help God's people.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how to develop the good judgment and common sense necessary to serve God's people and lead one's own life effectively.

III. Need

- A. Most of us, as a quirk of human nature, tend to believe that while others may not possess good judgment, we ourselves automatically do, as some sort of mental birthright. Perhaps we don't consciously think this way, but unconsciously we just assume we are totally sound-minded. This, of course, is a reflection of our vanity or pride. As the proverb states, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes."
- B. However, the truth is just the opposite. We do develop certain mental instincts automatically, but not good judgment. For, as Solomon wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man [that is, there is a way that seems right automatically to us], but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Read also Jeremiah 10:23 and Isaiah 55:7-9. Our automatic ways are the ways of death -- the way of

mental suicide. It may be the common way of thinking, but it is not very sensible.

IV. Just What Is Good Judgment?

- A. The terms common sense, good judgment and wisdom are really about equivalent.
- B. To understand what good judgment or wisdom or common sense is, we must first define some other terms:

1. Knowledge

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts. Numerous verses tell us to gain knowledge. For example, see Proverbs 10:14 and 15:14.

2. Understanding

Understanding is the ability to perceive what the facts (knowledge) say about the world. This is an important distinction and deserves some thought. We all know people who seem to have good memories yet really don't seem to understand their subjects.

An inept car mechanic illustrates the point. He may know the parts of your car, but because he does not understand how these parts work together, he cannot find the malfunction to fix it.

3. Wisdom

Also termed good judgment and common sense, wisdom is the ability to take the facts, with proper understanding of them, and steer a proper and effective course to a desired end or goal. Wisdom is indispensable in making proper decisions.

Wisdom is the ability to properly use knowledge.

4. Character

Finally, character is the willpower to implement the proper course of action once a right decision is made.

Solomon is a good example of the distinction between character and wisdom. Solomon possessed knowledge, understanding and wisdom, but apparently did not always have the character to do the right thing.

V. The Wisdom of This World Versus the Wisdom of God

- A. The purpose of this lecture is to teach sound-minded judgment that comes from God. This type of common sense or wisdom is far different from the way that seems right to man and never would win acclaim from people. Notice the difference between the two:
1. I Corinthians 2:1-13 -- These verses show that Paul did not use the wisdom of this world, but, instead, his reasoning was based upon God and His Son who died for us.
 2. James 3:15-17 -- The wisdom from above and the wisdom of this world are compared.
- B. Man's way of thinking, including his system of logic and his type of judgment or wisdom, is called the way that leads to death. But the wisdom of God leads to eternal life. Notice Romans 8:6: "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Carnal wisdom brings death. Spiritual common sense brings eternal life.
- C. It is as if there are two separate systems of logic -- man's and God's. God plainly tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:7-9). We, of course, wish to learn the good judgment and common sense of God and not the wrong reasoning of man. It is important, therefore, to understand this: Although a carnal mind and a spiritual mind both reason with a physical brain, and both follow the same general steps in their reasoning, each many times reaches a far different conclusion about a matter than the other.
- D. Here are the differences in the way a carnal mind reasons and the way a spiritual mind reasons. It is these differences that account for the difference in man's judgment and God's judgment.
1. Different Facts
When forming an opinion or judgment, the carnal mind uses only the information or facts that it can gather through the five senses. It excludes all other facts and therefore remains in ignorance of them. The spiritual mind, on the other hand, takes into account revealed knowledge from God. Read Daniel 2:28 and I Corinthians 2:9-16. Adam and Eve rejected revealed knowledge from God in the Garden of Eden.

For example, one who reasons carnally will not tithe because he will not believe that his income will cover his needs. He will look at his budget and see that the physical facts say that. But a converted mind will accept additional facts about tithing that the carnal mind does not -- namely, that God will provide our needs if we tithe.

2. Different Goals

A carnal mind will reason differently from a spiritual mind because the ultimate goal of the carnal mind is to merely reach temporary physical goals such as wealth, power and status. The spiritual mind is working toward unseen, eternal life in God's Kingdom.

* For example, a carnal mind will grieve if it has to suffer wrongfully, while a spiritual mind can glory since it knows that the character built thereby works toward the Kingdom of God.

3. Different Motives

Our motives affect the way we think. They color our conclusions. Carnal man's motive is to get and glorify himself. God's motive is to give. In John 7:17-18 Christ said His motive was to glorify God and not Himself. For that reason, His listeners could believe what He said, knowing that there was no unrighteousness in Him.

[No matter how hard man may try to be "objective" and "fair" with the facts, he cannot be impartial when his motive is self-centered. In fact, it is for this very reason that men reject God in their moral decisions, such as about premarital sex. Their motives (to do what they want) color their thinking.

4. Different Values

Judgments are made when facts are considered. In addition to using different facts than God does, people also weigh those facts differently in their minds. That is, their values -- what seems to be important to them -- are different than God's. See Luke 16:15). This, of course, affects their conclusions.

People value power, fame, wealth and appearance (I John 2:15-16). But the spiritual mind values the things of God (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Luke 10:38-42 shows an excellent example of this. Mary thought it logical to sit at Christ's feet and hear His words, because she valued the things of God, while Martha thought it more important to be cumbered about with much serving. They were both doing what they thought was right, but they reasoned differently because they had different values.

Another example is that of suffering. Men eschew all suffering and believe it to be bad. The spiritual mind instead "counts it all joy" when a trial occurs because of the good character it will produce (James 1:2).

VI. Good Judgment Can Be Learned

- A. Since we are not born with godly judgment, we must be trained. But as obvious as this seems, it is good to emphasize that common sense and good judgment can be learned. Just as surely as some wrongly believe that we are born with good judgment, others will believe that it is impossible to rise above their present state of thinking. Read Proverbs 2:1-10. These verses state dogmatically that we can increase our knowledge, understanding and wisdom or good judgment.
- B. The key to learning good judgment is to realize this: Good judgment consists not in memorizing every possible answer to every possible problem, but rather in learning the relatively few principles of godly thinking and applying these principles to each unique problem as it arises.

VII. The Elements of Good Judgment and Common Sense

The following principles provide a foundation for wise thinking and good judgment. Strive to learn these principles, and you will be learning good judgment in the process.

A. Asking If Something Is Right or Wrong

One who wishes to exercise godly judgment will first ask if what he is about to do is morally right or wrong. Today people in our society do not do this. In fact, they do the opposite. Scientists many times brag that they do not wish to introduce questions of right or wrong into their research. Today people instead ask themselves, "Do I want to do this?" or "Will this make money?" They don't care if it is right or wrong. In fact, they say that right is wrong and wrong is right (Isaiah 5:20).

A godly person knows he will reap what he sows, and knows that a good decision must be morally right. He will do what is right even if the wrong way is what he carnally wants to do, or even if it will make millions.

? A good example of this principle would be a landlord who unfairly raises rent on a widow because he wants to make the extra money. It may be financially sound to raise the rent, but morally wrong and therefore not something a spiritually minded person with sound judgment would do.

B. Consistency

One great principle of the Bible is that our living God is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). This consistency, this utter reliability, is at the heart of the perfect running of the universe itself. Yet we humans sometimes fall out of harmony with this maxim. But realize this: One who is inconsistent, wavering from one side to the other, must be wrong at least part of the time.

Being consistent does not mean being stubborn or refusing to change when wrong. It means, rather, that you always arrive at the same right conclusion when confronted with the same circumstances.

A common example of how we often fail to be consistent is in our child rearing. If we inconsistently discipline our children, correcting them one time for something and then neglecting the same infraction the next time, we just confuse the child. Such confusion does not come from a mind led by the principles of judgment.

Even worldly courts understand and at least profess to abide by this principle. They call it stare decisis, a Latin term meaning to abide by or adhere to decided cases. We know it is the same system of relying upon precedent -- that is, the practice of deciding subsequent cases the same way as the first case was decided, as long as there is no compelling reason not to.

C. Balance

It is human nature to go to extremes. Therefore at times one can be either a "hanging-judge" type of minister or an "easygoing" type. But this quality of human nature does not really serve the righteous judgment of God. Rather, we must constantly strive for the proper balance in our administration of the local church and in other duties under our control.

This, of course, does not mean we compromise with sin. Sin is sin and it is always bad and wrong. But we do balance our actions with mercy and judgment. And we must exhibit God's quality of "temperance" (Galatians 5:22-25), doing nothing to excess, but all things that are appropriate in moderation.

Again, child rearing serves as an excellent example. Why is it that some people almost never spank their kids, and yet others are guilty of beating them constantly? It is because they do not understand the role of temperance and balance.

D. Objectivity

To be objective means to be aware of the emotion of the moment, but not to let it rule our minds and actions. We all know from experience that emotions are powerful forces and that they can affect our judgment. A person with godly judgment will not let this happen, even if it means that he must delay a decision or an action until he is in control of his emotions and can make a calm and rational decision based upon the facts. God says He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). God has emotions, but He is always able to exercise control and not allow emotion to cloud His judgment.

Read James 1:20: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." The same could be said of fear, jealousy, revenge and many other destructive emotional states.

How many parents have spanked their children too hard because of anger, or not hard enough because of a child's tears? Clearly, one with Christian common sense must strive to be objective in his decisions and actions.

E. Sensitivity and Perceptiveness

Sad to say, many people fail to deal with certain situations that should command their time simply because they fail to even see that they exist. At times, we all seem oblivious to problems or situations. Maybe it is because we don't want to see them, or because we just are insensitive. But a person with good common sense is aware of the subtleties and nuances of each situation under his leadership.

Read Matthew 9:1-4, where we see how sensitive Christ was to the thoughts, moods and motives of those around Him. Ask God to give you this same sensitivity.



Matthew 7:3-5 tells how we may grow to be more sensitive. It tells us to root our own sins out of our lives, and then we will more sensitively and accurately see the spiritual needs of others. Another way we may become more sensitive is through experiences. Through experiences we learn what the warning or tell-tale signals of a problem are, so we can decipher problems early when we see similar symptoms again.

F. Experience

Experience is more than just a teacher of sensitivity, however. The ability to learn by experience -- both our own and those of others -- is a profound quality mastered by relatively few people. The old saying is true: "The one thing we have learned from history is that we have never learned anything from history."

This is not to say that you should sin so you will be an authority on the subject. It means merely that you learn from the past so you can do repeat successes and do not repeat failures. In fact, if you are able to learn from the experiences of others, you can avoid many mistakes common to man.

In I Corinthians 10:6, God plainly tells us that one reason for the Bible, especially the Old Testament, is so we may learn from the experiences of others so we don't have to repeat their mistakes.

G. Uniqueness of a Problem

Although one with common sense learns from his experiences, he also understands that every circumstance is in some ways unique. One with good judgment, therefore, does not blindly apply some principle or maxim to a situation without further thought.

One powerful lesson of the New Testament is that the self-righteous Pharisees were inflexible and unable to discern properly between similar yet not identical circumstances. It was for this very reason that Christ had to rebuke them for applying the law of the Sabbath so strictly and mechanically that they chided their master (Christ) for healing on that day. Anyone with common sense would have seen that the rule against work on the Sabbath was not broken by Christ's doing good. Read Matthew 12:9-13.

For an excellent example, read about the daughters of Zelophehad in Numbers 27:1-11. They sensed that their special circumstances were an exception to the rule

that a man's inheritance passed through his eldest son. In response to their inquiry, God said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right" (verse 7).

H. Relative Importance

One who would have keen judgment must be able to direct attention to the important facets of a matter and exclude or minimize less important points. Even a fool wouldn't prepare for a car trip by fixing a hole in the upholstery yet ignoring faulty brakes. He would see that, under the circumstances, the brakes should receive his attention. Yet many of us find it difficult to concentrate on the truly important issues of a matter. We get sidelined in unnecessary details.

The ability to concentrate on the important things demands that we master three qualities:

1. Focus -- the ability to see through a complex matter to its core issues.
2. Priorities -- the ability to know what facets must be dealt with in what order.
3. Proportion -- the ability to know how much weight to give each separate set of facts.

Note: Lawyers and judges deal with these principles under such headings as relevance, competence and materiality. While they deal with man's inferior laws, nonetheless the ability to see what is important in a decision and what is not is vital for leaders in God's Church.

No better example of this rule can be found than Luke 10:38-42, about Martha. Another example is that of the Pharisees. Read Matthew 23:23. They had no sense of the relative importance of the basic truths of God compared to the practice of minutely tithing the smallest herb.

I. Moot Points

Good judgment many times requires tough decisions between difficult alternatives. But one with common sense also realizes this: Some decisions don't have to be made! That's right, sometimes it doesn't make any difference what you do. There indeed are such things as "no-win" and "no-lose" situations. Frankly, merely knowing that sometimes you cannot win or cannot lose helps you look for this type of situation and gives you the confidence to sit back and do nothing when you should do nothing. But beware.

It is human nature to feel defeated when you are not, or to be cocky and self-sure in the face of uncertain events. Don't use this simple truth as an excuse to be lazy or to fail when you should succeed. For such actions will not be common sense, but common nonsense.

J. Dealing With the Obvious

When making decisions or judgments we must not overlook the obvious. Yet many people do. It seems to appeal to the vanity in human nature to look deeply into things, far past the surface into the complex inner workings, and to search there for answers. But many answers are right out in the open if we will simply see and accept them.

One great illustration of the wrong approach of ignoring the obvious is how some well-intentioned psychologists probe into the secret and seamy past memories of their patients to find why they feel guilty at committing some sin -- adultery, for example. Why do they not merely see the obvious -- that one should feel guilty, and should quit? Because their vanity wants to be erudite and abstruse and deep.

K. Timing

Ecclesiastes 3:1 plainly states that there is a "time for every purpose under the heaven." Therefore some actions and decisions will be appropriate or inappropriate depending upon when they are done or decided. Any actor can tell you the importance of proper timing. Any farmer knows there is a proper time to sow his seed and another time to reap the crop.

Thus a leader who possesses godly judgment and common sense will consider the timing involved before blurting out a decision or making a judgment. Certainly no minister of God's Church would baptize a child. Yet he would immediately baptize that same person, when ready, as an adult. This is but one example of the importance of timing in common sense.

L. Leaving One's Options Open

A Christian must at times take a stand on an important issue and burn his bridges behind him. Yet, at other times such finality is not required nor preferred. In many cases a leader must leave his options open.

A simple yet practical example would be planning a picnic. Although he hopes it will not rain, and thus

plans many outdoor activities, he also may arrange to use a gymnasium for the social instead, if the weather turns bad. Leaving one's options open this way many times merely means planning for contingencies.

M. Balancing Risks

A leader with common sense always compares alternatives and seeks to balance the risk of his decisions with potential benefits. In fact, a person who unwisely decides to follow his own reasoning and live life without God's law directing him has done just this. He has not considered the risky end of his foolish ways. He has chosen to ignore, or not consider at all, that God's way ends in life (although it may be difficult for now), and that man's ends in death. Remember Christ's warning: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

N. Consider the End



There is a cause for every effect. That being true, it is wise to consider exactly what final effect our actions will bring. Often people simply do what they wish or what seems right emotionally, without realizing that their actions and attitudes will cause a specific result, good or bad. Galatians 6:7 states the case succinctly: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

O. The Spirit of the Law

Finally, no man can claim to properly guide God's people without understanding the need to act within the spirit of God's law. Simply stated, this means we ought to conform our decisions to the intent of the law and not merely the letter. In most cases, obeying the spirit of the law means obeying the letter as well as going beyond it.

For example, the command against adultery forbids lust, also (Matthew 5:27-28). Yet sometimes obeying the letter allows a technical breach of the command, as in the case of David and the shewbread, recorded in Matthew 12:3-8. Truly, it takes great understanding and wisdom to always apply the spirit and intent of God's perfect law.

VIII. Roadblocks to Learning Good Judgment

With all that has been said about common sense and good judgment, there remains yet this: Human nature can work

against itself and block its own quest to learn wise thinking. Here are some roadblocks to straight thinking:

A. Vanity and Self-righteousness

Read Galatians 6:3. Admitting you are wrong is one of the most difficult things to do. Yet to grow in good sense, we must constantly dispose of incorrect ideas. The ability to admit wrong is one important mark of a good leader.



B. Ignorance

Good judgment must be based upon knowledge. If we know little about a subject, we can hardly make decisions concerning it. Therefore an ignorant man cannot be a wise one (Proverbs 1:5).

C. Fear

Making decisions is not easy. It risks opening one to being wrong and ridicule. But if fear makes us shirk from decisions, colors our reasoning or influences our choices, it causes bad judgment. Remember, true courage is not the absence of fear. Without fear there is no need for courage. True courage is the ability to achieve the proper goal in spite of fear. Courage is not yielding to fear.

D. Impatience

) Snap decisions made in an effort to get the job over with run a great risk of being wrong. Yet "patience" is not synonymous with "indecisiveness."

E. Laziness

Even Solomon put great effort into learning good judgment, as can be seen by the fact that he collected and memorized so many proverbs and songs (I Kings 4:32). It takes effort to grow in grace and knowledge. You have to work at it. Is it worth working for?

IX. Conclusion

Even before Solomon was given wisdom from God, he was smart enough to see he needed it to rule God's people. That is why he asked for it in the first place. We as leaders in God's Church, who rule over God's people, certainly have no less a need for wisdom. The rewards of solid common sense and good judgment are many. As Proverbs 4:7 says, "Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 7

Grow Spiritually Through Personal Bible Study

I. Introduction

- A. "The Word of God Is the Foundation of Knowledge." Those stirring words are engraved into Ambassador Hall on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena. Those words and the truth they express have guided God's Work since its foundation in this era.
- B. But the sentiment these words express -- that God's Word is the foundation of knowledge -- should also be engraved -- not merely upon the building on the Ambassador campus -- but upon our own consciousness.
- C. That is, the Word of God should be the very foundation of our service in God's Church.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how you may grow spiritually through personal Bible study, to the end that your service in God's Work may have a true and firm foundation.

III. Need

A. God's Word Is Spiritual Food That We Need to Survive Spiritually

Our physical bodies are constantly running down. Minute by minute they are literally dying, but at the same time, they are being revitalized and renewed by physical food that nourishes and sustains us. What would happen if we were to stop taking food into our bodies? We would begin a process that, if not interrupted, would result in the end of our physical life.

In the same way, our spiritual life is sustained by spiritual food. God describes His Word as that life-giving spiritual food. It is the staff of our spiritual life (Matthew 4:4).

John 6:63 -- Christ's words are spirit and life. He was, in the flesh, the Word of God personified (John

1:14). He described Himself as the living bread that -- if we eat of it -- will enable us to live forever (John 6:51).

Romans 8:5-6 -- To be spiritually minded is life and peace. We can be spiritually minded only if we are regularly putting into our minds spiritual thoughts -- God's thoughts.

Romans 12:2 -- Our minds must continually be renewed. A spiritual mind is not permanent in a physical body. Every day our minds must be renewed by the study of God's Word.

God spoke personally to Adam, to Enoch and Noah, to Abraham, Moses and all His prophets in Old Testament times, but today God speaks to His servants through His Word. If we are not letting God speak to us regularly and consistently through diligent, wholehearted and often prayerful Bible study, then we are not learning to think like God thinks, and we will starve to death spiritually.

B. God's Word Is the Basic Tool We Use to Guide Our Service to God's People

II Timothy 3:16 -- "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This verse summarizes the purposes of God's Word. It is profitable for:

1. "Doctrine"

A doctrine is merely a teaching. We refer to the doctrines of God's Church as "the truth." These doctrines explain God's plan for mankind, how He is working it out and our part in it. Our understanding of the truth of God will depend directly on our personal Bible study. So will our ability to teach God's Word in sermonettes, sermons and Bible studies.

2. "Reproof"

This word could better be translated conviction. God's Word convicts us.

James 1:23-25 -- It reveals to us our shortcomings and sins, and convicts us of them.

Romans 7:7 -- Just as Paul came to understand what lust is, we all learn what sin is through the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 -- God's Word is a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. It plainly shows us our thoughts and real intentions. God's Word brings us to deeper and deeper repentance. Job was finally convicted of what he was when God spoke to him personally. Unless God is speaking to you through regular personal Bible study, you won't see yourself, and you won't qualify to be used by Him.

3. "Correction"

This is the only verse (II Timothy 3:16) in the New Testament where this Greek word is used. It means, literally, "a straightening up again." God's Word sets us straight.

Let God's Word correct you, change you and set you straight! All of us, to one degree or another, are affected by our past sins. What we have done in the past -- our habits and our ways of life -- and what we have thought affects our minds and our character today.

Psalm 119:9 -- Looking into and heeding God's Word will wash us spiritually.

Ephesians 5:26 -- Regular, intensive Bible study washes our minds. It cleans out the spiritual error that accumulated in our minds before conversion.

John 15:2-3 -- God will purge -- He will correct and work on -- those who are growing and bearing fruit.

Hebrews 12:5-11 -- God corrects us out of love -- out of a real concern for us. Correction sometimes hurts for the moment, but it helps us put on the mind and character of God.

God has, in His Word, corrected us in principle for every fault that a human can have -- and it all applies to us. For example, we haven't literally fallen down before an idol, perhaps, but we have made, and often do make, idols of some things. Accept and profit from correction. Don't justify yourself in the face of it -- even in your mind. The correction may not apply exactly as given, but the principle always applies. Don't resent it -- take it and change.

4. "Instruction in Righteousness"

Psalm 119:172 -- God's commandments are righteousness, and God's Word lists, expounds and magnifies the commandments so that we will understand how to obey them in the spirit of the law.

Just as any machine comes with an instruction book to show how it is to be operated, God has given man an instruction book to show us how we are to operate. That instruction book is His Word. Following those instructions will give us happiness, peace and joy in this physical life, as well as ensure that we will experience these things for all eternity in His Kingdom.

C. Why We Should Study God's Word

Deuteronomy 17:15, 18-20 -- Notice that God commanded the king of Israel to write out the law and to read it every day of his life (verse 19). In this way he would learn to fear God and keep God's commandments and statutes.

Verse 20 -- It would give him a right perspective of himself and keep him humble. It would direct him in God's way and give him a long, happy life. How much more should we, who will be kings in the world tomorrow, study God's Word every day as a way of life?

Hebrews 5:12-13 -- Some of our older, longtime members just do not have the deep understanding of God's Word that they should have. Do some of us, who should be teachers, need to be taught the beginning principles of God's Word and need to be fed milk rather than strong meat? As a leader in the local Church, you must go above and beyond the average Church member in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word -- and in your ability to apply it to your everyday life.

II Timothy 4:1-3 -- We who are teachers are commanded to use "the Word" (the Bible) to preach, teach and guide. Notice that we are not to rely upon, as a foundation, the methods of this world, such as its psychology or business methods, but the Bible. Obviously, to use the Bible, we must know the Bible.

IV. How to Study Your Bible

A. Have a Definite Time for Bible Study

In resolving to get more out of your personal Bible study, plan to study at the same time each day, if possible.

As humans, we tend to develop patterns of habit. Too many of us develop bad habits that work against our efforts to change and grow spiritually. But the force of habit can be a powerful ally to help us if we will use it. Studying at a set time each day will help us develop a habit of regular Bible study.

B. Provide a Regular Place and Proper Environment

Have a definite area or place in which to study. You will tend to associate that particular area or place in your home with Bible study, and this will help you get in the mood more quickly each time you begin to study. This place should, of course, be one that is private, quiet and conducive to a proper mental attitude. It is difficult to concentrate and drink in deeply of God's Word with the distractions of noise or interruptions.

C. Have a Proper Attitude in Study


1. Study With Purpose

If you are merely going through the motions of Bible study in order to log time, your Bible study will be superficial and will be of little value. You won't grow spiritually as you should. Study with the intention of coming to a deeper and fuller understanding of how God wants us to live.

James 1:5 -- Realize that God is the source of all wisdom and understanding. Our attitude in our personal Bible study should be that of a child coming to his father for instruction. Ask and expect God to help you to deeply understand His Word so that you can grow spiritually and develop godly character.

2. Fully Respect God's Word

Familiarity breeds contempt, and if we aren't careful, we will begin to take God's Word for granted. Approach your personal Bible study with a deep respect for God's Word, realizing that what you are studying truly is inspired by God, and that the words truly are words of life that should have a real impact on your personal life.

 Fear to treat God's Word lightly by studying lackadaisically or with a ho-hum attitude. When you study, concentrate and devote your undivided attention to what you are studying.

3. Be Positive and Big-Minded As You Study

Be positive and big-minded in your approach to study, keeping in mind God's overall purpose for mankind. Don't zero in on some vague scripture or obscure prophecy and lose sight of the big picture.

D. Read the Entire Bible

God deliberately inspired the Bible to be written "here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10), and some passages of Scripture are indeed "hard to be understood" (II Peter 3:16). Don't get sidetracked by sections that may not be completely clear to you at this time. God will, in His own time, reveal the meaning of such scriptures. He is continually opening up new understanding to His Church.

You will profit most in your own personal Bible study by seeking to deeply comprehend and make a part of your very character the basics of Christian living -- love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control.

II Timothy 2:14, 23, 3:9 -- Recognize the type of study that is unprofitable and vain. Don't delve into a search for "new truth" or strive over words, phrases or passages that are not crystal clear to you.

E. Live By Every Word of God

It is important to study the Bible regularly and consistently, and it is important to study with a proper attitude, but the most important point to remember is that we are to live by every word of God. Don't set as your primary goal in Bible study merely the accumulation of more knowledge. We are being judged by our works -- by our actions and attitudes -- not merely by what we know.

In some ways, this is the most important point about Bible study. Psalm 111:10 says, "A good understanding have all they that do His commandments."

Understanding, then, comes from obedience -- from applying God's Word to our life.

F. Apply What You Learn

As you study, think in specific, concrete terms about how the concepts and principles you are reviewing apply to everyday life situations. This will make your personal Bible study interesting and meaningful.

You will then remember what you have studied and be able to put it to practice when the situation or circumstance comes up.

If you study the account of Abraham's life, for example, merely to learn about him as a historical person, you miss the point. You also miss much of the point if you learn from that account only that "we should have faith." Unless you can apply the examples in Abraham's life to specific circumstances in your life, you probably have not really strengthened your faith by a study of his life.

In certain parts of the Bible we are given specific instruction, such as in the "Sermon on the Mount," which we must apply to specific circumstances in our lives. In other cases, we learn by the example given, such as from Abraham's faith and attitude of unquestioning obedience or David's loyalty to Saul. Learn to apply what you are studying to your everyday life and live by every word of God.

G. Study to Help Others

Extremely important here is for you to study with an eye toward (helping) God's people. If you study merely for your own growth, you are being selfish and limiting your growth as a result. When you study, think of the needs of the Church or the problems of those you serve, and search for ways to help others as your responsibilities dictate or allow.

V. Conclusion

Any great effort, be it a building at Ambassador College or a spiritual work of service to the local church, is only as good as its foundation. In the case of our work of service, let us strive so "The Word of God is the Foundation" of our ministry and service.

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 8

The Duties and Responsibilities of a Local Church Elder (Part I)

I. Introduction

- A. "We're looking for a few good men." That catchy phrase is a recruiting slogan for the United States Marine Corps. It has been used on television, on radio and on compelling posters by the Corps to lure young and talented men into that armed service of the United States of America.
- B. One reason for the success of this slogan is that it implies not everyone can be a Marine. It implies that only a few men are good enough to meet the standard of leadership they desire in the Marines. And it also implies that a large and powerful work can be accomplished by only a few men if they indeed are good ones.
- C. Whatever the merits of this slogan as a promotional tool for the Marines, one thing is certain: God's Church has looked for and has found a "few good men" in the persons of the local church elders who serve Christ's Church.
- D. It is also abundantly clear that only a few of the billions of men alive today have been called to the job. Those who have must indeed be "good men" in every sense of the term.
- E. The record of service thus far tallied by the local church elders has been very distinguished indeed. Their service has been a pillar of strength to God's Church and the pastors they serve. Indeed, no lesser a figure than Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach started his ministry as a local church elder.
- F. As is true in the case of any good soldier, whether it be in the well-intentioned but ill-fated military machines of man, or in the service of God's ministry, the servant always asks: "What is my job? What are my responsibilities? What are my duties? What are the limits of my authority? In short, just what is expected of me?"

II. SPS

To answer these and other vital questions, Mr. Tkach has directed that this lecture describe the duties of the office of local church elder.

III. Need

Most local church elders probably would not for an instant question the desirability of having a complete job description. They would know and feel the value of such a lecture without being told how it will help them. But we in God's Church desire not to merely know what is required of us, but also desire to know why we should know, and from God's point of view. His reasons may be different than ours.

Here are some of the reasons we need a job description such as this:

- A. The welfare of God's people depends in part upon the elders being fully instructed in their responsibilities. Quite clearly, all elders of whatever rank are to be "helpers" of the "joy" of the people of God (II Corinthians 1:24).
- B. The unity of the Church as a whole hinges in large part on the need for all to have sameness of approach in key matters. See I Corinthians 1:10. Clear guidelines of responsibility help all to have such sameness of approach.
- C. Each elder must answer to God for his effectiveness. To be effective we must be instructed in our responsibilities.

Hebrews 13:17 -- All elders must give account to God.

I Corinthians 3:9-15 -- Local church elders are held responsible by God to help build a Church of solid members.

II Timothy 4:5 -- We are instructed to make full proof of our ministry.

- D. Finally, and obviously, we all want to fulfill our responsibilities properly.

IV. Background of the Office of Local Church Elder

The concept of a class of ministers who fulfill the functions of our local church elders is clearly found in the Bible.

- A. Paul commanded both Timothy and Titus -- ministers of higher responsibility -- to ordain elders in the local areas under their jurisdiction. Read carefully Titus 1:5 and II Timothy 2:1-2 coupled with I Timothy 3:1-7.
- B. Obviously some of these elders were "local" in the sense that they were in a certain limited area. See Titus 1:5. They were not traveling elders like Paul or most of the other apostles.
- C. It is obvious that at least some of these elders were not "salaried" but unsalaried. In fact, until a church reached a certain size it would not have been practical or necessary to fully support a local man from the finances of the brethren. Of course, in time some would be supported by the Church. But the point here is that the idea of an elder who obtains his living from another occupation is biblically sound.
- D. Finally, it is also obvious that these elders in many cases had a lesser authority and responsibility. Ephesians 4:11 shows a brief hierarchy of Church offices. This shows that not all elders had the same authority, and thus that the concept of having certain elders with limited authority is biblical.
- E. In conclusion, it can be seen that the Bible supports the concept of having elders who are local in responsibility, not salaried and under the authority of the pastor.

The Church has such a rank of minister, and has chosen to call it local church elder to distinguish it from other types of elders.

V. Definition of the Office and Job

The above points describe from where the Church derives the office, but is not really a definition of the job. One possible definition is as follows:

A local church elder is the first-rung level of the ministry of the Church, comprised of qualified men who have been ordained to the office. They are by definition non-salaried, having primarily responsibility within their local church, under the directorship of the pastor and headquarters, and have some but not all duties of an ordained minister.

This lecture describes the duties of a local church elder.

VI. Place Within the Government of God

One of the most important things that every local church elder must understand is his proper place in the government of God. To not understand this may result in his taking his role too lightly and neglecting his duties, or, on the other hand, being presumptuous of duties that are not his.

Therefore, here is a description of his proper role in the government of God -- God's Family as it is now within God's Church.

A. Relationship to Headquarters

All members are of course under the authority of Church headquarters and its leaders. The local ministers are not a law unto themselves but are under the authority of the apostles. See I Corinthians 12:28.

Today, we have but one apostle, Mr. Tkach, and he leads the Work under Christ from headquarters. When a man is ordained, it is with the understanding that he is under authority of the Church's spiritual and physical head. The very act of the laying on of hands shows this submission to authority.

The concept some churches of the world have that once a minister or elder is ordained he is autonomous or just under the directorship of the local pastor is unbiblical. Christ is the Head of the entire Church -- the vine with all its branches extending from the trunk (John 15:1-7).

An elder's loyalties must be first to Christ and headquarters from which the pastor's authority flows. Thus, there may be a rare occasion of disagreement in which the local church elder must appeal to headquarters for a judgment. Such a step is not to be taken lightly, however. Please review your notes from the lecture on Church government for detailed examples about when and how to go over the head of the local pastor if necessary.

B. Relationship to Pastor

The local elders, within the overall loyalty to the leadership of Christ and His apostle, have a definite responsibility to follow the lead of the local pastor. The local pastor has been placed in the Church by headquarters and is not to be ignored or circumvented without cause.

In the past some few elders have not understood this. They have felt that once they were ordained they were equal with their pastor and could take or leave his leadership as long as they saw themselves loyal to headquarters in the overall sense. This is untrue.

Pasadena expects the pastor to be in authority in the local congregation, and to direct the actions of the elders within his church. No elder may circumvent his pastor for any administrative or spiritual reason unless it falls within the guidelines stated in the lecture on Church government, or is strictly personal in nature. (An example of such a personal thing would be to write Pasadena about not receiving one's personal literature.)

C. Relationship to Other Salaried Ministers in the Local Area

In addition to the pastor, the local church elder will come into contact and work with other salaried ministers locally, such as associate or assistant pastors.

Since a local church elder is of the first rung of the ministry, he is subordinate in authority to a pastor's salaried and ordained associate or assistant (in that order). A local pastor should make plain to a local church elder in what areas he expects his elder to report to him and in what areas, if any, he expects him to report to the assistant or associate. At all times, however, an elder should cooperate with these other men as ministers of higher rank, which they indeed are.

Salaried but unordained assistants, such as ministerial trainees, are a special case. While strictly speaking not yet ministers themselves, they nonetheless are in actuality assigned to special responsibilities which require them to have the cooperation of a local church elder. An elder should recognize this fact and give the assistant his cooperation. In reality, he is merely cooperating with headquarters or the pastor as the pastor implements his responsibilities through the trainee.

D. Relationship to Other Local Church Elders in His Own Church Area

No local church elder outranks any other local church elder. Nonetheless, a pastor has the prerogative to give different responsibilities and degrees of authority to different men as circumstances dictate to be best. For organizational purposes, an elder may

occasionally be given a responsibility which would give him temporary line authority over other local church elders. We should all submit ourselves one to the other (I Peter 5:5).

E. Relationship of Local Church Elders to Elders and Members in Outside Church Areas

From time to time, an elder will visit another church area or deal with other ministers and members during the Feast.

An elder's responsibilities are primarily local. He should therefore not exercise authority in matters or toward people outside his church area unless specifically authorized by someone with the right to do so.

Of course, he can and should always be a big brother to any needy member but even then must be careful not to even unintentionally take someone else's role. The local ministers in any given area have the right to advise their own people and you must not usurp that right. Know when to advise someone to speak with his local minister rather than you. Remember that a minister is forbidden to extend his authority beyond its rightful boundaries or to build on another's foundation, no matter how good his motives. Read II Corinthians 10:14-16 and Romans 15:20.

F. Relationship to Deacons

The deacons and deaconesses are not ordained to the ministry and are not in positions of authority over the elders. Nonetheless, all elders must be careful to treat the deacons with great love, respect and humility as brothers in the faith.

Exercising lordship has no place in Christ's ministry nor among His elders. Read Matthew 20:25-27. Also, every elder must realize that the fact that he outranks a deacon does not give him the automatic right to direct the deacon's actions, especially his spiritual state and personal affairs. An elder should not be placed in the role of spiritually supervising the growth of deacons and deaconesses. This is so important that a special section is devoted to it below.

On the other hand, a pastor will often place an elder over a certain duty and assign a deacon to assist him. In the course of fulfilling the physical duties required for church services and activities, an elder may serve with line authority over deacons. But this

must not become a permanent configuration. For example, in the planning of a major church activity like a dance, within a large YOU group outing or set-up for Sabbath services, within the strict limits of the specific matter at hand, the elder has primary responsibility.

G. Relationship to Lay Members

Lay members should show respect to the elders and should be in subjection to them within the pastor's overall leadership. However, this does not entitle the local church elder to exercise lordship, or interfere without invitation in members' private affairs or spiritual growth unless directed to do so by the pastor. Even then an elder's approach must be one of meekness and humility. This will be dealt with in more detail later.

VII. Proper Attitude of Service

Read Matthew 20:24-28. Christ stated that leaders in His Church would have service as the foundation of their ministry. There is no room for lordship among the elders who serve God's people.

One who serves focuses his attention upon how he can help others grow in grace, knowledge and happiness, and not upon his own position or career. Christ's comments cited above were in the context of correcting the sons of Zebedee for concentrating on their own position in the Kingdom.

Therefore, an elder who serves well will be constantly asking himself two questions: 1) How can I better serve those above me in the chain of government? and 2) How can I better serve God's people in general?

Clearly, the attitude of service requires one to concentrate his thinking upon the needs of others and not upon his own needs. Read Philippians 2:4.

VIII. Proper Methods of Service

The very purpose of this lecture series is to upgrade the already high competency of leaders in God's Church. But there are dangers here. It is possible to make the mistake of trying to do God's Work man's way! That is not what is wanted from our leaders. Some points therefore need to be borne in mind:

A. The Bible must be our sourcebook.

We as elders are to use God's Word as the underlying foundation of our ministry. We should be well read, of course, but should not and must not forsake God's truth for men's psychology, etc. We are to preach the "Word" (II Timothy 4:1-2).

B. We are servants, not lords.

This point was focused on above but is very important and bears repeating. The proper role for an elder is to be a helper of joy toward the members (II Corinthians 1:24).

C. We are part of a larger government.

We are not independent practitioners out on our own to build a following for ourselves. We need to stay plugged into Christ's government and help the members to understand it and relate to it more as well. Ephesians 4:11 shows we are part of a structure of offices.

D. The true values are our goals.

We are not here to teach people how to make more money through real estate or the stock market, but to teach them about God's way of life that leads to true happiness (Matthew 6:19-21, 24).

E. We are not authorities on subjects outside our calling.

Our responsibility is to serve God's people in our areas of training. We are not there to handle other areas and should not engage in legal advice, health diets, tax planning, etc. When an elder acts in this capacity, he creates potential liability for the Church. The Church should not have to defend itself in court because an elder has given poor advice on taxes or health practice.

F. We carry authority.

Counselors in this world pride themselves on maintaining a nonjudgmental attitude. While we are not to be harsh or self-righteous, we must implement God's government and deal with evil according to God's Word. Of course, disciplinary actions, if needed, should be taken by the pastor and not by an elder on his own (Hebrews 13:17).

G. We should not live people's lives for them.

Elders are brothers in the faith and helpers of joy and not policemen or messiahs. While circumstances sometimes demand our intervention, most times our role is one of teacher and advisor. We must allow people to make minor mistakes as a parent does his children, and allow them to grow at their own rate (I Thessalonians 2:11).

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Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 9

The Duties and Responsibilities of a Local Church Elder (Part II)

I. Introduction

In the last session we covered the definition of a local church elder, his place within the government of God and proper methods of service.

We continue with the basic responsibilities of a local church elder.

II. Duties and Responsibilities

The actual day-to-day duties of local church elders can be broken down into two rough categories: 1) Those duties of a general nature which the Bible ascribes or implies to elders, and 2) those duties of a more specific nature which the pastor assigns.

A. Responsibilities commanded, defined, shown by example or inferred from the Bible

1. Teach

An elder must be apt to teach, according to the qualifications for ordination given in the Bible (I Timothy 3:2).

To teach means to instruct others in God's way from both an academic and practical point of view.

2. Preach

Preaching denotes public teaching to groups as opposed to one-on-one teaching. Preaching is clearly the job and prerogative of the ordained ministry (II Timothy 4:2). This does not exclude the assignment of deacons and leading unordained men to sermonettes which are viewed as training opportunities.

Mr. Herbert Armstrong often stated that the ability to preach was not needed by those ordained to rank of local elder. Still, since many of our

local elders can preach, their abilities are taken advantage of with sermonettes, sermons and Bible studies.

3. Counsel

Counseling is one-on-one advice-giving.

4. Encourage

Encouragement is verbal support and aid, usually done on a personal basis. Many epistles have whole sections devoted to the encouragement of the brethren. See, for example, Hebrews 12. It is obviously a valid function of the ministry at all levels.

5. Judge

To judge is to decide a matter at issue between parties. The Church clearly has authority to decide such issues (I Corinthians 6:1-5), especially in the persons of its elders. Many matters of this nature should be referred to the pastor, depending upon the circumstances. See also Matthew 18:15-20.

6. Correct

The ministry is permitted -- and indeed commanded -- to correct those bound in sin. However, usually this function should be handled only by the pastor or one he delegates it to (Hebrews 13:17).

7. Anoint

Anointing the sick is a duty specifically assigned to all elders (James 5:14).

8. Set a Good Example

Setting the example is one of the most important duties of all elders of whatever rank. Paul was conscious of his own example, and even cited it from time to time (I Thessalonians 2:10, II Thessalonians 3:7).

9. Be Hospitable

Hospitality is the act of extending your home, possessions and self to others. It is an important trait of an elder, commanded by the Bible (I Timothy 3:2), and rooted in love toward God's brethren.

B. Responsibilities delegated by the local pastor

The categories of duty mentioned above are very general in nature and are common to one degree or another to all elders of whatever rank. Each pastor has the latitude, within broad guidelines, to fulfill these duties through his local elders in the ways that seem best under the circumstances.

Note: All local elders should recognize that not every elder will participate in every one of the following specific duties, nor, when they are assigned them, to the same degree as every other elder. Pastors are allowed to make such decisions for themselves based upon their needs, the talents of their men, their personal style, etc. More will be said about this below.

1. Sermonettes

Many elders, but not all, are assigned sermonettes. This is one, but not the only, way an elder can partially fulfill his calling to teach.

2. Sermons

Probably many elders do not give sermons, but some do if they have talent in this area. This is up to the prerogative of the pastor depending upon the circumstances.

3. Bible Studies

The type of teaching that a Bible study requires is different from a sermonette. Some men will be better suited to this than to sermonettes. Helping out in a Bible study is a valid way to serve should the pastor need the help.

4. Activities and Projects

Certain projects and activities may be led by deacons, but certain other types might be better suited to the skill of one of the church's elders. This is an important way to serve and of much benefit to the pastor.

5. Visiting

Pastors may wish their elders to do some visiting if their time and talents permit. Usually these visits would be more of a general nature and with baptized members only. Problem visits, counseling

prospective members or handling crises normally would be handled by the pastor. However, even then the pastor may need your help as an assistant.

6. Anointing

Routine anointing is an important but sometimes time-consuming duty. The pastor may delegate some of this to you.

7. After-church Counseling

The time after services each Sabbath is often busy with questions from the members. The pastor may delegate to you some of these duties so he can concern himself with the more serious or pressing ones which demand his personal attention.

Generally, when a member presents a serious problem to a local church elder asking for counsel, the elder should advise the member that he must bring this matter to the church pastor. It is always the church pastor who must make the decision whether he should personally handle it or delegate it to the elder.

III. Duties (Not) Part of an Elder's Responsibilities

Knowing one's duties sometimes also involves knowing the limits to one's duties. Although Mr. Tkach encourages full utilization of every elder's abilities within local circumstances, he also wishes to reserve certain functions to the salaried ministers.

Certain duties are reserved to the pastor because these duties require the extra experience and training which the pastor has been given. They are also reserved to him because the pastor is the one held responsible for the overall welfare of the church and hence the one who must involve himself in those matters which most affect its growth.

(A) Discipline

Most cases of discipline should be handled by the pastor. If you see a circumstance which you feel may call for such action, explain the details to the pastor and he will decide how the matter should be handled.

B. Serious-Problem Counseling

Problems which are serious in nature, such as marital problems, demon problems, attitude problems and doctrinal problems, are the domain of the pastor. He may call upon your assistance in some way, and if he does you should be ready to offer the advice or help he needs. But the overall situation should be counseled by him.

C. Prospective-Member Visits

Many pastors have their elders perform general, sick or encouragement visits. But Mr. Tkach expects the salaried ministers to have first contact with prospective members, and to continue with whatever visiting is necessary to bring them to membership. After the church pastor has made initial contact, he may ask the elders to work with prospective members to answer questions and to be hospitable.

D. Oversight of Deacons in a Line Capacity

It is common to appoint an elder over a large project and have deacons temporarily report to the elder in a physical matter like a fund-raiser. But deacons should not be permanently assigned to certain elders. Deacons should not be placed in a position where they may come to the pastor only through elders. No local elder is over any deacon in a permanent-line capacity. All report directly to the pastor and his assistant or associate in spiritual matters. This is why the church pastor should rotate the duties assigned to deacons so that they are not continuously reporting to a local church elder instead of the pastor.

E. Baptism Counseling

Generally speaking, the baptism counseling to be done in a local area is the responsibility of salaried elders. In some cases, you may be asked to handle a session or two of preliminary baptism counseling, but in almost all cases the final counseling and decision to baptize will be by a salaried elder.

F. Ceremonies

Certain church ceremonies are routinely assigned to elders, such as the oversight of a Passover service in a multi-church circuit where the pastor must be somewhere else. However, certain other ceremonies are in the public eye and should as much as possible be performed by a salaried minister.

DISC 45

Most funerals and weddings fall under this latter category. However, when illness or other circumstances prevent it, the pastor may assign the job to his elder if the local law permits (some states, for example, may not allow unsalaried elders to perform weddings for which a license is required). It is the pastor's prerogative, however. Members should understand that funerals or weddings in his area fall to the pastor or associate pastor unless he gives permission otherwise.

Baptisms may be performed by a local church elder if the pastor directs him to do so. Even then, however, the counseling and decision to baptize will have been done by a salaried elder.

IV. Factors Determining Differing Use of Elders

The numerous responsibilities mentioned here cover a very broad range. A little thought and reflection should show that not every elder will have every responsibility of every other elder. Sometimes jealousies develop between leaders because of differences in responsibilities. Of course, this should not be the case. In fact, such wrong attitudes themselves indicate that the leader with such internal jealousy needs to examine his own motives for service.

Still, it can be helpful to briefly list some of the reasons why responsibilities differ between elders. This helps us see that the reasons are often physical and commonsense and not indications of favoritism or level of conversion. Here are some of the more common reasons for different people to have different responsibilities.

A. Age

Some jobs require the energy of youth and therefore a youthful man. Others require more maturity and experience.

B. Abilities or Skills

Certain jobs or roles, like speaking, may require certain natural abilities. Apollos, for example, was a talented speaker with natural ability in that area (Acts 18:24). Certain other jobs or roles, like leading a youth group, may require abilities or skills of a different sort. One job or person is not more righteous than another.

C. Education

Certain responsibilities require more or a different type of education than another job. A person with accounting skills might be able to give a Bible study on budgeting better than a man who is a wildlife expert. On the other hand, the second man might be better to lead a teen hike.

D. Experience

Our experiences are unique and give us insight into certain types of things. This difference in experience obviously qualifies us or disqualifies us from certain types of service.

E. Personality

Certain types of personality tend to be effective in certain types of circumstances and with certain types of people. It is natural for the pastor to try and match the man's personality with the needs the pastor has.

F. Pastor's Preferences

Different pastors reserve to themselves slightly different specific duties, and delegate those which seem wise to them. Such differences in type and style of delegation are normal and to be expected.

G. Geographical Area

A western area with western-type people may not respond well to an elder who moves into the area from the east. Such a man might have had an impact on his prior church that he may never have in his new one. People simply often respond best to the type of people they are most like.

H. Conversion Level

This has been put last because it is usually thought of first when men are seen to differ in responsibility in the local church. It is indeed a factor, but as can be seen, not the only one and in a given case it may not be a consideration at all.

V. Common Problem Areas

The elders of God's Church have a long and impressive record of service to God's people. But we are all human and must be constantly on the lookout for our human nature. It is important in this context to briefly note

certain common dangers that all elders must be on the lookout for in their own ministry.

A. Vanity

Pride or vanity affects all humans to some degree. It is a quality God hates (Proverbs 6:17).

B. Competition

One of Satan's most common and infectious attitudes is that of competition. It is pervasive in this society but must be shunned by us in favor of love and the spirit of cooperation. We are to serve others, look after their needs and in general exalt God and our brethren and not ourselves. Remember Christ's example -- not of competition and grasping for self, but of service (Philippians 2:4).

C. Disloyalty

Elders are to be, by definition, faithful men who are able to loyally work with and teach others (II Timothy 2:2). Disloyalty to Pasadena is disloyalty to Christ. And the notion that some have that they can somehow be loyal to Mr. Tkach and Christ and headquarters and yet be disloyal to their local pastor as he follows Christ, Mr. Tkach and headquarters is utter nonsense. The local pastor is part of the government of God and deserves the loyalty of the local elders as long as the pastor does not remove himself from God's chain of government or is not removed from it by those over him.

D. Presumptuousness

A tendency exists in some to assume they have certain qualifications, rights, duties or prerogatives which they in fact do not possess. It behooves all of us to be careful not to exercise ourselves in matters not our concern. Read Psalm 131:1, James 4:13-15 and II Peter 2:10.

E. Personal Sin

None of us is beyond the wiles of the devil and the pulls of the flesh. We must be constantly on vigil lest the lusts of the flesh snare us into vice of some sort like overdrinking, overeating, gambling, adultery, etc. (Galatians 5:17-21).

F. Example

Setting the example is an important part of an elder's responsibilities. Setting a good example is a powerful builder of people. Setting a bad example will undo much good and, unfortunately, more than offsets our good qualities.

VI. Rewards of Service

As can be seen by now, the job of a local church elder is a challenging one indeed. It requires, quite literally, superhuman strength in the form of God's Spirit to fulfill.

Still, the rewards for faithful service are many, and include:

A. Satisfaction

One of the most enjoyable parts of life is to contribute to the personal and spiritual growth of others.

B. Personal Knowledge

It is impossible for an elder or any minister to engage in helping and teaching others without himself learning many things.

C. Personal Character Growth

In addition to learning new things, our service to God's people develops many qualities of character within us -- such as patience, love, etc.

D. Greater Reward

We are to be rewarded according to our works. Those who do the most works will receive the greater rewards.

VII. Conclusion

God is always looking for a few good men to serve as elders in His Church. Those of us who have been chosen, out of God's mercy, for the job must take our responsibilities seriously. By so doing, we will be helping God prepare good sons and daughters for His Kingdom.

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Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 10

How to Be a More Effective Leader

I. Introduction

- A. "Leaders are made, not born" -- so says the old proverb.
- B. Although some of the world's great leaders may have been born with natural leadership ability, one clear fact cannot be denied: No matter how much natural leadership ability you have been born with (or without), the skills of leadership can be learned and your effectiveness as a leader can improve if you are willing to work at it.
- C. Nowhere is this more true than in the Church of God, for we have both the true principles of leadership and God's Holy Spirit to help us apply those principles.

II. SPS

* This lecture will explain how to be a more effective leader.

III. Need

- A. Luke 12:32 -- God likens His people to sheep that need to be guided and led. They need care that is genuine and nurturing.
- B. Unless we leaders are effective, the brethren will not have a clear path to follow as we follow Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, who in turn follows Christ.
- C. Hebrews 13:17 -- We ministers and leaders in the Church must give account of our leadership to Christ at His coming.

IV. What Is the Foundation of True Leadership?

Many qualities go into the making of a leader. He must have strength of character to command the respect of those he is leading. He must also have a measure of wisdom, knowledge and understanding in addition to a certain amount of natural ability. But the most important quality

or characteristic a leader in God's Church must have is genuine love for others.

- A. Love is the very basis of true Christianity. God's character is summed up in that single word (I John 4:16). That is the foundation upon which we must build in any kind of leadership training.
- B. I Corinthians 13:1-3 -- No matter how many gifts, talents, abilities or personal qualities we may possess, without love we are nothing.
- C. Without real Christian love as the foundation, any of our efforts to become more effective leaders would be self-centered -- selfish. Our efforts would be just so much vanity. We can truly help others only if our motivation is based on the kind of love God expects us to have.
- D. In this lecture, let's examine ourselves to be sure we're building on the solid, sure foundation of love for others.

V. Love the Brethren

- A. I John 2:9-10 -- Surely, we are in the second category described here, aren't we? None of us hates our brother -- or do we, in some cases? This word hates is translated from the same Greek word as "hate" in Luke 14:26.
- B. Luke 14:26 -- Notice, Christ said we must "hate" our parents and members of our own families. This word can, of course, have the meaning of "to love less" in a comparative sense.
- C. Genesis 29:30-31 -- This is another example of how God looks at this matter of hating someone. Nothing in the Bible indicates that Jacob hated Leah in the sense that we usually think of a person hating someone, but because of the way he treated Leah in favoring Rachel, God considered Jacob's feeling toward Leah as hatred.
- D. Do we sometimes hate our brother in the sense that we -- through our actions, words or attitudes -- love him less than we should? Some of us do. God says that any of us who are guilty of this are walking in darkness.

* [On the other hand, if we truly love our brother, there will be "none occasion of stumbling" in us. We won't offend any of our brothers and sisters and cause them to stumble as a result of our being inconsiderate, tactless, unkind, discourteous or unfriendly, no matter what the circumstances may be.

*Hates all
"ARE ARE
"FRIENDS" A
GENUINE?*

- E. Romans 12:9 -- If we have the kind of love toward our brother God expects, it will be sincere and from the heart -- without dissimulation, which means without feigning or pretending. Do we have a foot-washing attitude all year long?

VI. Spend Time With the Brethren

To have this kind of genuine, sincere love for others, you'll have to spend time with and really get to know them as brethren.

A. Fellowship often.

Malachi 3:16-17 -- Those who speak "often one to another" are those whom God will remember when He begins to select those who will be spared from the coming time of tribulation upon the entire earth and be born into His Family at Christ's return.

B. Set the example in being hospitable.

I Peter 4:9 -- "Use hospitality one to another." This is a very important way to spend time with and get to know others. Paul said we should be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). This should be one of our outstanding characteristics as Christians, and as the leaders in the local church, you should be setting the example for the rest of the brethren in this regard.

C. Show interest in others.

It is enjoyable to have others over for dinner from time to time, as circumstances and your finances permit, but an evening of cards (or some other game) and conversation, with simple refreshments, can be just as enjoyable and profitable.

Learn to make others feel at ease and relaxed in your home by showing a real interest in them -- in their background, their experiences, their interests. You can get to know them best by being a good listener and, if they are a little reticent, by asking them questions to encourage them to talk.

D. Invite newer members and others, not just close friends.

While it is normal and right for you to want to entertain your close friends, you should be sure to have others, such as newer members and those who don't usually get invited out often, over to your home often, also.

Good Example
Here.
Most persons
Attend CWT studies
& Fellowship well.

How often you have others over to your home will be up to each of you to determine in view of your own individual circumstances, but be sure to use wisdom and balance. Don't overdo it, and don't give others the impression that you are having them over to "help" them or because you are "supposed" to do this. This is just an area of Christian life in which all of you as leaders should be setting the example.

E. Glorify God.

John 15:8-17 -- It is very pleasing for our Father in heaven to look down and see His people visiting together and sharing their lives with each other. He is glorified by our fruits, and the most important of these, as emphasized right here in this chapter (verses 9, 12, 17), is love for our brethren. We get a chance to show this love and grow in it by speaking "often one to another" -- by having others over to our homes and by spending time with them at services, Bible studies and at other Church functions.

VII. Bolster and Encourage Each Other As Brethren

- A. Hebrews 10:25 -- This scripture is specifically referring to assembling for Sabbath services or other official Church meetings, but the principle stated here certainly applies to us getting together as individuals. It is important for us to spend time with each other, and "so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

As this age waxes more violent and becomes more perilous, those of us who are striving to obey God and serve Him "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15) need, as never before, to cultivate a real closeness among ourselves as brethren. We need to bolster, encourage and exhort each other in a positive, friendly, helpful way.

- B. I Corinthians 12:13-14 -- We are all "one body," and, as Benjamin Franklin told his fellow signers of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

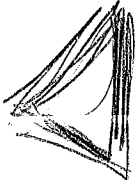
We as a group have been called to carry out the most awesome, gigantic commission ever given to any group of people. And for faithfully doing so, we will soon be (hated) of all nations. We must "hang together" -- we must work together and help each other -- if we are going to finish this Work!

VIII. Give Others the Benefit of the Doubt

In order to have the right kind of esprit de corps among ourselves as brethren, and in order to be sincerely pulling for each other in every circumstance, we must learn to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. We must learn to accept people for what they are without judging and criticizing.

Study this -
includes
addressed

A. God is our lawgiver and judge.



James 4:11-12 -- It is to God that our brother is accountable -- not to us. It isn't our place to judge others -- to impute motives and draw conclusions in our own minds about other people and what they should or should not be doing.

It is easy -- and in fact, natural -- to evaluate and critically analyze others, but it is wrong. This directly works against and tears down the godly love for others that we should be building into our character through God's Spirit. We need to recognize and put out such thoughts whenever we find ourselves mentally judging and criticizing others.

B. Look for the good in others.

Philippians 4:8 -- Think on these things. Look for the good in others. Learn to automatically think the best instead of the worst.

C. Practice godly love.

I Corinthians 13:4-7 -- This is how godly love behaves. But human nature wants to do just the opposite. Unless you are consciously trying to have this kind of love toward others and going to God continually for it, you won't have it.

D. Be tenderhearted.

Ephesians 4:29-32 -- We need to be kind, thoughtful and tenderhearted in our dealings with others. This is especially true for those of you who have a position of responsibility in which you must at times direct other people in some way (e.g., ushering or as the one in charge of a committee for a social).

Always be considerate, tactful and kind, even in the face of a wrong attitude. Maintain an attitude of forgiveness toward others and be willing to overlook their faults. Unless we forgive others, we ourselves can't expect forgiveness from God (Matthew 6:14-15).

IX. Develop a Family Comradery Among Yourselves

A. Promote unity.

Sincerely rejoice, from the heart, when one of your brothers in God's Church receives special blessings or recognition in some way. On the other hand, show empathy for those who suffer in any way. Express care and concern for brethren in trials, and pray for God's blessing upon them. This promotes unity and love in God's spiritual Family.

I Corinthians 12:26 -- Practice seeing God's Church as the spiritual Family of God, which it is, and develop a real concern for every individual member of that Family.

B. Esteem others better than ourselves.

Philippians 2:3-5 -- We must put on the very mind and attitude of Christ, esteeming others better than ourselves. Don't just rejoice in your own blessings (verse 4), but rejoice sincerely when others are blessed (Romans 12:15).

C. Pray for each other.

You should help each other and pray for each other. You don't have to confess your sins to each other, but you will find that it often helps to admit your faults and weaknesses to others and to ask them to pray with you about a particular problem.

X. Develop a Spirit of Selfless Service

A. Give of yourself to others.

After making certain that you are building on the foundation of genuine godly love for others, a second basic key to remember is that true leadership requires a spirit of service.

Matthew 20:25-28 -- Christ pointed out to the 12 disciples, who were at that time carnal and were striving among themselves, that any who would be "great" should become a "minister" -- a servant. He held up His own example of coming to minister unto others by giving His life rather than to be served.

I John 3:16-18 -- We ought also to have this attitude of being willing to lay down our lives for the brethren -- literally, if necessary, but just as importantly, in giving of our life, which is our time and energy, in serving others. We must demonstrate our love for the brethren by our deeds.

James 1:27 -- This is "pure religion." This is an important way in which you can serve -- by making it a point to visit widows, the sick and others who may be lonesome at times.

Another helpful way to serve is to include some of the "fatherless" in some of your family activities. The children of widows and of women who are separated from their husbands need the masculine influence you can provide, as well as the opportunity of being with other children. If various men would help from time to time with these "fatherless" children, no one man would be overburdened.

B. Be sure your motivation for service is right.

No matter how much you serve, unless your attitude and motivation is right, you aren't pleasing God. Examine your own motivation. Be willing to admit that it hasn't always been completely pure and honorable -- that there has been a lot of self involved. This is another aspect of human nature at work. You can overcome it only if you recognize it, repent of it and ask God to give you the right motivation, which is a sincere desire to help others and see them benefit.

Acts 20:35 -- It truly is more blessed to give than to receive, and if your attitude is right, you'll experience the satisfaction and joy that comes only from giving -- from serving and helping others.

Matthew 6:1-4 -- This should be our approach in serving. We don't have to be secretive, but neither should we be concerned about whether anyone else knows about it. Verse 3 -- As applied to the Body of Christ, this means you shouldn't be telling another member about the way in which you serve just for the sake of letting it be known. If you do, you already have your reward.

I Timothy 5:25 -- God says that most good works are obvious anyway, and those that are not cannot be hidden. The Pharisees blew their trumpet to get attention and then dropped their coin. We tend to drop our coin and then blow our horn. Don't. If it should be known, it will be.

XI. Lead by Your Example

A leader is one who sets the pace -- who lives the example -- for others to follow and emulate. We have seen two basic keys that will help you be more effective leaders in the local church. If you use these keys, you

will be setting the example as leaders for the rest of the congregation to follow.

1 First, really get to know the brethren and build into your character genuine, godly love for all of them. Second, 2 develop a spirit of selfless service. You'll help the brethren through your example, and you'll be richly rewarded now by the joy and satisfaction that comes from loving and serving others. More important, you'll be rewarded, according to your works, in God's Kingdom.

XII. What About the Other Qualities of Leadership?

It should be obvious that this lecture has not exhaustively covered all aspects of leadership. The reason is twofold: 1) Many other aspects of leadership will be covered in other lectures in this series. 2) This course is not trying to duplicate what the many profitable books on leadership, available at libraries and bookstores, say on the subject.

But it most assuredly is giving the important spiritual components of leadership not available anywhere else -- the missing dimension in leadership that this world doesn't recognize.

This truth is indeed precious.

XIII. Conclusion

Although some people are born with great natural ability, nonetheless we all can improve our leadership skills with work and the Spirit of Jesus Christ living in us. Hence, the saying that "leaders are made, not born" should be no more true than it is among us, the leaders of God's Church now, who are being made in the very image of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

N. B. F. H.
26-4-88

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 11

Pitfalls Leaders in God's Church Must Avoid

I. Introduction

- A. Have you ever watched a tightrope walker and marveled at the incredible skill and daring he or she displays? Certainly someone with such skills must experience a great euphoria and sense of accomplishment.
- B. Yet a tightrope walker pays a price for such death-defying accomplishments -- the constant danger that he might make one false step and plummet to disaster.
- C. Likewise, we who serve in leadership roles in God's Church experience the great blessing such service brings, but also, by virtue of that service, expose ourselves to certain pitfalls that in a spiritual sense can be deadly.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain the possible pitfalls of leadership in God's Church and how to avoid them, so you will never lose your vital spiritual footing.

III. Need

- A. Even though we are leaders in God's Church -- even ministers -- we are not impervious to losing our spiritual balance.
 - 1. Acts 20:17-38 -- Paul's strong words of warning were directed at the Church leaders.
 - 2. II Timothy 4:16 -- Even those closest to Paul -- Church leaders of one type or another -- forsook him and thus failed in their responsibilities when he needed them most.
- B. Thus, we need to pause and consider some of the pitfalls that may entrap us if we are not diligent.

IV. Pitfall One: Vanity or Self-righteousness

- A. Leadership in God's Church involves many duties that can puff up our vanity if we allow it.
 - 1. Ordination itself tends to tell the congregation that we are (or should be) at a certain level of spiritual development, and this realization about ourselves can lead to vanity.
 - 2. I Corinthians 8:1 -- The extra knowledge we should have, or learning experiences we are given, can lead to vanity.
 - 3. Special treatment and compliments that brethren tend to give us out of their love and respect can cause vanity.
- B. Such vanity can display itself within us in different ways depending upon our own character tendencies.
 - 1. A superior, condescending or know-it-all attitude.
 - 2. Self-righteousness.
 - 3. Imagining yourself to be more qualified, competent or experienced than you really are.
- C. Many important texts caution against such attitudes of vanity.
 - 1. I Timothy 3:6 -- This verse cautions Church leadership not even to ordain one who is so spiritually immature that he will allow ordination to swell him with pride. The principle applies also to non-ordained leaders.
 - 2. II Corinthians 12:7 -- Even Paul admitted that one reason he had a "thorn in the flesh" was to prevent him from feeling "exalted above measure."
 - 3. I Samuel 15 -- The story of Saul and how his vanity got the best of him is a grim and important reminder for us not to fall into this trap.
 - 4. I Corinthians 10:12 -- Those who think they stand should take heed lest they fall.

V. Pitfall Two: Becoming Critical of the People You Are to Serve

- A. Of course, leaders in God's Church must enforce God's government and standards even though at times this means giving correction and discipline.

- B. Yet this responsibility does not justify wrong attitudes and actions concerning God's people that some leaders have fallen into, such as:
 - 1. Gossiping about people's problems.
 - 2. Complaining about people with whom you don't get along.
 - 3. Being hypercritical of people's simple personality faults, or subjecting people to virtually microscopic examination.
 - 4. Viewing people as problems.
- C. Deal rather with God's people as potential Gods who need your help and encouragement. Maintain a humble spirit of mind.
 - 1. Galatians 6:1 -- Consider your own weaknesses when you serve, so you will not sin while you try to help others.
 - 2. John 3:16 -- Christ loved the brethren enough to die for them. Follow His example of giving of yourself, even though we are all sinners.
 - 3. I Thessalonians 2:7 -- Paul used gentleness in serving the people. Follow his example. (Of course, he used proper power when necessary, but in love and not in a critical spirit).

VI. Pitfall Three: Competing Among Yourselves

- A. Acts 15:36-40 -- Although contentions or competitions should not arise between leaders in God's Church, scriptures such as these show that they do.
- B. Such contentions may take various forms:
 - 1. Rank consciousness.
 - 2. Disagreements over areas of responsibility and who is in authority.
 - 3. Differences in judgment or opinion about how some matter should be handled.
- C. God's government gives precise instructions about how to deal with such matters.
 - 1. Philippians 2:3 -- Jealousies and other carnal attitudes should be repented of.

2. I Peter 5:1-5 -- Elders of lower rank should submit to those of superior rank in a good attitude. All elders should get along among themselves by humbling themselves before each other.
3. Matthew 18:15-18 -- One who is sinned against by a brother should follow this formula.

VII. Pitfall Four: Disloyalty

- A. Although disloyalty is common, many don't see themselves as disloyal because they don't recognize its many guises, such as:
 1. Speaking out against headquarters at Pasadena, Church leaders, a Church policy or a doctrine.
 2. Speaking out against the local pastor or his decisions or leadership style.
 3. Usurping the local pastor's role by not checking with him often about decisions only he can make.
 4. Dragging your feet or not being supportive of him on matters over which headquarters gives him the right to make decisions, such as speaking schedules, personnel use or timing and type of activities.
- B. All of these are examples of disloyalty, which should be guarded against.
 1. I Samuel 15:23 -- Disloyalty is a type of rebellion -- a grievous sin against God.
 2. I Corinthians 4:2 -- Loyalty is a type of faithfulness and a necessary quality of a Church leader or minister.

VIII. Pitfall Five: Becoming Jealous of Our Responsibilities

- A. It is common for leaders to become so used to doing a certain job or having a certain responsibility that they resent feeling interfered with by brethren or even the pastor. Such interference could take the form of:
 1. Unwanted advice.
 2. Unwanted assistance.
 3. Reassignment of duties, even by the pastor, from a job we enjoyed or for which we felt qualified.



B. Resentment or hard feelings especially tend to occur when a new pastor comes to the area and reassigns personnel, or when someone is taken off the sermonette list or from some other duty that seems to be one of spiritual status.

C. Therefore, remember these points:

1. * [No one has a special right to any job or responsibility for any given length of time for any reason.
2. The local pastor has been given authority by Pasadena to assign personnel as he deems best and to administrate the local church as he sees fit, within broad but specific guidelines carefully spelled out by Church Administration.
3. To properly serve requires that you develop a teachable and willing attitude that is open to suggestions and input both from your superior and even the people who serve under you.

IX. Pitfall Six: Being Served Instead of Serving

- A. God's brethren are loving and helpful people, and can at times wish so much to please their leaders that they become the servers instead of us.
 1. Examples: Buying you gifts, treating you to expensive meals they cannot afford, neglecting their families to tend to your needs.
 2. Although well intended, some types of serving work to their detriment since it harms their finances or family.
- B. Acts 20:33-35 -- Paul made clear that he was their servant and not the other way around.
- C. Matthew 20:25-28 -- Christ said that the greatest among us should be the servant to the others.

X. Pitfall Seven: Serving So Much You Ignore Your Own Family

- A. While the needs of God's Church are important, they should not be allowed to take so much time that your own family suffers as a result.
- B. I Timothy 3:1-4, 12 -- One of the qualifications for service is a good family life and example.
- C. Each leader in God's Church should make certain he takes time for his or her spouse and children.



1. This means having to schedule your time wisely.
2. You may have to inform your pastor you need fewer responsibilities so you have time with the family.

XI. Pitfall Eight: Using Man's Methods Instead of God's

- A. All leaders in the Church should want to improve themselves and increase in competency, such as by reading widely.
- B. Yet, while many books can be helpful, we must be ever wary to avoid substituting man's methods for God's methods.
 1. This is especially true in regard to man's systems of psychology, finance, business and justice, which form the keystones to man's ways in this world.
 2. James 3:13-18 -- There is a worldly wisdom and a godly type of wisdom, and it is God's wisdom we should seek.
 3. Proverbs 1:7 -- God's wisdom is based upon His Word, and fear and faith in Him.
 4. Remember the words carved on Ambassador Hall on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena: "The Word of God is the Foundation of Knowledge."

XII. Pitfall Nine: Succumbing to the Lusts of the Flesh

- A. We are not immune to the foibles of human nature just because we are leaders in the Church. Therefore, we must be on constant guard to avoid the lusts of the flesh.

Examples are: sexual lust or promiscuity, materialism and striving after money or status, alcoholism and drug abuse or addiction (even to prescription drugs).

- B. Ephesians 4:22, I John 2:16 -- We are commanded to forsake such worldly lusts as a part of our quest to become like God.

XIII. Pitfall Ten: Spiritual Lethargy

- A. Even though we as leaders should set the example of diligent prayer, Bible study, fasting and meditation, it is possible to let down and drift spiritually.
- B. Hebrews 2:1-3 -- Paul warns not to let salvation slip through neglect.

- C. I Corinthians 9:24-27 -- Paul tells how even he had to constantly strive to not be cast away himself, even though he had preached to others.

XIV. Pitfall Eleven: Erring from Doctrinal Purity

- A. With the privilege of using God's Word in preaching and counseling may come the tendency to err from the truth on some doctrinal point. This may be done unknowingly, through mistake or intentionally in the belief the Church is wrong on some point.
- B. Titus 1:9 -- A minister must teach as he has been taught.
- C. I Timothy 4:1-7 -- A leader must avoid perverting the doctrines of Christ.
- D. No minister has the right to teach contrary to the Church under whose authority he was ordained. This prohibition extends even to putting forth opinions or pet theories contrary to the Church's doctrines. If he has a doctrinal disagreement with the Church, he should resolve it through the proper channels. He is not to teach his opinions, but the teachings of the Church.

XV. Pitfall Twelve: Becoming Weary of Serving

- A. Although service in God's Church is a great privilege, it is possible to tire at times and let down if we are not careful. This produces various problems:
1. It can cause sloppiness and neglect of our responsibilities.
 2. It can cause us to look for greater recognition or advancement in a carnal way.
 3. It can breed discouragement.
- B. To overcome such feelings, do the following:
1. Don't look for your reward in this age. Remember that our primary reward is the spiritual one of God's Kingdom.
 2. Galatians 6:9-10 -- Have faith that your efforts will be rewarded by God.
 3. Philippians 2:12-18 -- Realize that service is its own reward, since any effort that results in the growth of God's people is itself reason to rejoice.

XVI. Conclusion

Like a tightrope walker, one who serves in God's Church must be ever sure that each step he takes avoids the pitfalls common to human nature. If we are careful to serve God's people faithfully, we can know the resulting joys and pleasures that others can only imagine!

28/6/02
CRAW/02

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 12

How to Maintain Good Health and Prevent Sickness

I. Introduction

- A. Here is a riddle: "What one thing is received naturally by most people, is taken for granted by almost everybody, is lost sooner or later by us all, and for the return of which humans will pay almost anything?"
- B. The answer is health!
- C. And here is another riddle: "Why, if we know that we will lose our health if we don't take care of ourselves, do we ignore caring for our bodies until it is too late?"
- D. This second question is harder to answer. But usually the answer is lack of knowledge or lack of desire and commitment. But we leaders in God's Church must be examples to the flock in all things, and therefore must determine to give our health the high priority it should have in our lives (if we are to have our lives at all!).

II. SPS

This lecture will deal with the often discussed but rarely acted on topic of how to maintain good health and prevent sickness.

III. Need

Why should we be concerned about our health? Why should we devote a lesson to it? Why is it important?

III John 2 -- It is God's express will and intent that His people have good health.

Good health is one of the seven laws of success. Our health will vitally affect, first of all, our success in this Christian life -- the degree to which we overcome and grow spiritually -- and, secondly, our success in doing our part in God's Work. And, of course, our basic happiness and well-being depends in large part on how we feel physically -- on our health.

A. To Grow Spiritually

In order for us to use this physical life as God intended -- to build godly character -- we need to have the best health possible. A tired, run-down, sickly body will automatically cause you to have a dull, lethargic mind. In order to have a sharp, clear, alert, sound mind, you must have a healthy, vibrantly alive physical body.

Any one of us can think more clearly, concentrate better and retain what we learn much more easily if we are in good health. Our spiritual growth -- the extent to which God's Spirit can enlighten, inspire and motivate us -- will be in direct proportion to the condition of our health.

B. To Do the Work of God

A second reason that we should maintain good health is to do God's Work. If we are physically run-down and weak, and at times sick, how can we do our part in the Work of God -- whatever that part may be, whether serving in the local area or simply staying on our jobs to contribute as much as possible to the Work?

To produce and be profitable in God's Work, we must maintain the best health possible!

C. For Our Own Happiness and Well-Being

Obviously, the state of our health directly affects our mental happiness and well-being. How we feel physically is important to our overall sense of peace and satisfaction. Certainly no one can read the book of John and miss this important truth. Physical health and happiness are closely linked.

IV. Basic Keys to Good Health

We all know that sickness is not normal or natural, and that a healthy body is not susceptible to sickness and disease. But we need to apply that knowledge and accept full responsibility for the present condition of our health. And when we do become sick, we should try to understand what caused it and resolve to change to avoid repeating that same mistake.

We are living in a physically degenerate age, and all of us are now suffering from physical weaknesses that we either inherited from our ancestors, or that we brought on ourselves by our own past way of life. Rather than using this as an excuse for not maintaining the best possible health, however, we should strive all the harder to negate

those weaknesses by complete obedience to the principles of health. There are certain basic keys, that, if followed, will ensure that each of us in our present circumstances will have the best health possible.

A. Proper Sleep

The first basic key to staying healthy and being alive, alert and productive is getting regular sleep. The average individual needs about eight hours of sleep, beginning and ending at about the same time each night, to be most effective.

The human body is not like a machine. It runs down. During the time you are asleep, your bodily processes slow down and your internal organs rest. At the same time, poisons are expelled through your sweat glands, and the body repairs itself. When you skip sleep or get it at odd hours, you throw additional strain on your body, wearing it down, and you upset your metabolism and make your body vulnerable to sickness or disease.

Failure to get proper sleep may also make your thinking murky. This means your study of God's Word is ineffective and your prayers are lackadaisical, which stunts your spiritual growth. In addition, you are more accident-prone and tend to be more irritable when you have robbed yourself of needed sleep.

Set a definite, reasonably early time each night to go to bed, and stick to it. Then get up early each morning after a good night's sleep. Make it a regular way of life, and you'll be far more alert, alive, healthy and productive.

B. Regular Exercise

The second basic key to good health is regular exercise. You can't be in really good physical condition without regular exercise. Have you ever seen an out-of-condition deer, squirrel or hawk? Their whole way of life is exercise. It is normal to be alive, zestful, energized. But many of us have been living in a physical straitjacket for years -- in most cases simply because we do not get enough exercise.

I Timothy 4:8 -- God tells us that for the time we are in this flesh regular exercise is profitable to us. Let's understand why.

Your heart is designed to pump blood through your body. If you are continually inactive, many of your

arteries and capillaries will tend to shrink, and your blood will not be able to carry enough oxygen to all parts of your body to keep you full of life and energetic. As a result, you will begin to feel tired all the time, and your circulation will become poor in your fingers, toes, hands and feet. At the slightest constriction of circulation, they will then begin to tingle and "go to sleep."

Our heart is a muscle, and any out-of-condition muscle works inefficiently and produces fatigue toxins at twice the rate of muscles that are in good condition.

Also, in time of stress, a heart weakened by lack of exercise is vulnerable to a heart attack.

Drivers involved in automobile accidents sometimes escape serious injury in the accidents but die of heart attacks. This is how a person is literally "scared to death." The heart can't take it and just breaks down. A heart in good condition will not break down; it will remain steady after reaching a peak pulse rate.

As this world decays and this Work reaches its climax, we are going to be under more and more stress and persecution. We are going to face continuing crises as a Church and as individuals. Knowing what we will face in the near future, all of us should set ourselves to get in top physical shape.

The best exercises are those that not only tone up muscles in your body, but also build up your heart and increase circulation of your blood -- like running, cycling, walking and swimming. Aerobic exercises are excellent. When you first begin aerobics, you will put a load on your muscles and arteries, so that your body will begin to produce new arterioles for the blood to flow through. The new strain and flow of life-giving oxygen and blood will clean up the old arteries and expel the poisons. The muscles will become healthy, you will lose the feeling of fatigue and your mind will become much more alert.

It takes persistence, stick-to-itiveness and character to begin and continue on a regular exercise program, but it will pay off in better health for you today, and may save your life in the next few years.

If you are completely out of condition or have chronic health problems, it is wise to seek the advice of a doctor before beginning an exercise program.

C. Peace of Mind

The third basic key is peace of mind. Develop a positive approach to life. Don't stew and worry about minor things, and learn to cast your real concerns, worries and burdens on Christ (I Peter 5:7). Proverbs 17:22 shows that a merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit breaks up the body.

Many glands in your body respond to mental stimuli and react adversely when you are angry, frustrated, sad, sorrowful or upset in some way. If you argue, you can't properly digest your food. Many people stimulate fatigue in their bodies by constantly being in a downcast attitude.

Christians often put themselves under unnecessary stress by bottling up things that should be talked about. Counseling with a minister or going to a brother about a misunderstanding can help you restore calm and confidence.

II Corinthians 10:3-5 -- Bring all your thoughts into obedience to Christ.

Philippians 4:6-8 -- Stop worrying about things beyond your control. Begin to de-emphasize your problems and exercise faith. Refresh yourself with the promises of God and stimulate your mind through God's Word. Believe and know that all things work together for good to those who love and obey God and with whom He is working to perfect for His ruling Family and Kingdom (Romans 8:28).


Smile, greet people cheerfully, radiate happiness, pursue peace. Don't brood over things. Be open and talk things out -- get the problems, misunderstandings and traumas solved quickly.

You'll be surprised, if you begin to practice these techniques, how much better you'll feel and how some of your chronic ailments, pains and fatigues will subside. Mental attitudes and anxieties can cause physical diseases.

D. Right diet

1. Eat Balanced Meals

We are what we eat. Even though we are getting regular sleep and exercise and maintaining peace of mind, unless we are eating properly, we cannot be as healthy as we should be.

 You should eat a well-prepared, well-balanced diet. Vegetables, fruit and whole grains, raw seeds and nuts should predominate. This should be the major portion of your diet. Then should come protein -- good lean meats, fresh raw milk, eggs and cheese. And don't forget to drink plenty of fresh, clean water daily.

Most people emphasize the wrong foods. The major part of their diet consists of sugars and refined starches, followed heavily by protein. They rarely eat green, leafy vegetables and only occasionally have an apple or orange. Some drink virtually no water.

It is easier to serve pre-cooked, pre-packaged foods than to take the time to bake bread, make nourishing, colorful salads and carefully wash and prepare green leafy vegetables. Life comes only from life. Eating a constant diet of de-vitalized food will age the body prematurely. It takes more effort to prepare a nourishing, wholesome meal, but it really pays off.

Daniel 1:4-16 -- Daniel was healthy and wanted to stay that way. He didn't intend to defile his body and sludge up his mind with the rich, starchy, spiced-up concoctions the king was eating. But he was not a vegetarian, and he did drink wine (Daniel 10:3). Daniel simply ate natural vegetables and fruits and, later in life, clean unadulterated meats and good, natural wines. We would do well to follow his good example as much as possible in this present society.

2. Minimize Preservatives and Artificial Colorings, Flavorings and Supplements

Try to avoid eating foods with preservatives or artificial colorings or flavorings. People today are suffering from myriad diseases and paying a horrible penalty in their bodies as a result of these additives. Many of these additives are poisons that would be fatal if ingested in larger quantities, and are somewhat harmful even in small quantities. To make matters worse, many of them are residual -- some of them accumulate in your system and build up over the years to potentially dangerous levels.

It is a simple matter to check the products you buy for additives that might be harmful. The labels of most products list the ingredients and chemical additives such as BHA and sodium nitrate.

If you are visiting someone's home and you don't know whether what they serve contains such things, don't worry about it. But where you are doing the buying and it's your decision, make an effort within your financial means to buy only pure, natural foods or products.

We should eat only those natural foods that can spoil -- and eat them before they do. This is a good overall principle to follow with regard to every area of your diet.

Artificial supplements and vitamins, as well as food that is "enriched" or "fortified" with such supplements, are not the keys to good health. A diet of natural foods is the surest, quickest, best way to health. Many "health foods," pills and artificial vitamins can get your body out of balance or have an adverse reaction that is harmful to your body.

In some cases a dietary supplement may be required for a limited time for a special dietary lack. You must make those decisions for yourself. But a natural diet is all that is generally necessary to maintain good nutrition.

3. Refined and Processed Foods Do Not Build Good Health

Many refined and processed products are of little or no value in sustaining, nourishing or building the body. In fact, tests have proven that they can be harmful. They can clog the digestive system and become a real burden for the body to eliminate. In many cases, they act as poisons -- not foods.

While it is certainly not wrong or a sin to eat white bread, white sugar or other refined or processed foods on occasion, few people fully realize the detriment caused by these "improved" products when they are regularly substituted in place of the natural products that were intended as food.

Today we are paying the penalty of having a generation grow up on refined and processed "non-foods" rather than on nutritious foods. Our hospitals are filled with people with mental disorders, and our streets and homes abound with them. Our nations are wracked with sicknesses and diseases that are the direct result of our diet of processed and refined foods.

Many of the starchy, sugary, spicy desserts that taste good at the moment contain little or no nutritional value and can, if eaten too often, adversely affect one's health. Fruits, cheese and nuts are good alternatives.

And a special point should be made here that most of us eat too often (because of snacks) and too much. Consequently, many of us are overweight and out of condition. So learn to eat sparingly of the right kinds of food. This, combined with regular aerobic exercises, may literally save you from heart attack, stroke or premature death.

V. Don't Compromise With What You Know Is Right

We all know many of these basic keys to good health, but are we acting on that knowledge? Do we simply lack the character to do what we know is right?

A. You Will Incur Physical Penalties

It is easy to make excuses for not doing what we know we should, but excuses do not take away the penalties. Many look around and see others losing sleep, burning the candle at both ends, "too busy" to get regular sleep and exercise and eating improperly, and they conclude: "Oh, well, it doesn't hurt me any worse than it hurts them." Others look to someone else and justify what they do because so-and-so does it. That, in other words, makes it all right in spite of what they personally know is right. If you reason this way, your physical health will suffer as a result.

B. Your Confidence and Faith in Healing Could Be Weakened

James 4:17 -- Knowledge can be dangerous if we are not acting on and obeying that knowledge. Some will not change even though they know better. Others toss it off to the fact that this is the end time and we are all so degenerate it couldn't have been avoided. In some cases this might be true, but not always.

Galatians 6:7-8 -- We can't mock God. We can't claim to repent and continue to repeat the same mistakes that caused the illness, knowing better, and expect God to heal us (Colossians 3:25).

I John 3:22 -- You can't go wholeheartedly to God in prayer for healing when you know you haven't been doing the best you can with the knowledge you have -- when you know you have been compromising continually with that which makes for good health. You would not think of going to your employer and asking for a raise

in pay and a promotion when your performance on the job is substandard. Can we honestly think that we should ask God to grant us a miracle such as healing when we have not conscientiously maintained our bodies which are the temple of His Holy Spirit?

C. It Weakens Your Spiritual Character

But just as important, you need to use this area of your life to build character, not tear it down. Resolve not to compromise your conscience in any of the basic keys that would insure good health. Resolve that by the way you conduct this area of your life you will build good health -- and good character.

VI. Conclusion

It is important for us as God's leaders to set the example in maintaining good health. Plus, the vitality and energy that comes from practicing a balanced health program will enable you to serve the Church more effectively.

Strive to keep these principles. It will take effort, but we've been called to exercise character in all areas of our lives. The results will be well worth the effort!

24 Oct 58
N. Bayley

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 13

The Duties and Responsibilities of Deacons and Deaconesses

I. Introduction

- A. This is the age of dwindling natural resources. In fact, resources are at times in such short supply that a crisis occurs in commodities like paper, water or oil.
- B. But one resource that has always been in short supply is qualified manpower and woman-power to do the Work of God. That is why Christ commanded us to pray that He would send laborers into the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38).
- C. One of the rich resources of manpower and woman-power which God has supplied is that of deacons and deaconesses. Because this resource is so precious, it behooves the Church to ensure that this resource is being properly managed and encouraged.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain the duties and responsibilities of deacons and deaconesses.

III. Need

Deacons and deaconesses have been a part of the Church so long that sometimes we take them for granted and perhaps neglect to stop and ask ourselves why we need to rehearse such a subject as this.

Here are some of the reasons it is good to review the responsibilities of deacons and deaconesses:

- A. They greatly influence the stability and attitude of the local church.

Usually the deacons and deaconesses are spiritual pillars of the congregations and are looked up to by the members. It is therefore vital that we do not

neglect instructing this important group on their duties.

B. They need to know what is expected of them.

One great frustration of any employee or volunteer is when he doesn't know what his job is. We must not allow this state of affairs to exist among those whom God has chosen to serve His people in such a personal way.

C. They need to know how to do their jobs.

Knowing what is expected of you is not enough. A person must have instruction in how to do his job properly. This is only fair for we cannot require someone to fulfill his responsibilities if he does not know how to do the job.

D. Instruction such as this promotes uniformity and unity.

It is helpful to have guidelines from headquarters defining how things should be done. We are to do the same things and have unity in God's Church. Read I Corinthians 1:10.

IV. Definition and Description of the Office

The place to start is with a job description. How many of our deacons have ever been given a job description? It can be easily done.

A. First read Acts 6:1-8. These verses give the historical basis for the office of deacon. From these, we are also able to construct a definition of the role.

B. From the biblical instruction we can discern the following points about the roles of deacons and deaconesses:

1. Deacons are charged with mostly duties of a temporal (physical) nature. For example, service to widows.
2. It is a position to which one is ordained through the laying on of hands rather than merely appointed verbally.

3. The office requires one to meet certain spiritual standards or criteria. We see these further delineated in I Timothy 3:8-13.
 4. Deacons sometimes do have some spiritual duties as assigned by the ministry. Some of our deacons may give sermonettes, for example.
- C. Putting these points together, we can compose a biblical definition: A deacon or deaconess is a person of spiritual maturity ordained from the congregation to serve the physical needs of the local church as directed by the ministry. It is not an office of the clergy, but is a dignified and important position.

V. Qualifications -- The Duty to Set a Good Example

- A. Everyone hearing this lecture is probably familiar with the qualifications of a deacon and deaconess given in I Timothy 3. But these qualifications are not merely for the minister to read and ponder prior to ordaining a deacon. They are also for the deacon to refer to and meditate upon so he may compare himself to see if he meets the standard God sets.
- B. Indeed, the first duty of a deacon is to ensure that he meets the standards or qualifications. One of the best ways to promote such self-evaluation is to read these verses and emphasize the qualifications, and understand what the various words, such as "blameless," mean today.

VI. God's Government

A deacon or deaconess is ordained into an official position within the framework of God's governmental structure. In the past, misunderstandings about how God's government in the Church should work, and a lack of understanding of where and how the deacon fits into that government, has been the cause of some problems within local congregations.

Therefore, it is vital that we reaffirm and explain some of the principles of the operation of God's government as they relate to deacons and deaconesses.

A. Structure

God's government is a pyramidal hierarchy with Jesus Christ as head of the Church under the overall direction of God the Father (Colossians 1:18). Under

Christ is the ministry, but still part of the governmental structure, are the deacons, deaconesses and other "helps." Read I Corinthians 12:28.

B. Relationship With Headquarters

Deacons, like all members, are taught doctrine directly from headquarters via Church literature, tapes, etc. However, administratively, deacons are linked to headquarters through their local pastors. Thus they must be sure to be responsive to the leadership of the local ministry, for it is to the local ministry that the deacons primarily answer.

C. Relationship to Members

Although all members receive instruction directly from headquarters, most matters of administration are handled through the local pastors. Often, but not always, the deacons are vital links to the people from the local ministry. It is therefore crucial that the deacons and deaconesses accurately reflect the will of the local ministry to the members in how they act, talk and direct activities.

It's often true that a pastor will appoint a deacon to be over a temporary or permanent crew assigned to a certain job or responsibility. In all routine matters relating to the chore at hand, the members should, of course, look to the deacon for direction. However, the serving member should never be or feel dissuaded from approaching the pastor directly with a problem concerning the job that he feels he cannot resolve with the deacon.

What has been said above refers to physical matters related to a job at hand. It goes without saying that all members "report" spiritually to the ministry directly without having to go through a sub-organization of deacons or others.

D. Relationship to Local Church Elder

What has just been said to be true of members in regard to deacons is also true of deacons in regard to local church elders. That is, a deacon may be assigned certain duties under the direction of a local church elder, but he always has the right to approach the pastor in case of conflict. Furthermore, in personal, spiritual matters, a deacon has no need to approach the pastor through the local church elder.

All local church elders are not "over" all deacons in a line authority sense.

E. Summary

The point of these comments about government is to show that no deacon or deaconess can allow himself or herself to act independently of the local ministry.

God's ministers are required by God to be faithful conduits of truth through which God's way of doing things is transmitted to the people from God's leadership at headquarters. Read II Timothy 2:1-2.

In like manner, deacons are themselves a link in the chain of authority with connections up and down the chain. Like the ministry, they must be accurate reflections of the will of their superiors so that the truth which is flowing to the people through the local ministry will not be stifled, changed or distorted -- even unintentionally -- by them.

As can be seen, one important test of a deacon or deaconess is how well he or she serves the local pastor in the temporal duties he assigns. The test is not how creative or capable they are, per se, but how they apply themselves to fruitful and selfless, balanced service. Misunderstanding about this point has caused much disruption in the past and must be avoided.

F. Exceptions

Although deacons are to follow the local ministry, there are times when they should not do so. They should not follow the local minister if he, for example, is departing from the way the Church is directing him.

Here are some guidelines showing when it may be necessary to go around the authority of the ministry.

1. A deacon or deaconess should not go over the head of the minister:
 - a. In matter merely involving personality differences. The deacon should overlook such differences and strive to cooperate with the pastor. Read Hebrews 13:17.
 - b. In matters of administrative style within the broad guidelines headquarters allows.

- c. When the minister has made an innocent mistake or slip of the tongue. The deacon should discuss the matter with the pastor and resolve it. Read Matthew 18:15-20.
2. The deacon or deaconess may go over the minister's head when:
- a. The pastor teaches intentional doctrinal error or heresy.
 - b. The pastor clearly and markedly departs from the administrative policies instituted from headquarters.
 - c. The pastor (or elder) commits a serious sin that threatens his own spiritual life or the well-being of the congregation.

Note: Caution is in order here. Remember that when one goes over his superior's head, he should be in a good attitude and correct in his facts. No matter what the outcome of such a move, the move has serious implications for those involved. Such action should never be taken lightly, therefore.

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God's government allows such actions, for it is through this means that we can be sure we are never cut off from God by an intermediate weak link in the chain. Still, it is a serious move and should not be done capriciously or taken lightly.

VII. Methods of Doing Duties

When we stop and analyze it, the duties a deacon performs must be performed differently -- very differently -- from how deacons or similar offices of the world's churches go about doing their duties. That is, the deacons must not fall into the trap of doing God's service man's way.

Here are the important ways in which a deacon should fulfill his responsibilities:

A. Service

As Christ pointed out, it is common for people in authority to fall into an attitude of lordship rather than of service. Read Matthew 20:25-28. This must not be the case of our deacons and deaconesses who are to serve.

B. Humility

Not only must a deacon do the job of a servant (that is, serve and not be served), but his attitude should also reflect humility of mind. Read Isaiah 66:2, I Peter 5:5-6.

C. Responsiveness

A deacon in God's Church must be quick to implement the needs of the ministry in serving the people.

D. Teachability

The purpose of God's government is not just to direct, but to teach. Therefore, the local pastor hopes that the deacons and leaders under him will not only obey his directives, but that they will be good students and learn the principles which God is trying to teach His Church through the local ministers.

E. Example

The principles and objectives taught to the deacons should filter down through them to the people they serve. Their example is a strong teacher.

F. Diligence

Proverbs 12:24 says, "The hand of the diligent will rule." Those who are in authority, such as the deacons and deaconesses, must always be diligent in their duties.

G. Dependability

→ A person who is reliable is always a good servant. One who is unreliable can never be fully counted on.

VIII. Specific Duties

The specific duties of deacons may be subdivided into certain categories. Some of these categories are listed here to help our leaders understand the nature of each type of duty.

A. Implied in the Bible

The Bible itself states that the purpose of deacons is to serve the needs of the widows (Acts 6:1-2). We may also add to that group the fatherless and other needy people (James 1:27).

Therefore, each deacon or deaconess should consider himself or herself a committee of one to notice problems among such groups and help without being told. He or she should notice things and act on his or her own initiative.

Of course, such help should be done in a manner which does not conflict with the specifically assigned responsibilities of other deacons. Nor should these things be done without the pastor's knowledge or consent.

B. Assigned Duties

Most of a deacon's duties are specifically assigned by the pastor. It goes without saying that the whole intention of this lecture is to help deacons fulfill these responsibilities in the spirit and manner described in this lecture. Here are some examples of typical duties:

1. Setting up/taking down chairs
2. Assisting/organizing YOU groups and activities
3. Assisting/organizing senior citizen groups and activities
4. Organizing church potlucks (set-up, food service, clean-up)
5. Driving widows to and from services
6. Caring for widows throughout the week (lawn work, housework, etc.)
7. Contacting brethren to pass on urgent messages from minister (e.g., change in location of services)
8. Cleaning church hall before/after use on Sabbath
9. Cassette-taping Sabbath services
10. Distributing sermon tapes to "shut-ins" *homebound*
11. Organizing sending meals to disabled members
12. Visiting hospitalized members
13. Providing flower arrangements for the stage on Sabbaths

14. Handing out songbooks on the Sabbath
15. Taking attendance
16. Taking up offerings on Holy Days and assisting in counting
17. Giving opening/closing prayers
18. Organizing church book library and tape library
19. Setting up mother's room on the Sabbath
20. Receiving extra responsibilities in Spokesman Club

Special Note: When listed in one place like this, it is obvious that the responsibilities deacons handle are many and varied. It is also obvious that these duties are critical to the successful running of the local church. The importance of these duties -- and hence of the deacons and deaconesses -- can simply not be overstated.

Sometimes the so-called "spiritual" duties like sermonettes are esteemed highly, but these physical duties are not considered important. Such thinking is shortsighted. The physical duties of the deacon have tremendous spiritual impact. The role of a deacon is extremely important, and his/her duties are as well.

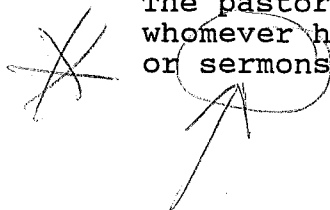
C. Speaking

The duty of giving sermonettes is in many ways a separate category. Pastors from time to time hold meetings to instruct the speakers how to better do their job.

What should be said here is that while deacons are often given the opportunity to speak, this is not always the case. No one should feel hurt or left out if he is a deacon and is not asked to speak.

Speaking assignments such as sermonettes are not a standard part of the job description of a deacon. In the past, some few deacons have felt unfairly treated if one or more of the other deacons in a church area were on the speaking list but they were not.

The pastor has been given the discretion to assign whomever he chooses as qualified to give sermonettes or sermons. No deacon should feel slighted if he is



not asked to speak. Those who are extended the opportunity to serve in this way should be grateful for the opportunity for extra training. Those not invited to speak will be serving in many other, and sometimes in even more valuable, ways.

IX. Problem Areas and Pitfalls

The opportunities a deacon or deaconess has in God's Church are many and varied. Yet these special opportunities afford certain potential problems and pitfalls, both physical and spiritual.

Here are some of the more common ones:

A. Vanity or Self-righteousness

A leader in God's Church must never fall into the trap of becoming vain or lifted up in pride. Read I Timothy 3:6. Likewise, he must never become critical of the people he serves or views them as inferior. Remember Christ's love for all (John 3:16).

B. Competition

Competition between yourselves or striving for advancement should be repented of (Philippians 2:3). You should humble yourself in God's sight so He may lift you up if He so desires (I Peter 5:6).

C. Disloyalty

The point above regarding Church government may be reiterated here.

D. Jealous of Responsibilities

Don't allow yourself to feel resentment if you are moved to another responsibility, or if someone tries to help you in your present one.

E. Spiritual Lethargy

Even though leaders in God's Church, we must not allow ourselves to lose out on salvation through neglect (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

Spiritual lethargy often takes the form of neglecting prayer, Bible study or meditation. Sometimes this occurs because the deacon's physical service crowds out his spiritual time for God. Be vigilant and never let this happen to you.

F. Being Served Instead of Serving

Matthew 20:25-28 shows the greatest are those who serve.

G. Serving Too Much

No one should serve so much that he harms his family, or his physical or spiritual health. Communicate with your pastor if you find this to be a problem. Remember the necessity to set a good example in all areas of your Christian life. Read I Timothy 3:12.

H. Using Man's Methods

God does things in His Work differently from the way man does things. We must use God's way and wisdom and not man's (James 3:13-18 and I Corinthians 2:1-8).

I. Succumbing to Lusts of the Flesh

All of us are susceptible to the weaknesses of human nature like sexual sins and must be always on guard against these things. Read Ephesians 4:22 and I John 2:16.

J. Becoming Weary of Well Doing

It is a tendency in all of us to tire with service. We must not allow this common foible of human nature to ensnare us. Read Galatians 6:9-10.

X. Rewards of Service

The service a deacon or deaconess renders affords the server many rewards. Of course, our main goal should be the Kingdom of God and we should not look to full reward now in this age. But it can be good to focus briefly upon some of the rewards as an incentive to further service.

We can know for sure that our efforts are not being overlooked by God, but will afford us thanks from Him. Remember the words of Paul: "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 3:13).

A. Satisfaction

In all labor there is profit, and much of this profit comes from the satisfaction of doing a job which needs to be done.

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B. Feelings of Thankfulness

Only a few in this age will ever know the joy of working for God directly in His Work. Even though not on salary, our deacons and deaconesses should from time to time focus on the joy they get from doing a job that has eternal implications.

It may at first seem strange that we would be thankful for work. But work can be a great blessing. Jesus Christ said that His will was to do the will of the Father and finish His work (John 4:34). If the same attitude is found in Christ's deacons, the Church of God will be well on the way to accomplishing the Father's will on earth.

C. Seeing People Change

Much of the duties we do, and in which the deacons share, results directly or indirectly in change in people. Certainly seeing such change is a reward of great magnitude and one which should not be overlooked.

XI. Conclusion

As stated at the outset, our deacons and deaconesses are one of the greatest resources we have at our disposal in serving the local church. God, the ministry and the leaders at headquarters are grateful to you for your service.

Thank you!

28/11/88
Newman's
Last Sydney

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 14

How to Properly Serve the Widows, Elderly and Other Needy

I. Introduction

- A. Have you heard the phrase the survival of the fittest? You probably have if you have studied evolution. It means that the species we have today are alive because they were strong enough to survive, but the weak died out.
- B. Of course, man did not evolve, but man does indeed function in a similar way in society. That is, only the strong survive. Sad to say, such is the nature of Satan's world.
- C. This may be the way man's world works, but it is not the way God's system is to work. God's ideal is that all survive -- and prosper! Indeed, God's way is, as Romans 15:1 says, that "we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (King James Version). The strong should care for the weak!
- D. Nowhere does this command to help the weak apply more to God's Church than in the case of widows, elderly and other needy.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how to effectively deal with the widows, elderly and other needy. It will mainly address serving widows because the problems they face are typical of the needy in general. Widows' problems are usually the most severe of the needy group. If you know the principles of how to deal with widows, you will also know how to deal with the elderly and other needy.

III. Need

Here are some reasons we need to study this topic:

- A. Widows and elderly are at a time in their lives when they are physically weak and need extra help.
- B. God warns against oppression of the widows and, by implication, against oppression of all those who share their problems. Read Exodus 22:22: "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child." See also Deuteronomy 24:17, 27:19, Zechariah 7:10, Malachi 3:5 and Matthew 23:14.
- C. God directly commands that we care for them. Read Deuteronomy 24:20-21, Isaiah 1:17 and Jeremiah 22:3.
- D. God praises service to them (Deuteronomy 24:19, James 1:27).
- E. God Himself cares for the needy, and we should emulate Him since we are to be His children. See Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 68:5, 146:9, Proverbs 15:25 and Jeremiah 49:11.

Special Note: No one can read these verses without being powerfully struck by God's jealous zeal for the widow and other needy. Clearly, we have a solemn duty to make sure our responsibilities to these people do not go unfulfilled.

IV. Who Are Widows and Other Needy?

- A. The term widows includes all women who physically or spiritually are alone.
 - 1. A widow is a woman, old or young, who has lost a husband to death and has not remarried. Most widowed young women should be considered simply as eligible singles. They share some characteristics of widowhood, but not others.

Paul said that we should "honor widows who are really widows" (I Timothy 5:3). This usually means older women who are not as able to care for themselves. This doesn't mean we ignore the younger ones, but that we discern their different abilities to help themselves.
 - 2. A woman may not physically be a widow but can have the same needs. For example:
 - a. A woman who is married but her husband is not in the Church. Some of these women will need little extra attention because they have good husbands, or are younger. Others will require much help.

- b. A woman who is divorced. The older ones have nearly the same needs as true widows. Younger divorced women will have nearly the same (lessor) needs as a single, eligible girl.
- c. An older woman who never married.

Special Note: The primary element that Paul seems to stress in determining whether one is "really" a widow is whether she is "left alone." Read I Timothy 5:5. (We try to avoid the use of the term "spiritual widow." It can unnecessarily cause offense to nonmember mates.)

B. Other Needy

Usually these are elderly, but the fatherless, orphans and poor share many needs with the elderly.

V. Special Needs of the Widows, Elderly or Other Needy

It should be obvious that the special help we hope to offer to the widows and elderly is in response to special needs that arise out of their unique problems. It is helpful to list some of these special problems and ways we can serve:

- A. No helpmate -- Widows and elderly often have no one to rely on to help with their day-to-day needs.

Deacons and deaconesses charged with the responsibility of caring for the widows and elderly would do well to become familiar with the daily physical needs of those they serve.

Depending on the circumstances, daily needs may include preparing meals, shopping, bathing, washing and fixing hair, writing or mailing letters, taking walks, handling bills, making repairs around the house, housecleaning, laundry, yard work, special errands and dozens of other responsibilities we may take for granted.

- B. Health problems -- Widowhood and old age often go hand in hand, and with older age often come health problems.

Ways to serve here include taking widows and elderly to the doctor, dentist or other health professionals, helping them research and understand their health problems, doing chores they're not able to perform and providing and preparing nutritious food for them.

It may be helpful for deacons and deaconesses to become informed about the health problems associated with old age.

- C. Loneliness -- In addition to lack of a helper, widows often feel lonely since they now have no regular company after having lived for years with someone to talk to at all times.

Frequent visits, calls and cards may be the best way to serve in this area. Show the elderly and widows you really care. Learn to be a good listener. Don't be afraid to ask a widower or widow about his or her deceased mate.

- D. Vulnerability -- Because of age, poor health and lack of a mate, widows are quite vulnerable to those who might do them harm (i.e., landlords, neighbors, ill-behaved teens).

To ensure their safety and make them feel more secure, it would be helpful to check doors, windows and locks. Volunteer to install a peephole or extra locks.

- E. Fear -- Widows and other elderly sense their vulnerability and often become fearful.

We can help alleviate their fears by giving them a sense of security by our time, concern and attention.

- F. Depression -- The above problems lend themselves to the development of discouragement and depression.

Again, involvement in serving their needs and being a friend they can rely on will lessen the likelihood of discouragement.

VI. We Owe a Debt

The Bible makes plain that the Church, through its ministers and concerned members, owes a debt of responsibilities to widows and other needy.

- A. The account of the ordination of the first deacons in Acts 6 implies that the Church has responsibilities to the widows, for the very reason the office of deacon was established was to meet those needs.
- B. The Bible commands us not to persecute widows. Certainly neglect is a type of persecution. Further, the Bible commands affirmative action to help the needy widows and others. The Bible highly exemplifies those who help the widows.

Special Note: Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach gained a reputation as being a friend of widows. As in all matters regarding the Church, we should consider this reputation as an example God hopes we will emulate. No doubt it is one of many reasons God chose Mr. Tkach for his present responsibilities.

VII. Whose Responsibility Is It to Help the Widows and Elderly?

A. The Ministers

It should be obvious that the minister, and first of all the local pastor, is primarily responsible for seeing that all of God's injunctions are followed in the local church, including God's directives regarding widows, elderly and the needy.

This does not mean he must personally see to every detail, nor that he himself carries out every charitable act, but merely that he oversees the process and sees that the needs of the widows are met.

The minister may delegate many day-to-day matters to those under him.

B. The Deacons

Acts 6 makes plain that the deacons must consider the care of the widows and other needy, as far as their physical needs are concerned, to be one of their primary obligations.

They should be so tuned in to the widows that they anticipate their genuine needs even before they are vocalized to the minister. And they should be prepared to help them in smaller matters even without checking every last detail with the pastor. Pastors should be kept informed of these matters, however.

C. The Members

Finally, all members should be educated about the special obligations they owe the needy in their congregations.

VIII. Responsibilities of the Church to Widows and Other Needy

The Church's responsibilities toward widows, elderly and the needy into two categories: spiritual and physical.

A. Spiritual Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the Church are spiritual. We, as well as the widows, can sometimes become so involved in the physical needs that we forget our first priority must be the spiritual character development of the individual.

Again, the Church does not exist just to be a sort of welfare system for the needy. Its primary function is to show people how to solve their own problems by living God's way and developing a deep spiritual relationship with God. God says, "Let your widows trust in Me" (Jeremiah 49:11).

But this means that the ministers must from time to time focus on the special, spiritual needs of widows and elderly and tell them how to deal with these needs.

B. Physical Responsibilities

The Church has the obligation -- indeed, the privilege -- to help in physical matters. However, this help must be in accordance with certain guidelines.

1. Relatives of the widow should help first.

The Bible is plain about the need of relatives to help their own before the Church is called upon to lend assistance. This is easiest when the relative is in the Church, but even relatives outside the Church can be diplomatically informed of the person's needs and encouraged to help out.

If relatives decline to help, then we must fill the void, as the widow has no other recourse.

Read I Timothy 5:4: "But if any widow has children, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God."

See also I Timothy 5:16: "If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows."

2. All forms of available government assistance should be sought first.

The United States government, for example, offers many types of assistance to seniors, widows and

other needy. As citizens of the United States, widows and others have a right to take advantage of these resources when they are eligible for them. These include food stamps, welfare, social security, government pensions, "meals on wheels," plus many local programs.

3. The Church should respond to all remaining needs, plus those wants to which it reasonably can.

The Church, however, cannot respond to all wants. Often, people's wants are not good for them or for the Church. (This topic is further discussed under "Pitfalls to Avoid.")

4. The minister must abide by biblical and Church guidelines regarding matters on which a policy has been stated.

For example, third-tithe assistance should be administered as stated in the Assistance Manual.

IX. Ways to Serve the Widows, Elderly and Other Needy

As ministers, we often tend to serve those who require help as needs come to our attention, rather than anticipate their needs. For example, when they counsel after services about getting help with a bill they cannot pay, and we almost without thought write them a third-tithe check to help with the bill.

It would be good for us to stop and list the ways we can be of service. This does two things: 1) It causes us to consider how we might anticipate their needs, and 2) it causes us to be prepared to help them in the most effective way, not merely in a way requiring the least thought.

Here, then, are some of the many ways we can serve the widows and other needy.

A. By Providing Company

Many widows are lonely. When we visit them we help alleviate this problem. Often a problem described by a widow to be one thing, such as a minor health problem, turns out to be more loneliness than anything else. Remember James 1:27.

B. By Providing Physical Advice

Often, widows or other needy find themselves lacking

the guiding support and advice of a mate they used to rely on. They feel helpless and need advice. You can be of service by being sensitive to their circumstances and being ready to aid with such advice when it is wise to do so.

One caution here: Some will display feigned helplessness to get attention or to get out of unpleasant duties they are qualified to do. Be aware of this possibility.

Also, avoid becoming so deeply involved in personal matters, such as finances, that you virtually become their conservator. You have no legal right to delve too deeply into highly personal matters that may be the rightful domain of their relatives.

C. Spiritual Advice and Encouragement

Everyone needs this. But the special problems of old age simply may demand greater time with these needy.

D. Transportation

Often, old age brings health problems that preclude driving. Sometimes old age brings fear. In many cases widowhood is virtually synonymous with low income. All these things mean that the needy often need help with transportation. The minister can help solve this problem through the good graces of those in the congregation who can provide rides to Church and other activities.

E. By Providing Work Parties

Many needy don't have the health or finances to do needed repairs, run errands or shop. Here is one big way that we can help those who are unable to help themselves.

F. Special Bible Studies

The physical and spiritual needs of the widows are unique. It can be good to hold special or even regular Bible studies to address their problems and offer solutions.

G. Social Events

All people of all age groups need the fellowship of similarly aged persons with similar life situations. In balance, as it is practical in any given Church

area, it is good to schedule special social events for the widows, or at least the seniors.

H. Telephone Visits

A brief call on the phone can be a real source of encouragement to a lonely widow.

X. Learning the Needs of the Widows and Other Needy

Sometimes we learn about the needs of the widows and other needy by accident. But we should make the effort to uncover their needs before they become so big or so many that a crisis is created that could have been avoided.

Here are ways we can discover their needs:

A. Directly, by them telling us their needs.

This is often how we learn of their needs, but it has the disadvantage of perhaps being embarrassing to them. Of course, the more you have served them, the more likely they are to share their concerns with you.

B. Indirectly, by others telling you.

This is also common. It is good for the congregation to be sensitive to the needs of the elderly or widows. However, this has the disadvantage of making the minister feel, or maybe even look, like he doesn't have the situation well in hand. (If he does, why does he need others to tell him what he should know?)

C. By observation.

This means that you keep a watchful eye on their welfare and check up on telltale signs of physical or spiritual distress or need.

D. By inquiring personally.

This is good since it shows your concern. But be careful not to sound like you are prying. This point is like A above, but differs because you initiate the conversation.

E. By assigning someone to call upon them or telephone them regularly to inquire of their needs.

This can be a deaconess or other person who exercises wisdom, sympathy and compassion. This person then can regularly report to you. This is like B above, but,

again, in this case you take the initiative (although through a third party assigned to the task by you).

XI. Ways to Get People to Help

Once we see a need we often also see that we must enlist someone to help with that need. We can call upon a number of sources of manpower.

A. Yourself

We should be ready to help the needy with our own time and effort, but we must not leave the Gospel to wait on tables (Acts 6:1-3).

B. Deacons and Deaconesses

Acts 6 plainly proves that one of the greatest responsibilities of deacons and deaconesses is to stretch a helping hand to widows.

C. One-time Assignments

Some needs are one-time needs and can be met with one-time help. If you need a special type of assistance and someone in the congregation is qualified to help (such as a painter who could paint a door) consider calling upon the person for the favor.

D. Permanent Assignments

This can work well if a family takes a special liking to a particular needy person. They can "adopt" the person and tend to most of his or her special needs. This also works when a person does not take care of all a widow's needs, for example, but just one of them on a regular basis. A widow or needy person can come to depend on and trust the server.

A good illustration of this is when a person gives a widow a ride to Church services each week. He or she might not be adopting the widow in all respects, but is relied on by the widow for most of her transportation needs.

E. A Committee

Another resource is to establish a person or committee to look after the needs of widows and other needy. The advisability and practicality of this approach will depend on many matters, such as church size. It could be effective, or could be seen as too sterile, unfeeling or complex.

F. Volunteers

Ask for volunteers. This is often the approach used when work parties are needed.

XIII. Pitfalls to Avoid

Even service to the widows and elderly has pitfalls that can befuddle those trying to help. Here are some pitfalls to look out for:

A. Looking to the Church to solve all one's problems instead of looking to God.

All people, including widows and other needy, must remember that God is our first and final provider, and that we all must live by faith. Read I Timothy 5:5: "Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day."

B. Giving becoming a one-way street.

At times people can be quick to take help but slow to realize they, too, have responsibilities.

C. Being lazy.

It is not good to do so much for people that you take away their initiative. You should encourage people to meet their own needs when they are genuinely able to do so.

D. Being demanding.

Some people can fall into the attitude that the Church, deacon or other member owes them total subservience. They become incensed if every little thing doesn't go their way immediately. This should not be allowed to occur.

E. Minister or other member taking place of husband to the hurt of the widow or helping person.

Sometimes a widow so dearly misses the constant companionship and support of a man that she adopts the minister's or deacon's family as her own. This can be a good thing in balance. While it is good to include others in your family structure as you can, realize that even this has some potential pitfalls.

The relationship with the widow or other person should

not hurt your family nor them. Everyone must learn to stand on his or her own feet and remember that God is their Savior and not a man, even a minister.

F. Having unrealistic expectations.

Some people feel the Church should help them reach a standard of living that is not practical. If their husband did not leave them an estate, it is not practical for the Church to provide them an expensive house and car, although the basic necessities can often be met.

G. Server becoming discouraged.

Some people cannot be pleased no matter what you do. Remember this lest you get discouraged, and then try to educate them about their personality problems.

H. Gossiping and criticizing.

The Bible plainly states that certain groups, like widows, tend to gossip and complain (I Timothy 5:13). Be wary of this and instruct them, in Bible studies and counselings, about this tendency if necessary.

I. Fearing to speak up to voice one's needs.

Some people are shy about letting their needs be known. They need to learn how to communicate with the minister and deacon regarding these matters, and to realize that while no one likes a complainer, no one can help another unless he knows the needs.

J. Wanting help when not eligible.

Sometimes, certain people want help when they should not have it.

1. Undeserving -- People need to know that their membership in the Church does not give them an automatic right to all opportunities. Those who have better attitudes and serve more deserve a bit more in return. Read Luke 4:25-26.

Also, read Acts 9:36-42 and consider whether Dorcas would have been raised to life had she not been such a special, serving person.

2. Ineligible -- People who can or should help themselves should be givers and not receivers. It is ludicrous for a member with a family, on a

lower wage, to drive 100 miles at his own expense to cut the grass of a widow who has a bank account worth \$400,000 plus stock dividends and a monthly pension and social security. She should be hiring a gardener and maybe even hiring one for her neighbor who is needy.

Special Note: The pitfalls listed in this section are intended to make us wise as serpents but harmless as doves. They should not be taken as excuses for neglecting our duties to the needy, but merely as cautions so we serve with wisdom.

XIII. Obligations of the Widow, Elderly and Other Needy to the Church

As stated above, the Church is primarily concerned with people's spiritual welfare. The Church is the Body of Christ and hence a spiritual training ground for the salvation of the individual and for teachers for the world tomorrow.

Each person, including the needy in one of the special classes listed in this lecture, needs to remember his or her duties to God and the Church.

A. The duty to faithfully obey God in all things.

This should go without saying but needs to be emphasized. Some people begin to become preoccupied with their problems and hence ignore their spiritual priorities.

B. The duty to pray for the Work, Mr. Tkach, the ministry and the members.

The biblical illustration of Anna, recorded in Luke 2:36-38, is a powerful example that should serve as a constant reminder here. See also I Timothy 5:5.

C. The duty to serve others as able.

The example of Dorcas is a powerful example here (Acts 9:36-42).

D. The duty to meet one's own needs when able.

Read II Thessalonians 3:10.

E. The duty to tithe and give offerings as able.

No one expects a widow or needy person to give

something she does not have. But remember the widow's mite in Mark 12:41-44.

XIV. Conclusion

While it is the way of this world for only the strong to survive, it is the way of God that the strong take care of the weak, not grudgingly, but in love (Romans 15:1). Only when a minister has met both the spiritual and physical needs of the members of his congregation can he rest in the realization that his whole job is being done.

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Mr. Melbourn
22/2/81

Lecture 15

How to Plan and Organize Church Activities

I. Introduction

- A. The late Herbert W. Armstrong often intimated that his mother's favorite scripture was Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"
- B. Indeed, it may be the favorite scripture of many, for the wonderful feeling of total harmony that comes when brethren stand in close unity is one we all enjoy, as God Himself surely does.
- C. While, in the final analysis, unity comes from God's Spirit, nonetheless one of the best physical means of encouraging spiritual unity is through properly organized Church activities.

II. SPS

This lecture will describe how to properly organize and run Church activities.

III. Need

- A. Even though many of us have been involved with Church activities for years, we still need to learn or review this important information for numerous reasons:
 - 1. John 8:23 -- We, like Christ, are not of this world. As will be shown, Church activities should be handled according to God's principles, not those we may have learned in the churches of this world!
 - 2. We should all be upgrading our skills in this area since we are striving for actual perfection in all things, and not merely to do a "good enough" job (Matthew 5:48).
 - 3. God's government comes into play in Church activities in a direct way. The process and practice of God's government is an immensely

important subject that needs to be thoroughly understood as it relates to this and associated matters. This should be important to pastor, elder, deacon and layman alike.

4. I Corinthians 1:10 -- We are all to speak the same thing. Therefore, it is helpful to know what the Church considers standard procedure regarding Church activities so that we may all operate similarly and thus promote worldwide unity.

IV. The Improper Approach Used By This World

Although we are not a part of this world, we are called out from it and living in it (John 17:11). Hence we cannot help but have even our best-intentioned thinking influenced by our past associations. It is therefore good to see some of the mistakes this world makes so we can avoid them.

A. Churches of this world misunderstand the purposes of church activities.

1. Some churches seem to exist almost solely for the purpose of having activities, and hence become a sort of "social club."
2. Others use activities solely for fund raising and care little whether their own people profit personally, just so they make money for the church coffers.

B. Churches of this world don't understand God's government.

In many churches the minister's approval is virtually an afterthought and the whole process is run by the deacons or a board. Hence it is run like a democracy from the bottom up, with all the obvious evils this can introduce.

C. Wrong activities and atmosphere

Some churches of the world participate in wrong activities like gambling (e.g., bingo parties), rock-music concerts, etc. Others fall into the opposite ditch and disallow certain things that can be proper, like card playing, family films, etc.

And some socials are conducted in a wrong atmosphere, allowing improper behavior such as overdrinking, snobbery, cliques and dark or improperly lit dances

with various degrees of sexual promiscuity even tolerated at times. Probably many of these things have resulted from the influence that the entertainment media has had upon public attitude.

D. Romans 12:2 ("Be not conformed to this world")

In light of the wrong approaches used by this world, it behooves us to look to the Church for proper instruction on how to handle these things. We must see the example God is teaching us through the words and actions of Mr. Tkach and the headquarters team and not conform to the ways of this world.

V. The Important Purposes and Functions of Church Activities

Why does God's Church provide activities other than those involving worship directly? Church activities fill true needs in the congregations. Some of the purposes of Church activities follow.

A. Church activities promote character development.

We all know that our personal growth is enhanced when we mingle with others. The positive examples of others influence us and vice versa.

B. Church activities promote personality development.

While our character is the most important part of our make-up, our personality is also vital and in many ways is strengthened and broadened through social contacts with other believers.

C. They provide opportunities of service.

Since many jobs need to be done to make activities a success, members get a chance to serve and experience the rewards service brings.

D. They provide practical experience in utilizing God's government.

The organization and overseeing of an activity is a living lesson in how God's government should work.

E. They teach the values the Church embraces and thus illustrate and reinforce God's way of life.

F. They are enjoyable and provide positive fun and relaxation.

Hence they become a viable alternative to this world's often destructive entertainment forms.

G. They develop social graces.

Many in God's Church have come from common backgrounds where the social graces receive little attention. Through activities we can learn how to talk, walk, socialize, dress and even eat properly when with others (Romans 13:7-8).

H. They promote fellowship.

By being with others of similar belief, we can draw closer and uplift one another in the faith. Hebrews 10:25 -- This is one way we can meet together more often. See also I John 3:1-3.

I. They promote Church unity (I Corinthians 12:12-20).

As stated at the beginning of this lecture, all of the above purposes are forces that work together to build joyful unity in the church congregations and hence the whole Church worldwide.

J. What Church activities are not to become:

1. Dating service -- While the Church strives to provide wholesome opportunities for singles to mix, Church activities do not exist solely to provide dating opportunities!
2. Babysitting service -- While it is OK for some activities to be just for children, it is wrong to constantly separate children from parents or use Church activities as a dumping ground for toddlers while the parents go off by themselves (Malachi 4:5-6).
3. Social club -- All activities are secondary to the primary purposes of the Church and should never be too frequent or get out of proportion.
4. Money drain -- The members of God's Church have many important commitments of their available funds, not the least of which is tithes and offerings. Activities should not become a drain on the people financially.
5. Time drain -- Activities should not consume too much time, either for the participant or the organizers. Our first priority is to the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:15-16).

VI. The Special Responsibility Falling to Those Who Must
Oversee and Organize Church Activities

As can be seen from the sheer number of purposes and functions of Church activities, one who is involved in the planning of these affairs shoulders a tremendous responsibility.

- A. He is actively involved in people's lives and may influence them more than a person who gives a sermonette or helps in a Bible study. Throughout the preparation and execution of the activity he can inspire, motivate, develop, teach, direct, serve and be served.
- B. The world pays high salaries to those men and women in business who can manage people and organizations well, and for good reason. They realize the responsibility such managerial skills entail. Certainly we too should consider these points seriously (II Samuel 23:1-4).

VII. How to Plan, Organize, Direct and Control Church
Activities

I Corinthians 14:33 -- God is not the author of confusion, and hence is not the author of disorganized Church activities. No one is born knowing how to properly coordinate Church activities. We must be taught by both example and instruction. The following outline can serve as a step-by-step blueprint to follow for taking most activities from the initial idea stage to the completed activity.

A. Planning

The first stage in any activity is planning. Too many activities go astray because the leaders do not have a plan. God has a master plan that He follows and reveals to us. Why should we not, also? The planning stage can itself be broken down into steps.

1. The idea

Of course, every activity begins with an idea, which begets a firm decision to have an activity. Perhaps the idea will originate with the pastor or his assistant. If it begins with you, then realize that the idea itself is a type of service. But don't forget that the decision to have or not have it is up to the pastor. Don't grumble if he decides against it.

2. The appointment of an activity coordinator

After the idea is approved, the pastor will appoint a coordinator. Perhaps it will be you. Or, he may feel the activity involved requires his own personal guidance and he will decide to make himself the chairman for the event. At any rate, be supportive of the person he picks, even though it may not be you and you came to him with the original idea. Headquarters allows him latitude in these types of decisions.

3. The formulation of basic purposes and goals for the activity

This step is really the actual planning process itself. Some of this -- especially for minor or small activities -- may merely be a mental description of what the activity should be. But the best plans are committed to paper. The plan should state the type of activity, its purpose, the goals you wish to attain by means of the activity, the date agreed upon, the place, the time and a brief listing of the steps necessary to organize and direct the activity.

This doesn't mean there must be some deep, profound spiritual goal for each activity. It could be only one of those mentioned above. Many times, Church activities simply provide opportunities for Christian fellowship, which of itself is of no small importance.

4. The budget

Most activities cost money. As part of your plan you should make estimates about the costs and incomes involved and lay these out clearly for the pastor.

5. Approval

At this stage, as well as many other points in the process, you should approach the church pastor, show him your plans or explain them to him and ask for his approval. Be flexible and make the changes he suggests. He is the one ultimately in charge of the church area and responsible for its success. Don't buck his leadership or display an "I-know-better" attitude.

B. Organization

Although the organizational phase of the activity is really a type of planning, it is so important that it is usually considered separately. Simply stated, when you divide your plan into separate areas of responsibility, you are organizing it.

The organization of most activities uses the committee approach. That is, the person in charge of the activity appoints others to head up the various major areas of the project and delegates certain responsibilities to them. This usually requires a number of steps.

1. Areas of Responsibility

The project is divided into logical areas of responsibility. These may include setup, cleanup, decorations, transportation, finances, food or refreshments, lodging, entertainment, construction, picture taking, article write-up, hall procurement, etc.

2. Committee Heads

Committee heads are chosen for each area of responsibility. This is one area in which your pastor will want to be involved. Unless given permission, in no case should you appoint people to jobs without obtaining the pastor's approval first. You may find yourself deeply embarrassed when you try to explain why the pastor will not allow a man to lead an area.

3. Meetings

The committee meets. Each man learns his responsibilities, the time schedule, his budget and other limits he may work within. He in turn often appoints others to help him. He should be informed whether he needs approval before appointing personnel, and if so, from whom.

By the way, you might want to consider using YOU members on some crews so that they gain valuable experience that will help them in managing their own activities.

C. The Directing Phase

Once the planning and organizing is underway, the coordinator must begin to direct the continuing

efforts of those under him as they carry out the pastor-approved plan. Usually this consists of various instructions, or guidelines, given at periodic meetings of the main committees headed by the coordinator of the main committees headed by the coordinator or directed to the appropriate people via telephone.

D. The Execution

When the day and time comes for the activity, it should unfold smoothly according to the plan. The success of this stage of the activity -- the activity itself -- will depend directly on how effectively the coordinator has planned, organized and directed.

But even with perfect planning, the coordinator should himself be present at the activity from setup to cleanup so he is available to answer questions and troubleshoot. It goes without saying that his attitude, approach and demeanor at this time should be a living example of God's way. And, when confronted by decisions beyond his level of authority, he should seek out the pastor and get his answer.

E. Follow-up

Although not necessary for all types of activities, it can be helpful to have a short meeting of the committee heads after an activity is over to discuss its success. Helpful suggestions can be received, which will make future activities a success. This should not degenerate into a griping session, but rather be constructive in tone and attitude.

VIII. The Necessity of Activities to Reflect God's Way of Life

Over and over in this lecture we have stressed the difference between the way this world runs its activities and the way we in God's Church do. In this subsection, though, we need to further stress some important aspects of God's way that we must consider in planning Church activities.

A. Atmosphere

The atmosphere this world provides is wrong (overly dark, dingy, smoke-filled rooms with too-private corners, too-loud music of the wrong type, wild behavior, people "letting go"). The atmosphere we provide should be uplifting, inspiring and positive. With proper music at proper volume and properly lit

premises (not necessarily total light, however) fitting to the occasion (I Peter 4:3-5).

B. Quality

Ambassador College reflects quality. God is a God of quality. Within our budget, balance and the nature of the occasion, we should strive for appropriate quality in all activities.

C. Family

Activities of this world tend to split up the family into subgroups of adults and children. While it is not wrong to have occasional all-adult or all-teen activities, they should as a rule be geared to bring the family together (Malachi 4:5-6).

D. Minority Needs

In this world, the needs of minority groups are ignored until they put up a fuss and attract attention. In our activities, we should be sensitive to the unique needs of the elderly, the young, the poor, the handicapped, the out-of-towner, the shy or timid and others. Matthew 25:31-46 -- God is sensitive to the needs of special groups, and we should be, too.

E. Entertainment

We need to avoid sloppy, poorly prepared, unrehearsed entertainment, which is an embarrassment to all.

F. Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages are permitted at adult functions, but people should be cautioned about balance, and no drunkenness should be tolerated (Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:18). That alcoholic beverages are not necessary to have a successful Church activity should be obvious. The majority of activities should not present them as a choice. However, alcohol is certainly appropriate at club graduations or an annual dance.

G. Legal Responsibilities

We must at all times adhere to the applicable laws of our area and the rules of the facility we may rent. For example, if it is illegal for people under a certain age to drink, or if drinking is not permitted in the hall we rent for a dance, then we should abide

by the rules, even though God's law would allow it
(Romans 13:1-7).

IX. Church Activities and God's Government

As stated numerous times, Church activities are an ideal exercise in God's government. And it is important to point out that God's government goes far beyond the principle that God's government is from the top down. Here are some more important principles about government that we must learn from Church activities.

A. Top Down

This means that the pastor is in charge of all activities, even if he has delegated the specific oversight to someone else. Further, it means that the pastor himself must conform to guidelines that headquarters issues (Ephesians 4:11-13).

B. Teaching

The fact that Church government is from the top down implies that those at the top teach those under them, and don't merely order them around (II Timothy 2:1-2).

C. Learning

In like manner, those under the pastor and his assistants should realize that they are in their positions to serve and learn from those above (Proverbs 1:5).

D. Serving

God's system is not one of lordship, but of selfless service. This attitude should be reflected at all levels (Matthew 20:25-28).

E. Teamwork

God's Church is not one member, but a body of members working together in harmony. Each person should remember this vital analogy and strive to fit into the team so it works smoothly (Ephesians 2:19-22, I Corinthians 12:12-27).

F. Communication

Communication is vital to any endeavor of God or man. God considers communication so important that one of the members of the Godhead is named "the Communicator"

(the Word). We, too, should realize the importance of good communication.

X. Conclusion

In all areas of life, God's way is vastly different from man's way. This principle is no less true in the matter of how to plan, organize and run Church activities. When we as a Church work together in harmony to provide balanced Church activities in accord with God's will and way, we reap the wonderful unity of the brethren, which David so highly praised in the Psalms and which God and we so deeply value.

DEWIS
3/4/89

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 16

Set the Example -- for the Brethren and the World

I. Introduction

- A. Here is a question for you! "What is the most important way that you as leaders in God's Church teach others God's truth?"
- B. Is it through sermonettes or sermons or Bible studies or through answering personal questions on a one-to-one basis? Of course, all of these are important, but not even all of you regularly get to do these things.
- * C. No, the most important way you have of teaching others is your constant example that they see.
- D. Even in sermonettes, etc., your example at the time is probably more than half your message, for what you are speaks louder than what you say. How you say it and how well you live up to it is what comprises your example. And your example, of course, will both instruct others and influence how they respond to what you say.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how you can combine the knowledge and skills gained from the other lectures into a positive and powerful example through which you may lead and teach the brethren and all with whom you come in contact.

III. Need

It is important to understand why leaders in the Church need to set a good example. Here are some of the reasons:

- A. One important purpose of these training lectures is to provide qualified examples of Christian living. Being anything less than a good example is actually a type of hypocrisy -- in other words, knowing but not doing (James 4:17).

- B. Setting a good example is an outlet for using the knowledge gained in these lectures. Not every Church leader or even elder will give multiple sermonettes, Bible studies, etc., but can still use this valuable information in his personal life to profoundly affect others.
- C. The brethren and the world need good examples to follow, since they follow in accord with God's desire. Being a leader in the Church, therefore, demands being a responsible example.
- D. God commands that we let our lights shine as good examples (Matthew 5:16).

IV. A Reminder of Your Responsibility

A. Becoming a Pillar

As members of the Philadelphia era of God's Church, our special reward in God's Kingdom is to become "pillars" at God's headquarters in Jerusalem (Revelation 3:12). We can qualify for this special reward because of the unique opportunity for spiritual growth and growth in knowledge that all of us in this era have been given.

God has opened to our understanding a fuller, deeper, more thorough understanding of His plan than any other Church era has had since the apostles. And we have the advantages of weekly Sabbath services, regular Bible studies, the broadcasts, magazines and literature to help us as individuals to grow spiritually.

B. Special Training

In addition to the special advantages and help that all members of God's Church in this end time have, you have an extra opportunity to learn and grow through the special training you receive in these lectures and study materials. This special training and experience you receive should help all of you serve as pillars in the local congregation.

C. The Backbone

Just as a human body without a backbone would be weak and ineffective, a local church without a backbone of strong, stable, dependable, pillar members would be a weak church. This is an important responsibility for which you should be grateful.

I Corinthians 12:12-31 -- You must be willing to serve, as does the unseen backbone of a human body, without fanfare and in many cases without public recognition. For if you are serving for the purpose of being recognized and rewarded now, you have had your reward and will not receive the lasting reward that could have been yours in God's Kingdom as a result of your diligent, faithful service. We are not saved by our works, but we are rewarded according to our works.

V. Don't Let Down Spiritually

A. Take Heed, Lest You Fall

If there is any one thing that must be stressed above all else, it is that you cannot afford to let down spiritually. If you do, in a much shorter time than you probably realize, you can lose much of the spiritual growth and impetus you have gained as a result of taking to heart the instruction you are continually given.

I Corinthians 10:12 -- If you think there's no danger of your falling, take heed. This verse is directly referring to the preceding verse, verse 11. We are to learn from the examples of the Israelites, who did fall in spite of being led by Christ Himself and being taught by Christ through Moses.

I Kings 3:5-14 -- Here is an example written "for our admonition" that we would all do well to remember. Solomon started off with the opportunity to be an outstanding success as a king. He could have learned from his father and even avoided the mistakes that marred David's reign as king. He was given a wiser, more understanding heart than any man on earth before or after him (verse 12). He was also given great riches (verse 13). But he failed to heed God's admonishment in verse 14.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 -- Solomon didn't continue to stay close to God and obey God's laws. He failed in every one of these instructions God laid down for Israel's kings. The first instructions he disobeyed were no doubt those given in verses 18-19 -- to read God's Word regularly throughout his life. He began to slip before he eventually fell.

I Kings 11:4-11 -- This was the end result of his life. All he accomplished and acquired came to nothing. It was all just so much vanity, as he seems to have later come to understand.

B. Organize Your Life to Seek God First

Matthew 6:33 -- To ensure that you won't fall or even begin to slip, be sure to continually put God first in your life. Don't slip in the basic area of organizing your life to have the time to put God and the things of God first.

Be careful that you don't become overly involved in so many physical activities and pursuits that you are constantly "too busy" to stay close to God. Remember to keep your life simple in an overall sense so that you can, as a way of life, put God first. Putting God first in our lives means staying close to God so we have the eyes to see where we must overcome.

1. Prayer

Remember Christ's example of rising early to pray (Mark 1:35). He knew He could do nothing of Himself (John 5:19). How much less can we do of ourselves? We must go to God in the morning to request the help of His Spirit throughout the day.

Praying people are producing people and growing people. Contact with God through regular, consistent, wholehearted prayer is absolutely necessary. Nothing is more important.

2. Bible Study

This is another area of our lives that we must not sell short. In order to grow spiritually, we must be nourished and sustained by spiritual food -- God's Word (Matthew 4:4). Christ's words are spirit and life (John 6:63). Unless we are letting God speak to us regularly and consistently through diligent, wholehearted and often prayerful Bible study, then we will starve spiritually.

3. Meditation

Don't miss out on the benefits of meditation, which is simply taking a certain theme, concept, problem or scripture and thinking it through -- dwelling on it and pondering it deeply -- until you reach a fuller understanding and conclusion in your own mind. Meditation is an important key to help you see things from God's perspective. It helps you to step back and look at a problem, concept or scripture from various angles so that you can bring to bear and apply all the knowledge you may have on a subject.

Meditating on a scripture can help you understand it more deeply and will convict you of the need for personal change. Meditating on God's plan can fix in mind your goal and purpose in life and will help you avoid becoming sidetracked. Don't neglect this important tool.

4. Fasting

Fasting helps you draw closer to God and helps you learn real humility, so that you sincerely recognize how weak, frail and insignificant you as a human are before Him. Without regular fasting, we naturally tend to develop an attitude of self-sufficiency and tend to forget how totally dependent we are on God.

Fasting requires self-discipline. In forcing ourselves to do something we naturally don't want to do -- to go without food -- we can build character.

5. Exercise God's Spirit Through Obedience

Prayer, study, meditation and fasting are vital and necessary, but unless you are following through and exercising God's Spirit in seeking to obey Him, you won't really grow, no matter how much time you spend in those things. In exercising God's Spirit, you put to practice and apply the knowledge and understanding you gain through Bible study and meditation, using the help you have received through prayer and fasting.

Exercising God's Spirit involves making a conscious effort to do what you know you should be doing. It involves bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It involves, as a daily way of life, striving to become perfect (Matthew 5:48) and to live as Christ lived (I Peter 2:21). In this way, godly character is formed and developed within us.

VI. Be a Light to the World

A. Be Friendly to People in the World

Matthew 5:14-16 -- As a leader in God's Church, you should be setting the example for the brethren, but you should also be a light to the world. Notice that Christ said man would see our good works and glorify God. People with whom we come in contact in the world often may not have any idea what our religion is or

* what we believe as doctrine, but they should be struck by the fruits of God's Spirit that are evident in our lives. This is what really counts in being a witness.

We should, by our conduct, leave a certain impression on the people in the world with whom we conduct business or whom we just happen to meet in a situation that lends itself to casual conversation. We should be thought of by those in the world as friendly, thoughtful, kind, considerate, cheerful people.

B. Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

We are commanded not to love the world's society -- the world's way (I John 2:15) -- but we must love the people in the world. We as Christians are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). This is second in importance to loving God with all our hearts and mind. God so loved the world -- not the firstfruits only -- that He gave His Son Jesus Christ for our sins (John 3:16).

→ Matthew 14:14 -- Christ had real compassion for those in the world. Most of His miracles were acts of kindness and mercy.

Mark 8:22-26 -- Most of those Christ had mercy on and healed were not being called at that time. Notice this example of the blind man who was healed and then sent on his way.

Luke 10:25-37 -- Christ gave this example to explain that loving our neighbor involves showing mercy to all people -- that all are our neighbors. We who are converted should be willing to help and show kindness to anyone in need, whether they are in God's Church or not. Notice this Samaritan was on a journey. He wasn't out looking for someone to help. But when he saw a stranger in need who he was able to help, he willingly went out of his way to do so.

Galatians 6:10 -- Paul emphasized this same principle of helping all people as we have opportunity. In other words, our main pursuit in life should not be just looking for someone to help, but we should willingly help others -- even people in the world -- as the need arises and in situations where we can and should help.

I Corinthians 13:3 -- In this society, the concept of a corporate charity has made it easy to believe you're serving by simply making a donation to March of Dimes, United Way, etc. Sometimes we can fall into the trap

of passive serving. We should also have an active way of serving, but of course there should be a balance. Achieving that balance is our intelligent service, or our reasonable service.

C. Use Wisdom and Tact in Answering Questions

I Peter 3:15 -- We should be ready to answer questions that people in the world may ask us.

Colossians 4:5-6 -- Goodspeed's translation makes these verses much clearer than the Authorized Version: "Use wisdom in dealing with outsiders, making the most of your opportunities. Always put your message attractively, and yet pointedly, and be prepared to give every inquirer a fitting answer."

Here are several points to keep in mind in answering questions:

1. Don't be defensive or give the impression you are trying to avoid the question. Answer in an open, friendly manner.
2. Answer as briefly and to the point as possible. Say only what you need to say in order to satisfy the questioner. Sometimes we feel called upon to give a long explanation when a simple answer would have sufficed. If someone is not satisfied, he or she will ask another question.
3. Avoid answering in such a way that will condemn the other person ("I personally can't do this in good conscience," etc.). Don't have a self-righteous attitude in answering or even give that impression. Remember that people in the world are deceived.
4. Don't argue or debate if the other person doesn't agree with your answer. Remember Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turns away wrath."

VII. Conclusion

II Corinthians 8:11 -- In this series of lectures and study materials you have been given basic instructions to help you be more effective leaders in the local church. Essentially, there are three dimensions to leadership: 1) What you say, 2) how you say it and 3) how well you do it.

You know what you should basically be doing in the various areas of your lives to set good examples. You know how

you can best serve and help the brethren, and how to be lights to the world. And by your presence in this class, you have expressed a willingness and a desire to do these things. Now, as the apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians who had determined to send an offering to the needy brethren (verse 10), "Now therefore perform the doing of it"!

20/6/1
EMSWOODS

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 17

How to Deal Effectively With Teenagers

I. Introduction

- A. Ask yourself this question: "What subgroup of God's Church is most exciting to deal with?"
- B. Would you answer, "The singles"? Some would, because single adults are a special challenge. Perhaps others would say that the YES-aged youths are the most fun since their young minds are so refreshing to deal with.
- C. But it is likely most of us would almost immediately answer, in unison, "The teenagers!" For while the teenagers in our congregations almost always seem to be the biggest test of the leadership skills of the average elder or pastor, they also can provide some of the greatest rewards.

II. SPS

Since we in leadership positions in God's Church must deal wisely with all elements of the local congregations, this lecture will explain how to deal effectively with teenagers.

III. Need

While most of us sense the general need to know more about how to deal effectively with teens, it is helpful and important to briefly state the reasons why this subject should comprise a whole lecture in this series.

A. Teens Are a Large Group

Teens form a large and important subgroup within the Church. To ignore the special challenges of such a group would be, simply, to evade a sizable part of the congregation. Read Acts 6:1-4 and see that the apostles were sensitive to the special needs of the subgroup of widows in the Church.

B. Critical Time of Teens' Life

The teen years are a time of exciting changes in a person's life. It is therefore critical that all elders and leaders in the Church are equipped to deal with teens during this short but dynamic portion of their lives. Read I Corinthians 13:11. The transition from being a child to being an adult, along with the major changes that it implies, occurs during the teenage years.

C. Special Skills Required to Deal With Teens

Experience has proven that the skills necessary to deal with teenagers don't devolve to us automatically. Further, the skills necessary are different than those needed for dealing with the elderly or the YES-level kids.

D. Unique Era of History

This era of world history is different from all others and presents unique challenges to today's teens. II Timothy 3:1-7 lists the special problems of this age. Some teens, sad to say, give in to the pressures around them. We as leaders in the Church must see the special circumstances modern society presents to teens, and we must be equipped to deal with these special challenges.

E. Some of Us Have No Teens

Probably those who now have teens feel somewhat equipped to deal with others' teens. But those who do not now have teens, or have never had children, especially need to give extra effort to learning how to deal with this special age group.

F. We Can Influence Teens for Their Benefit

We can influence teenagers and cause growth in their lives, and we should. But we must know how to do it.

IV. The Rewards of Dealing With Teens

To some, dealing with teens is a drudgery to be dreaded and avoided. To others, teenagers are an exciting and rewarding group with which to work. Since our attitude toward teens will spill over into our actions, it is important that we develop a positive attitude toward what can and should be a rewarding experience. Here are some of the many rewards of dealing with teens:

A. Teens Do Fun Things

A certain amount of play is good for everyone, not just teens. Those who deal with the teens get to enjoy some downright fun activities like camping, skiing, etc.

B. Growth in Teens Is Rewarding to See

All of us enjoy seeing another person grow. Growth in teens is no exception. It is extremely rewarding to watch a young person develop character or personality and to have had a part in it. I Thessalonians 2:7 shows the love and care Paul showed toward his congregations.

C. Teens Exhibit Qualities We Should Emulate

As we grow older, some of us become overly serious or sober and jaded. The enthusiasm and sparkle teens often exhibit is infectious and can help rekindle zest and enjoyment for life.

V. A Positive Attitude -- The First Requirement

- A. Often people are negative about, fearful of or intimidated by teenagers. Most likely this is because they do not have teens of their own, and have formed impressions about teens from observing bad examples. To be sure, bad examples do exist.
- B. Yet, a person who must deal with teens needs to approach his responsibility with a positive attitude.
1. To develop that attitude, dwell upon the list of "rewards" for working with teens, mentioned above.
 2. Further, get to know personally some of the teens. If you do, you will find that they can be quite engaging.
 3. Finally, ask God in prayer for a positive attitude toward these young people who are potential heirs with us of God's Family.

VI. Principles for Working With Teens

Like any other leadership skill, the ability to work effectively with teens can be learned, if we will take the time and effort. Some seem to have a special talent in this area, and this can intimidate the rest of us into believing that it is no use for us even to try. However, many have learned how to be effective with teens,

and you can, too. Here are some of the main principles that will ensure success:

A. Treat Teens Like Ordinary People

Because teenagers are unique in certain aspects, we can at times fail to see them as real people, and respond only with some special set of behavioral rules. While we should not ignore their unique needs, nonetheless we must remember that teenagers are just humans who respond to the same gestures all humans respond to: friendliness, caring, concern, listening, etc.

Read I Corinthians 13 and see how many of these qualities you can incorporate into your relationships with the teens. Above all, make sure that you don't ignore teens or pass them by as if they were mere toddlers without their own identities.

Remember to always show them the common courtesy you would extend to anyone, such as a handshake, a friendly greeting, using their name or praising their efforts. Such acknowledgements will go a long way to establishing a bond between you.

B. Be Conscious of Their Unique Needs

In contrast to what has just been said (that teens are just ordinary people who respond to ordinary courtesy and human-relations techniques) is the fact that teens do have special needs. Their age positions them between childhood and adulthood. Here are some ways teens differ from both children and adults. Remember these differences so that you may treat teens with understanding.

1. Teens are more educated than young children, but generally less than adults.
2. Teens are still comparatively naive about life's harsh realities.
3. They generally lack experience.
4. They retain the curiosity of childhood, but sometimes lack the openness to ask questions.
5. Teens sometimes seem to ping-pong between very adult attitudes and very childish ones.

C. Develop an Attitude of Respect Within the Teens

Teenagers sometimes lack a general attitude of respect for adults, or for authority in general. II Timothy 3:2 says people in this age will be "disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." The attitudes displayed in our public-school systems strongly bear this out.

In God's Church, we must cultivate respect in a kind and diplomatic way -- toward parents, all adults and authority in general. The Fifth Commandment is really a directive that we must honor and respect all authority, since the father and mother are the foundation of community authority.

On the other hand, high-handed, overbearing, aloof or dictatorial adults or elders also miss the mark and fail to help God's government properly function. Remember these guidelines:

1. Get respect by winning it. You win respect by being worthy of it -- that is, being a person of true character (including warmth, love, compassion and personal strength), and being truly skilled at what you are professing to teach. (For example, if the basketball coach doesn't know the game or is a poor coach, true respect will be hard to master).

Read in I Timothy 3 the qualities of an elder or deacon. If you display these, you will win the respect of all the members, not just the teens.

2. Being overbearing, harsh, brisk, uninterested or unyielding will destroy respect, not build it. Some wrongly confuse these qualities with respect or dignity. They are merely satanic counterfeits. Jesus Christ warned against these attitudes in the strongest terms, and instead prescribed an attitude of service (Matthew 20:25-26).
3. Respect is a two-way street. God respects us, His children, and shows us in thousands of ways. We sense this and in turn respect Him. We must follow God's example and avoid words or deeds that tend to humiliate, degrade, embarrass, frighten or anger teens. This is the very thing God warns against when He says, in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath."
4. Gain respect by expecting it. If you don't allow disrespectfulness, it will tend to fade away. See Numbers 12 where God would not tolerate disrespect

for His servant Moses. This does not mean that we call fire down from heaven at every slip of the tongue or that we make the kids treat us like gods, but we should make sure that they do not show disrespect for us.

D. Require Teens to Meet the Standards of the Church

When dealing with teens, it is at times tempting to sit back and let them find their own level of moral conduct. This is not wise. Leaders of teens in God's Church are not merely observers, but teachers with the responsibility to uphold the standards God requires.

Teaching teens and helping them requires ingenuity and work. But it must be done. We are striving to show the teens a better way, not merely giving them opportunities to be themselves. This not to say we demand perfection now. If we did, none of us would qualify.

We must therefore be understanding, encouraging and helpful, but persistent and consistent in enforcing the true moral standards God requires.

E. Exalt God's True Values and Way of Life in Their Minds

Keeping standards up means that we demand a certain level of behavior. But we are trying to do more than merely become disciplinarians. We wish to help the youths inculcate God's way into their lives.

One way to do this is to use every opportunity to extol the true values. We can do this in Bible studies, of course, but it is equally important to talk of God's way as we go through life with the teens, so they begin to view God's principles as wonderful guideposts to be admired, respected and emulated. Carefully read Deuteronomy 6:6-7, where God directs that we constantly teach children the true laws and values.

For example, it may be proper to present a trophy to the winning team at a basketball tournament. Yet it is also proper to present a trophy to the team that displays the greatest sportsmanship. Doing so tends to exalt the true values as they should be exalted.

F. Project Genuine Concern and Helpfulness

Kids these days do indeed want to learn about life, but they tend to feel adults don't really care. Those who are the most effective with teens are those who

project an image of concern and helpfulness. Of course, the only genuine way to project such an image is to actually be interested in helping the kids.

In the final analysis, such qualities must stem from godly love in us. If we lack such love, we must go to God and ask that He supply it. This point cannot be overemphasized, for kids will overlook our minor slips in dealing with them if they sense a genuine concern within us.

G. Strive to Demonstrate the Practical Aspects of God's Truth as a Way of Life

Teenagers are at an impressionable age, and can be taught a better way of life if they are made to see it works to give them the things they want. Note well the introduction to Proverbs in Proverbs 1:1-7. The introduction, as well as the entire book, concentrates upon the practical application of God's law in our lives.

Sometimes leaders in God's Church strive to teach teens the academic side of God's truth (such as the names of all the Bible books), yet fail to show the kids that God's truth is a way of living that will bring them what they want out of life. Doctrine is not a end in itself, but rather an outline of a way of living.

Leaders in God's Church must therefore strive to explain the practical aspects of the truth. Be careful not to picture the truth merely as a system of rules that will make one "righteous" (which is a false assumption anyway!), but rather as a pathway to happiness.

For example, to explain that premarital sex breaks the Seventh Commandment is necessary, but to include the reasons why such activities cause heartache is better, for it applies the truth to life. Those leaders who include subtle lessons about God's truth and its superior way in everything they do with the teens will get positive results.

H. Develop Positive Peer Pressure Within the Local YOU

Intense negative pressure faces teens at school and with their friends. But the phenomenon of peer pressure can work with us as well as against us, if we know how to muster its strength to our side.

To develop positive peer pressure within the local YOU, try the following:

1. Make YOU so enjoyable that people want to belong. To belong, they know they have to conform to our standards.
2. Extol the accomplishments of individual members within the group so that other members admire their good works. When others admire us, we are drawn to them and to more good deeds.
3. Encourage the teens to look at YOU as a team that is different from the world. Feelings of being a team build group camaraderie, which in turn builds conformity.

I. Deal With the Teens Through Their Parents

The job of God's Church is not to replace the parents, but to point children and parents toward each other. Therefore it is important that we as leaders in the Church do not circumvent the parents, but rather support them. To do so, apply the following principles:

1. Never criticize parents to the teens. If it is necessary to say something negative about adults to the teens (such as, "These days parents are too permissive"), be sure to include comments that encourage them to respect their own parents in spite of weaknesses. Never openly criticize a specific parent to his teen.
2. If correcting a parent is ever necessary, do so in private so the teens will not overhear.
3. ~~Don't~~ Don't encourage a teen to go against his parent even if you feel the parent is wrong. Go to the parent to correct the situation.
4. Include parents on major decisions that affect YOU.
5. Refer teens to their parents when they have problems that should be solved by parents.
6. Don't allow kids to criticize their folks. Of course, attitude is important here. It does not mean that they cannot communicate to you their problems with their parents, only that they must obey the Fifth Commandment at all times.

7. Actively teach respect for parents.

8. Show respect to parents yourself -- both yours and theirs.

J. Remember That God Will Be Calling Them

True, teenagers are not converted and therefore cannot be dealt with like converted persons. And true, we as humans cannot call them into the Church. But God reveals that the children of baptized parents are "holy" -- that is, separated out by God with the opportunity to be called (I Corinthians 7:14). This being so, we must deal with the kids differently than we would if they were the sons or daughters of people of this world.

Primarily, this means that you deal with them in a way that will lead naturally to conversion, and in a way that will cause them to remember lessons when they are converted down the line. This approach allows for God to call them as He wishes, without trying to do the job ourselves.

In practical terms this means that we must remember they are potential Church members and deal with them as such.

For example, it means we should not hesitate to go past mere moral lessons and explain even doctrinal points when appropriate. This, of course, we would not do were we merely in charge of a youth group (even one with high moral standards) of this world.

K. Learn to Relate to Teens

All of us admire people who have a strong rapport with teens. We sometimes wish we had the same rapport, but tend to feel that rapport is a gift of birth and otherwise impossible to attain. This is not true. Anyone can improve his ability to relate if he will follow a few simple steps. Paul remarked that he had made an effort to relate to different ethnic or religious types by being all things to all men (I Corinthians 9:19-22).

Here are some pointers on how to relate to teens:

1. Take an interest in each individual teen and express that interest. Teens will respond when we reach out to them. If they find you really wish to help them -- by having them over for a

barbecue, for example -- they will draw closer to you.

2. Talk to them. A teen notices when an adult stops and talks to him or her. Rapport is built through communication, and talking is great communication.
3. Listen to them. Everything said in point 2 applies here as well, and even more so.
4. Make an effort to learn about the trends and interests of the teen world. Granted, none of us wishes to become an authority on heavy-metal rock groups so a few misguided teens will think we're "cool." On the other hand, it might be good to know if wearing white socks comes back in vogue, just in case we're tempted to express shock when someone shows up at a teen activity wearing them and is otherwise well-dressed.

Paul made it clear it was fine to at times mesh with the customs of a particular group in order to relate, so long as doing so was not out of accord with God's laws (Romans 13:7).

VII. Special Problem Areas

Each major age group in the Church has its own unique problems. Teenagers are no exception. It pays to briefly review them.

A. Rebellion Against Parents

While many teens are well-behaved and obedient, the teenage years for some become a time of rebellion and consequent disobedience (II Timothy 3:2).

B. Romantic Involvements

In recent years, dating and romantic involvements have been taking place at earlier and earlier ages. Leaders of the teens should be aware of this trend in society.

C. Premarital Sex

A strong tendency toward sexual experimentation and outright fornication exists in the teen community at large. This stems, no doubt, from the heavy emphasis on romance as stated in letter B. All Church leaders would do well to not be naive about possible or potential sexual experimentation within the teen groups they serve.

D. Drugs

Although illegal drugs have existed for millennia, only in recent decades has drug abuse become so widespread. Many teens are under heavy peer pressure to experiment with drugs. Therefore, teen leaders in the Church must keep a wary and watchful eye, lest temptation should turn to tragedy for a teenager.

E. Academic and Success Pressures

Our materialistic age, with its physical achievements, causes much stress in certain teens, and must not go unrecognized by those leaders who deal with teens and wish to help them face life's problems God's ways.

VIII. Methods of Instruction

From all that has been said in this lecture, it should be clear that the purpose of teen activities in the Church is not merely to provide a good time. Their ultimate objective is to teach godly character and a better way of living. This better way of living can be taught both directly and indirectly in the following ways:

A. Our Approach

We need to remember that the way we talk, our mannerisms should be consistent with the loving and compassionate way we wish to be treated when we are taught and corrected. We don't want to appear as though we are always expecting the worst from them. We don't want to always appear to be accusing them of wrongdoing. We want to avoid the "Gestapo approach."

B. Fun Activities

These activities are not an end in themselves but should teach God's way. On the other hand, they should be fun.

C. Example

The examples of every adult associated with the Church teen groups are of paramount importance, since we teach so strongly by example.

D. Teen Bible Studies

Monthly teen Bible studies held in each church are a prime arena for teaching God's truth.

E. Church Services

Likewise, even though Church services are geared primarily to the baptized adults, it is good to remember the needs of the teens during the messages and tailor appropriate parts to them when advisable.

IX. Conclusion

Dealing effectively with teens is a challenging endeavor. It is also one that is filled with a great sense of accomplishment and with a great big helping of just plain fun. Do yourself a favor and grow in your skill at serving this important group.

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 18

How to Build a Better Marriage

I. Introduction

- A. Marriage problems are perennially among the most common problems in society. Divorce rates are shockingly high in most Western countries.
- B. But why are marriage problems also common within the Church of God? Because people tend to be more "themselves" in marriage. There are fewer pretenses, less "putting on a show."

So it is often in marriage that our true commitment to Christianity -- to the way of love that Jesus taught -- is displayed. And if our lives are still more self-centered than Christ-centered, our marriages will have problems.

- C. As leaders in the Church of God we can and must grow in the mind of Christ that will enable us to build our marriages into deeply committed, loving relationships that glorify God.
- D. In so doing we will reap marvelous rewards, both now and through eternity.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how you and your spouse can build a better marriage God's way.

III. Need

- A. Marriage is a God-plane relationship designed to teach us the fundamentals of devoted love, the kind of love God has for us.

God is love. God has given us His laws to show us how to love Him and to love one another. Marriage and family provide a living laboratory in which we can learn to put others before ourselves and learn true godly love.

God's Family is a ruling family -- a kingdom. To be born into this family we must first learn, in this life, to be in absolute agreement with the authority

of the Head -- God the Father -- and to use whatever authority we may be given to serve others as Jesus Christ did.

In short, we should be learning to serve others with the wisdom, mercy and love of God. Christians are learning both to lead and to follow in godly love. Both of these attributes must be learned by both husband and wife. Marriage teaches us these things if we conduct our marriages God's way.

- B. Our personal example in our marriage is important, for it will set the pattern in our congregations.

We can preach all we want to, but our actions and the examples our marriages set will speak louder than our words. Hence our marriages should not reflect the ideals and ideas of this world, but the principles of harmony and love, which come only from God's way.

- C. In addition to considerations about the future, our own present happiness will be greatly enhanced by building a happy marriage now.

IV. Keeping the Spiritual Focus

- A. God is a family!

The human family is a type of the God Family. To function successfully it must be based on the law of love by which the God Family lives. Human concepts and social customs of themselves are not a reliable guide to the Christian family.

The Church is to become the Bride of Christ. As individual members of the Church we must be submitting to Christ in every facet of our lives, "bringing every thought into captivity." The closeness of the marriage relationship demands that we let the mind of Christ be in us, esteeming our mates better than ourselves.

The pattern of the perfect marriage is set by Christ and the Church.

- B. Marriage requires 100 percent from both parties.

Even though God has given husband and wife different administrative roles, marriage is not a master-slave relationship.

It is a partnership in which each partner is willing to go all out to serve the needs of the other. Each is ready to make whatever personal sacrifice is necessary to promote the well-being of the mate.



This involves submitting one's own will to the will of God so as to maintain a constant attitude of outgoing concern. A fundamental principle governing our relationship with other Christians is described in Ephesians 5:21 as "submitting to one another in the fear of God." Nowhere is this more necessary than in marriage.



Husbands who assume that all submission in marriage is to be done by the wife simply do not understand the full implications of the sacrifice Christ made for His bride-to-be in giving Himself totally for her.

C. Your marriage can advance or impede your spiritual growth.

In I Peter 3:7 we are given evidence of the direct connection between marriage and spiritual development.

"Heirs together of the grace of life" reveals that not only our physical happiness but also our blessings from God are dependent upon our capacity to love and serve our mates. It is clear that one party's spiritual condition can have a direct effect on the spiritual health of the other.

When Peter says, "that your prayers may not be hindered," he applies the broad spiritual principle that we cannot effectively communicate with God while there is a barrier between us and a brother (Matthew 5:23-24).

Two people, working in partnership, can provoke each other to good works and spiritual growth or they can drag each other down. So our attitudes and actions in marriage are an integral part of our spiritual development.

V. God's Government in the Home

A. Why is government necessary?

Have you ever asked yourself why there must be government in the home? If both husband and wife were perfectly compatible, cooperative and in harmony with each other, would authority be necessary? Is carnality the reason that authority is needed? Absolutely not.

No two people could ever be in more perfect harmony than Jesus Christ and God the Father (John 14:9, 17:11, 21-22), but they are not equal in authority (John 14:28, I Corinthians 11:3). God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). He is the author of authority. Absence of authority is anarchy.

It is not workable. Someone is in charge -- even in the Kingdom of God.

B. God made man the head of the family.

God has equipped both husband and wife perfectly for their respective roles in marriage. Though physically different, men and women have equal spiritual potential and capacity for rulership in God's Family. The masculine and feminine characteristics, including personality, emotions and physical features designed by God are intended to be perfectly complementary in marriage.

As stated above, government in the home is essential. God appointed the husband as head of the family. But the God-given responsibility of the man in the home is denied by much of society today. And, assuredly, many men have shown themselves unsuccessful in fulfilling their responsibility.

But converted men and women will find rich fulfillment in the respective roles God has given.

The cardinal rule that a Christian husband must remember in his relationship with his wife and children is stated by Jesus in Matthew 20:27, Authorized Version: "And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant."

Let's understand the role each partner should fulfill in building a solid, stable marriage and foundational home life for the rearing of children.

VI. The Husband's Role

A. Stay close to God.

If you want to be a strong and loving husband you must be in regular contact with God, who is your source of strength and love. You must continually maintain a close relationship with Him.

Beware of the many pressures that your job, social obligations, entertainment and a host of other things can put on you to neglect prayer and Bible study. The responsibility of leading a family is too heavy to carry alone.

If you are not submitting yourself to Christ and dedicating yourself to growing in His way of life, you will be creating a barrier to your wife's ability to be submissive and responsive to you.

B. Love your wife.

The Bible greatly emphasizes and commands husbands, "Love your wives" (Ephesians 5:25-29). There is an important reason God specifically commands men to love their wives. It is because men naturally tend to fall into habits that can cause them to ignore, exploit or even abuse their mates.

Certainly such is the case in marriages in this world. Although, the "women's liberation" movement is not God's way, it is men's abuses of women that have been chiefly responsible for bringing about the movement.

In many cases wives can cite real problems husbands have in marriages. Men can be and have been oppressive, unkind, intolerant, rough, condescending and abusive to their wives. We ministers who counsel marriages often see such examples even in God's Church.

The solution to these evils is not "women's liberation." It is, rather, to apply God's directive that husbands are to love their wives.

Notice Ephesians 5:25-29 in more detail. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

Loving your wife involves giving of yourself. A husband must give of his time, of his personality, of his words, of his deep feelings. Many husbands neglect conversation in their marriage. Talk to your wife. And listen to her when she talks. Without constant and regular communication about every aspect of your lives, you will drift apart. Don't allow hobbies and personal interests to consume large amounts of time and prevent you from spending precious time sharing your thoughts and feelings with each other.

How did Christ love the Church? He gave His Word, the Bible, with all its instructions, corrections and inspiration, to the Church. He gave His life that we in the Church might live and have life more abundantly. And He guides and directs the Church with lovingkindness and tender mercies for the goal of salvation, setting every example Himself for us to follow.

God's Word continues: "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious

church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

God further defines how a man should love his wife. He should love his wife as he does his own body. Every man and wife are one flesh, and the husband's thoughts ought to be directed toward the welfare of his wife. We all take care of our own physical bodies. We protect ourselves at work and are careful about accidents. We ought to love our wives the same way. We must be totally concerned for their whole being. And a husband's reward is immediate in this respect.

Once again, God's Word says, "He that loves his wife loves himself" (verse 28). The real blessing that husbands enjoy is that all the love they pour out to their wives comes right back to them.

Jesus Christ is totally faithful in His promises. And He is totally faithful to the one and the only true Church--His wife.

By the same token each husband must be totally faithful in mind and body to his one and only true wife (Matthew 5:27-28). Violations of Christ's enlarging of the Seventh Commandment will work havoc with your marriage. No man can get away with lusting after other women. To look on another woman for the purpose of lusting, or after lust has started, is adultery. Each husband must guard his mind against lust-provoking situations brought on by this world's advertisements, magazines, TV shows, movies.

Close companionship and conversation help in this regard. The more a husband and wife share life together, the more intimately involved they become. This will help a great deal in keeping each faithful and endeared to the other.

C. Be a good provider.

God says, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Timothy 5:8).

While wives may work outside the home and earn a portion of the family income, or even all the income for a temporary time while the husband cannot, the primary responsibility for providing for the family falls on the husband.

It should bring you deep satisfaction and joy to be able to provide adequately for your wife and family. This will allow her the freedom to devote as much time as needed to her responsibilities.

D. Encourage and inspire your wife.

Most wives want to please their husbands! Yet if in spite of her best efforts she never hears any compliments or receives any thanks, a wife can become discouraged. Taking your wife's labors for granted is unwise and unfair. After all, she probably looks primarily to you for approval and appreciation. If you neglect to give her appreciation she must conclude that she is a failure. Yet, with a little thought and care, you can give the encouragement and appreciation due her. But you must get your mind off yourself and consider all she does for you. Think about how life would be without her.

Instead of measuring your wife by comparisons with the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, try measuring yourself by the husband's attitude toward his wife. In verse 28 it says, "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."

Obviously the children have learned how to compliment their mother from the good example of their father. This praise only inspires her to even greater heights.

When you feel you need to point out a fault to your wife, be careful to follow Christ's example in the way He deals with the Church. Be sure you are not making a mountain out of a mole hill. Be sure you are taking the lead in admitting your own shortcomings and changing them. And be kind, patient, tender and forgiving in your approach.

In Colossians 3:19, God instructs husbands, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter [harsh] toward them."

Once you have pointed out the fault and she has acknowledged it, gently do what you can to help her overcome it, just as she would for you. But be patient. And don't keep harping on the subject as

this will only discourage, frustrate and exasperate your wife.

Tell your wife how much you appreciate her and all that she is to you. Acknowledge her strengths and achievements instead of focusing on the shortcomings she may have. Do unto her as you would have her do unto you.

E. Seek her counsel.

Although the husband is the head of the house, he should seek his wife's counsel on most if not all family matters. Her counsel should be encouraged and welcomed, and her advice weighed heavily before conclusions are reached. God says, "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). Your wife should be your chief counselor and advisor.

Where God's love is present, there will be no "battle of the sexes" or competition between you and your wife. You are still the head of the house. Accepting her advice does not mean she is "usurping your authority," or that you have "relinquished the reins of authority" to your wife. Be big enough and wise enough to acknowledge right advice -- to see it, admit it and accept it. And why not praise your wife for the good ideas she offers?

F. Keep up your personal appearance.

Before you married your wife you were probably very conscious of your appearance whenever you were with her. No doubt you wanted to make a good impression. Now perhaps you have let down.

Good grooming and maintaining an attractive appearance are even more important in marriage. This is another means by which you express love to your wife. It reflects an attitude of true outgoing concern. It shows respect for your wife. Don't assume that she doesn't care how you look. She does!

VII. The Wife's Role

A. Stay close to God.

It will be difficult for you to submit to your husband as God commands unless you stay in the right attitude. Be sure you are looking into the spiritual mirror of God's law through Bible study and prayer. It is easy to get bogged down in

housework and other time-consuming projects to the detriment of your spiritual life. Don't let this happen. Always put first things first and stay close to God.

B. Be submissive and responsive to your husband.

In Ephesians 5:22, God says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." This could be paraphrased another way: "Wives, fit in with your husband's plans."

God created woman as a helper for her husband (Genesis 2:18, AV). This is her primary function as a wife. The Hebrew word for "help meet" literally means "corresponding to, a counterpart" and could better be translated "perfectly fitting" or "exactly compatible." This wife is and should be the perfect complement to her husband.

You can help your husband by fitting in with his plans. Thus you enable him to accomplish more and grow faster. This will be a blessing both to you and your husband. Your submission to your husband is a reflection of your respect and obedience to God.

Follow your husband not only in the letter of the law, but in the spirit of the law. Try to understand his perspective and do your best to support it. Sometimes submitting to your husband and complying with his wishes will seem to you a hard thing to do. But as long as your husband's wishes are "in Christ," be sure you carry them out. This is part of character.

It is easy to justify a lack of cooperation or wrong attitudes toward your husband by finding fault with him. Naturally, he will have his faults. He is human. But don't let this justify in your mind your failure to submit to the authority that God has placed in the home.

C. Encourage and inspire your husband.

We all need compliments from time to time, and your husband is no exception. Let him know you appreciate him, and compliment him on work well done. Let him know you are solidly behind him in his efforts in work, study and planning family matters. Show him you have confidence in his ability to lead and guide the home.

But on the other hand, some wives go to a wrong extreme and make the mistake of pushing their husbands in order to "keep up with the Joneses." This will not encourage or inspire your husband to greater effort. In the end, it will destroy both him and you. Resist covetousness and lusting after status symbols. Be content with what you have.

Rather than push your husband, give him confidence, letting him know you are standing behind him in his efforts, even when you must go through difficult times together.

Although you want to encourage and inspire your husband, never condone his error or sympathize with him when he is wrong. There may be times when he will be in a wrong attitude toward others. It is at this time that you can be of great assistance to him. Do not sympathize with him at this point. Rather, encourage and inspire him to see God's will and to be in the right attitude.

Don't harp on or nag your husband, but gently and lovingly give him the advice or suggestions he may need in any situation.

D. Keep up your personal appearance.

Your appearance is a direct reflection on your husband as well as on yourself. Be conscious of proper grooming. Stay neat and clean. If possible, take time to freshen up before your husband arrives home. A woman's hair is given to her for a glory, and it is important that you take care of your hair so that it adds to your pleasant and attractive appearance.

Dress to please your husband as well as yourself. Learn the style of clothes he likes and put particular emphasis on that part of your wardrobe.

E. Be a good homemaker.

This world has many cares and troubles from which your husband, like the rest of the family, needs solace. Be sure your home has a pleasing and inviting atmosphere for the whole family. Keep the home neat and clean.

A home that is cluttered and unkempt only adds more frustration for everyone to an already harried day. God has placed the home under your jurisdiction, and your management of it for the welfare of your family is an important task.

VIII. Keep on Building Your Marriage

A. Improve your marriage.

The state of your marriage will directly affect your spiritual progress. It is difficult for a man to be an effective leader if he does not have a happy home life. Your example will be seen -- it cannot be hidden from others.

Give particular attention to constantly improving your marriage and making it happier. Go out of your way for one another. Be thoughtful and courteous in every way. Think on how your marriage relationship can be improved.

B. A happy marriage takes work and cooperation.

You will need to get together and discuss the state of your marriage from time to time.

Remember, you are both heirs together of the grace of life. Do not let your marriage degenerate, but continue to work for an ever better one. And know this: Your prayer life will suffer and you run the risk of spiritual disaster if you are not maintaining a happy, strong, close-knit marriage (I Peter 3:7).

We all know better -- it's not that we don't know what to do. But are we doing it?

Wives, you know what to do and how to please your husbands. You know how to submit to them as you ought. But do you do it?

Husbands, you know how to love your wives and make them happy. You know how to show kindness, consideration, tenderness and selflessness. But do you do it?

C. Follow the good examples of good marriages.

You know where you fall short. Take this information, as well as all the good literature available on the subject, and get to work now and build a better marriage.

IX. Conclusion

God has given His Church marvelous understanding of His plan. He has shown us how marriage itself pictures our ultimate place in His Family.

Don't let this blessing slip through your fingers by underestimating the value of your marriage. Let Christ live in you and be reflected in your love and care of your mate.

30/10/89

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 19

The Balanced Approach to Child Rearing

I. Introduction

- A. "The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow!" This phrase is repeated often because it is true.
- B. Does that statement comfort you? Or does it concern you and make you anxious for the future?
- C. Probably most of us fear the thought that children today are tomorrow's leaders. And well we may, for the true principles of child rearing have been ignored, if not forgotten, by many parents.
- D. As leaders in God's Church we can help mold the future by learning how to mold our children. We can then teach others the same skills according to the unique and wonderful child-rearing truths the Bible teaches.

II. SPS

This lecture will present a balanced approach to child rearing.

III. Need

It takes little thought to realize why we in God's Church need to be constantly refreshed on the principles of child rearing. Here are just a few of the reasons:

- A. Proper child rearing does not come to us automatically. It must be learned.
- B. The responsibility for rearing our children is so profound that it must not be left to chance.
- C. This world is full of misinformation. We have probably absorbed some of it unconsciously.

Therefore we need to refresh our minds on this vital subject.

IV. An Awesome Responsibility

A. Commanded of God

God says to parents, "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). This statement emphasizes the contrast between the natural human responses to children and the actions of spirit-led Christian parents. It also shows child rearing to be an ongoing requirement of a Christian parent's growth and development -- an expression of the fruits of God's Spirit in action.

We all know Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and [even] when he is old he will not depart from it." This shows the importance of working with children when they are young. It tells us that the lifelong values a person will hold dear are inculcated at a young and tender age. This is when he or she is responsive to the leadership, example and verbal instruction of parents.

Deuteronomy 6 gives the broadest perspective of the child rearing process. Here we see God's intent for mankind's education and training through the generations. Parents were to pass on the basic knowledge of God and His purpose to their children. Added to this would be the accumulated physical, material knowledge man could discover for himself.

This chapter tells us a lot about conviction, diligence and methods of instruction. It leaves no doubt of the awesome responsibility God places on parents. We will examine it in some detail later in this lecture.

B. Your Child's Future

While all child rearing has a spiritual foundation and purpose, we must not limit our efforts to so-called "religious" education. Our children need education and training for conducting successful lives in this physical society. They must be taught to apply true spiritual principles to the problems and challenges of everyday life. They must learn the way of give. They must learn how to work. They must learn to be responsible, dependable and resourceful.

In short, they need to develop the elements of the seven laws of success.

Your children had no choice of parents. Yet their future success in life is largely dependent upon the

foundation you help them lay during their formative years. Do not neglect this grave responsibility.

C. Spiritual Growth for Parents

Child rearing is not just for children. The constant care and instruction of children give parents many years of experience in conducting a tiny portion of God's government. You see, God has delegated to parents responsibility for governing their children and bringing them into harmony with His plan. It's our job to equip our children with the basic skills they will need as God delivers to them the same responsibility when they become parents.

D. Source of Joy and Happiness

Another desirable result of proper child rearing is the joy that happy, respectful children can bring to parents. God in His love intended that we have a type of the same joy He will experience when He succeeds in "bringing many sons to glory." This joy is multiplied when our own children give us grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As God says in Proverbs 17:6, "Children's children are the crown of old men." Most of us know grandparents whose lives revolve largely around their grandchildren.

As we read in Psalm 127:3, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is His reward." Yes, God gives us children as a blessing of life. And children bring us great joy when we have a proper relationship with them.

But God also warns that if we neglect our children they will bring shame and its attendant pain upon us (Proverbs 29:15).

E. Additional Responsibility of Your Office

You are leaders in this local church area. You have therefore, a responsibility to set a good example -- one that can be safely followed. What kind of example of child rearing are you setting?

God pinpoints this area as one of the determining factors whether a man is qualified to be ordained to any office in the Church, be it deacon or elder: "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (I Timothy 3:12). And an elder, Paul writes, must have "faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination" (Titus 1:6).

* But keep in mind that this is not the primary focus of your child rearing. Do not attempt to pressure your children into conformity because of your office. The pressure is on you, as a leading Christian, to do the best possible job of child rearing for the reasons mentioned above. That you serve in an office of the Church simply adds a little weight to the importance of your example.

F. A Portion of the Work of the Church

In Malachi 4:5-6 we read: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

We understand an important meaning of that verse is to turn this generation to their biblical "fathers." But we should not neglect our long-understood emphasis to the physical family.

God's Church is doing a spiritual type of the work of Elijah. What God is saying is that unless we succeed in restoring God's government to the foundation of all society -- the home -- and unless we provide a trained nucleus of virtuous young people who will be the pioneers of the world tomorrow, there is no use in perpetuating human life on this earth. What a commission! We must not fail.

V. Goals of Child Rearing

- A. The ultimate goal of child rearing is that our children become members of the God Family. Building a relationship with them that points them to a right relationship with God begins even before birth.
- B. A secondary goal is that our children develop the necessary attitudes and skills to function successfully in human society.
- C. Thirdly, our children must learn how to perpetuate God's way of life in their own future families, not only for their own personal happiness but also to prepare godly leaders in generations to come.

VI. The Wrong Approach -- Two Extremes

A. Parents -- Trained Observers

The world has been deceived into believing that children will somehow evolve into decent, respectful citizens and members of society. Parents don't really

have to do much, which, of course, is appealing since many parents are looking for the easy way out. Parents become little more than observers.

* It is parents -- not children -- who need to be trained. Then they can understand why their children act the way they do as they pass through one stage of behavior to the next sometimes more frightening stage. To try to alter their "normal" behavioral patterns, goes the deception, would seriously hamper their development. This is the easy way out for parents who don't want to be bothered with teaching, training and disciplining their children. This approach is doomed to failure! Children, following the natural course of humanity, only grow worse -- not better.

Effective child rearing takes time -- lots of time. And it's work -- hard work. Many who know how to rear their children God's way fail because they aren't willing to pay the price of success by meeting the required daily payments in time and energy. But we need to realize that paying the price yields huge, lifelong benefits to both parents and children.

B. Parents -- Unbalanced Disciplinarians

Some members of the Church have worked diligently at spanking their children and feel that they are doing a good job of child rearing. However, such might not be the case.

* Spanking and effective child rearing are not synonymous. There is far more to child rearing than paddling your children when they are disobedient. Spanking, of itself, will not produce a respectful, obedient, balanced child.

Some parents have tried to use spanking as a quick solution to their child-rearing problems. But that doesn't work! You need to see the overall approach -- the big picture -- to make sure you are on the right track to successful child rearing.

VII. Four Keys to Effective, Balanced Child Rearing

A. Love Your Children

God is the ideal parent. He is the perfect example. God is love. His every action is an expression of that love, even the discipline He administers to His children. His motivation toward us is outgoing concern. He wants what is best for us in every situation.

God designed the human race so that children are

begotten through the intimate expression of love between husband and wife. God intended that parents continue to share their love with their children throughout their lives.

The only motivation powerful enough to produce truly effective, godly child-rearing practices is love. We must want what is ultimately best for our children. ~~That should be the force behind every communication and action between us and them.~~ Of course all of us fall short of this ideal, but it should be the standard toward which we are striving.

The opposite motive, often present in families, is that of selfishness. It is all too easy for us as parents to let selfish concerns determine the actions we take. And because we are in authority, we must constantly guard against taking advantage of our children in judgments we make. When we have conflicts with our children we need to ask whether our greatest concern is for their welfare or our own.

This certainly does not mean that parents should give in to every desire or demand of a child. Far from it. Teach your children to respect the values and rules of life embraced by the parents. But they must be able to see and feel the loving concern that motivates the parents' actions toward them.

Don't forget that Jesus said, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Authorized Version, Matthew 20:27). Fathers and mothers who bear rule over their children by God's authority must be loving servants.

Children are fantastic blessings from Almighty God. They are assets, not liabilities. And loving your children is more than just providing for their physical needs. Today, some parents are giving more and more things to their children and less and less of themselves. True love involves giving of yourself. There is no substitute.

1. Enjoy your children.

The Psalmist wrote about the "joyful mother of children" (Psalm 113:9) and noted, "Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:5). Don't look on your children as a bother or a nuisance. Many parents are trying to find some way to "get them out from under their feet" or "out of their hair."

2. Spend time with your children.

How much time do you spend each week with your children? Did you know recent surveys in the United States show parents only spend 10-15 minutes of quality time each day with their children? How much do you actually play with your children? Playing with your children will prove to be not only an enjoyable experience but also a teaching experience. You will learn a great deal about your children by playing with them. You will also find that playing is a valuable opportunity to teach them important principles.

3. Be expressive in your love to your children.

Let them know you really do love them. Tell them often how much you love them and how much they mean to you. Remember, true love is outgoing -- expressive. Our children learn the meaning of love just as we have learned what true love is.

We love God because He first loved us (I John 4:19). He set the example. He expressed love to us. We responded to His love. You must teach your children how to love by first loving them. Hug and kiss them when appropriate. It isn't wrong for a father and son to kiss -- regardless of age. The parable of the prodigal son makes this clear (Luke 15:20). Little children enjoy crawling up onto their parents' laps and being loved. The ticklings and piggyback rides all go together to build a bond of love no force can break.

4. Get to know your children.

Unfortunately, as children grow older they often pull into a shell and become virtual strangers to their parents. They claim their parents don't understand them. Many times, sad to say, this may be true. Talk to your children, but don't make the mistake of doing all the talking. Let them talk. Find out what they are thinking.

And make sure you don't talk to them only when you need to correct them. Continually keep the channels of communication open. Your patient listening to matters important to them confirms that you love them.

Be careful to talk to them on their level and be sure they understand. Be gentle and patient when they have trouble expressing themselves. And don't squelch every attempted conversation by

continually doing picky little things like correcting grammar and pronunciation.

5. Appreciate what your children do.

Children hunger for recognition and praise from their parents. They will often spend a great deal of time preparing some little gift for you. It has no monetary value, but it's their way of saying, "I love you." It will crush them if you belittle it or overlook it. When they accomplish something worthwhile like bringing home a good report card, acknowledge it. Let them know you are well pleased. God wasn't neglectful about expressing His satisfaction with His Son (Matthew 3:17).

6. Purchase gifts for your children from time to time throughout the year as you are able.

Gifts don't have to be expensive as long as they are given as a sincere expression of your love and concern.

On the other hand, don't make the mistake of giving your children so much that they become spoiled. Use wisdom and moderation. Don't give your child everything he asks for -- even if you can afford it. Teach your children this lesson of life -- they can't always have everything they want.

7. Plan family activities.

Do things together as a family. Backyard cookouts, picnics, an outing to the beach or to the mountains, camping, hunting and fishing trips -- these are the things your children will cherish in their memories the rest of their lives. Be creative and take advantage of special recreational, cultural and educational features of the local area. Get the children involved in planning family activities. Have fun together!

8. Don't force your children to grow up before their time.

Remember, they are children -- not adults. Don't rob them of their childhood by trying to force them to grow up faster than God intended. Notice Paul's statement concerning this: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man [and not before], I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11).

Children will be and must be children. Of course, they are going to do childish things. What else would you expect? And no matter how much you discipline them, they will continue to be exactly what they are -- children. However, "Even a child is known by his deeds, by whether what he does is pure and right (Proverbs 20:11). Therefore, what we are striving to accomplish by the proper kind of child rearing is obedient, polite, respectful children, not some kind of "little men" or "little women."

9. Your love for your children will also be expressed in the teaching and discipline you give them.

Some time ago, Mr. Tkach asked all God's ministers to read two good books on the subject of child rearing. They were "How to Really Love Your Child" and "How to Really Love Your Teenager" by Dr. Ross Campbell. It would be good to review that material to help reinforce this DELS lecture.

B. Teach Your Children

We teach our children primarily in two ways -- by example and by specific instruction. Both methods are very important and must be used together to gain the best results. Let's consider your example first.

Actions speak louder than words. Regardless of what you say, your children will be more influenced by what you do and what you are.

Your children's educational training begins long before they enter school. Your home is their first classroom. You are their first instructors.

Children learn by mimicking or imitating others. Haven't you noticed (sometimes to your dismay) how your children gradually take on certain of your characteristics? We are at times dumbfounded at how much they are like we are. They are little carbon copies of their parents--gradually being created in our image and in our likeness.

This is the way God intended it should be. This is exactly the same way He is creating children in His image and after His likeness. We, as parents, are privileged to witness an unfolding of the physical type of what is spiritually taking place in our own lives.

Jesus Christ was the perfect example of this. He said: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also

does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does" (John 5:19-20). Jesus Christ learned from His Father. He imitated or copied His Father in everything. He was so much like His Father that He could say, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

As children of God, we are learning by the same process our children are learning -- imitating. "Therefore be followers [imitators, mimics] of God as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

Small children naturally look up to and stand in awe of their parents. To them, their parents are the greatest. They idolize you and want to be exactly like you when they grow up. All of this is a childlike form of worship, for to them you are a type of God.

This should come as an awesome realization. Can you begin to grasp the heavy responsibility this places upon you as parents? Think of the irreparable damage you could inflict on your children by your wrong examples. Your example is a tremendous power -- either for good or for evil.

What kind of example are you setting for the impressionable minds of your children? What type of soil are you providing for these precious little lives to grow up in? Do you want your children to grow up to be exactly as you now are? Let's discuss a number of vital areas where your example makes a big difference.

1. Are you setting a good spiritual example for your children to follow? Do you always show complete respect for God and His laws by your faithful, consistent example of obedience? Or do you occasionally drop your spiritual guard and compromise with God's laws? Sit down and go over the various laws of God and see if your example can be safely followed by your children.
2. Do you always show respect for and uphold the office of God's ministers and the Church in general? Or do you criticize your minister or Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, or the Church or its doctrines and policies? Don't expect your children to respect the minister or, for that matter, any figure in authority, whether he be a school teacher or the head of your nation, unless you back up the offices of those in authority.
3. Is your home a happy home -- filled with love and concern? Are you and your wife happily married,

and do you express your love for each other in such a way that your children can see it? Or is there dissension between you?

4. Dad, are you a strong, able leader of your family, setting the right kind of masculine example? Mom, are you a sweet, responsible wife with a meek and quiet spirit, setting the right feminine example?
5. What kind of personality do you have? Are you friendly, outgoing, personable, fun-loving -- with a real zest for life? Your personality will be indelibly stamped into your children's lives.

Now let's look at instruction. Beside setting the right example for your children you have the opportunity to verbally instruct them as well. In fact, such instruction is a clear command from God.

Let's return to Deuteronomy 6 and study the approach God tells us to take with our children. Notice first verses 4-6. Here God shows us that before we can instruct our children in the way that is right, we must first be committed to that way ourselves. The true values must be in our hearts and minds. Then out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. The right example will be there to reinforce the instruction. Again we see the two go hand in hand.

Many Christians sincerely but mistakenly believe that instructing children in the truth is done primarily in structured, academic family Bible studies that are often tense and boring. Certainly, regular Bible study with your children, at a level they can understand, is a valuable tool for teaching them. But poorly handled or over-used it can become a burden to young people and cause them to resent the truths you are trying to teach.

In verse 7 God reveals to Israel, and to us, the natural way to teach and reinforce the true values of God. We are told to talk of them when we sit in the house, walk by the way, lie down and rise up.

Clearly, this is not a reference to some ritualistic repetition of the commandments and statutes, but rather an exhortation to show our children the application of the laws of God in the activities we experience day by day.

Notice, this same method is recommended in Exodus 12:26: "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord,

who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt.'"

Parents who are wholeheartedly living God's way should not scare their children away from the natural learning process by specifying subjects or time periods as Bible study, or "religious" instruction. Even when structured Bible studies are conducted, they should be made relevant to the child's affairs.

After all, the truth of God is not a religion but a way of life. Further, it is a perfect, abundant, peaceful way defined by the perfect law of liberty. The only thing that makes it appear harsh and negative to our children is the influence of Satan's world. Therefore, the example we set and the environment we create must be powerful enough to counter that influence.

When a child is born, he should enter a family that is living God's way and is therefore motivated by real love. The initial expressions of that love will begin the instruction process by developing a bond between parent and child. Long before the child can speak or comprehend words, he will be learning about such things as love, tenderness, security and authority. He will associate the parents with all of the good feelings he experiences, from satisfying his hunger to making him laugh. The first year of life is a critical time for parents to build a close relationship with a child.

Once the right foundation is laid during infancy, the child will learn very quickly. It is very important that parents maintain a high level of communication with the child.

Most of the initial talk to the child will be positive approval and comfort. But as the child exercises the five senses it will be necessary to define limits of his activities. This serves two purposes: First, it will help protect him from innocent contact with danger. Second, it will reaffirm the parents' position of loving authority. The child's perception of that loving authority will become the basis of effective teaching and learning for the next several years.

Specific instruction should progress from simple to complex as the child grows and learns. It should teach the true values in a cumulative manner. Some key ingredients will be the following:

Respect for authority
Obedience to parents

Prayer
Sharing
Honesty
Friendliness
Self-control
Cleanliness
Diligence
Punctuality
Work habits
Drive
Resourcefulness
Dependability
Study habits
Right attitude in competition
Respect for the opposite sex
Financial responsibility

As these and other values are taught within the context of a Christian family, it is understood that specific spiritual duties such as Sabbath keeping and tithing are included in categories such as respect for authority. Prayer is specifically mentioned because it provides contact with God. Every child should learn to pray early in life.



It bears repeating that the combination of clear instruction and right example is the only effective means of teaching your child true values. And because children have human nature and the world offers wrong alternatives, parents must support their teaching with a system of discipline.

C. Discipline

The term discipline, as used in this lecture, is not synonymous with punishment. Rather it is used in its broadest sense to refer to a system of training and molding of character.

Right discipline provides for encouragement and rewards as well as correction and penalties. All are necessary tools for guiding the child. God, Himself, uses the combination of blessing and cursing, reward and punishment to get His point across. That is the message of Deuteronomy 28.

In dealing with children it is necessary to work with the five senses. Proper behavior and good fruits should be met with rewards that bring children pleasure. These may include praise, hugs, toys, special privileges, money and other rewards.

Wrong behavior and bad fruits should be met with penalties that bring a measure of pain or discomfort to children. These may include voicing disapproval,

proper spanking, deprivation of privileges, withholding money and other penalties.

The point of this discipline is to help the child grasp the effects of laws in motion. Children will not always be able to understand the long-term results of wrong actions and thus fulfill the words of Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Appropriate punishment, lovingly administered by parents will help motivate a child to avoid wrong actions. By the same token, rewards and praise will motivate a child to choose the right way because he enjoys the rewards. This system is patterned after the one God uses with His children.

It is important to keep in mind the principle that where there is no law there is no sin. That is, children must not be expected to somehow discern the difference between right and wrong unless they have been instructed accordingly. Therefore, discipline, whether reward or punishment, must go hand in hand with instruction. Neither is of much benefit without the other.

If a child misbehaves in ignorance, it is not a time for discipline but a time for instruction. The instruction must be clear and definite. It should explain exactly what the child did wrong. It is helpful to have the child repeat the instruction and acknowledge that he understands it. Then the parent should guide the child not to behave the same way in the future. Subsequent actions of the child can then be rewarded or punished according to his obedience or disobedience. This approach gives the child a clear direction for his behavior and a sense of security in the loving responses of his parents.

Parents must not be deterred from necessary punishment by misguided sympathy for the child. Remember, God says in Hebrews 12:11, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Two points must be emphasized here. First, do not neglect your child by failing to provide rewards and praise when he is doing well. If you do, you will not only lose its benefits, but you may reinforce wrong behavior. That's because the child gets more attention from you when he misbehaves. Second, always follow any punishment with an expression of love and

← affection for the child. This reminds him that you are punishing him because you love him, not because you are angry with him.

It is safe to say that the two biggest shortcomings most well-meaning parents have in child rearing are 1) lack of clarity with instruction and 2) lack of consistency with discipline. If you can overcome these two obstacles you will be well on your way to successful child rearing.

Our heavenly Father has set the perfect example of parenting. Notice what David was inspired to write: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.... As a father pities [has compassion for] his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:8, 13-14). Learn to have God's attitude in dealing with your children. This is not easy. But with help through His Spirit, you can do it.

D. Make God Your Partner

Child rearing is a fundamental spiritual responsibility of every Christian parent. It demands wisdom and character beyond human capacity alone. Only God, through His Holy Spirit can give you the strength and understanding you need to effectively rear your children. As in any spiritual endeavor, you simply can't leave God out of the picture. You must stay close to God at all times and study His Word to find the guidance you will need.

Don't forget that our children are not only ours but God's. He has a profound interest in their ultimate success. And though our young children do not have the Holy Spirit within them, they do have access to God and He is calling them to a special relationship with Him.

We should not consider our children as average carnal children who will be antagonistic to the truth. If we have been blessed with the opportunity to rear them correctly from birth, we can pray for them to respond to God's instruction. Of course they will be tried by this society and they will often fall short. After all, we who are converted do the same.

Pray for your children. Let God know that you are concerned for them and that you know they need His help at all times. Ask Him to motivate and inspire them. Ask Him to give them right attitudes and the strength to resist the natural pulls of the flesh and the temptations to go astray.

Of course you need to regularly ask God for the discernment, judgment, compassion and mercy you need to be an effective parent. The responsibility you have is a type of the spiritual office you hope to someday fulfill in the Kingdom of God. Only with the mind of God and His attitude of love can you hope to be successful as a parent.

VIII. Conclusion

It is true that "The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow." That being so, we can help change the future by applying God's principles of child rearing in the present -- now!

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 20

Prayer, Fasting and Meditation

I. Introduction

- A. Have you ever stopped in a large city and marveled at the giant skyscrapers that reach hundreds of feet into the air? Certainly they are striking monuments to the ingenuity and creativity of man's God-given mind.
- B. Credit for such masterpieces goes to many places -- like the architect, engineers and the workmen themselves.
- C. But the efforts of all these workmen would account for little if it were not for the many and varied tools they must use to do their work -- from the humble pencil, hammer and pliers to the large, complicated, powerful bulldozers and cranes.
- D. In the same way, the spiritual building we are constructing out of our very lives -- the temple of God's Spirit (I Corinthians 6:10) -- depends for its successful erection upon certain simple tools of Christianity.

God has given us the tools to help us grow, overcome and draw near to Him. How we use these tools will determine how God can use us, both as leaders in His Church now and in His Kingdom in the world tomorrow. These tools are Bible study, prayer, fasting and meditation.

II. SPS

We are going to see how we should use personal prayer, fasting and meditation -- the tools of Christian growth.

III. Prayer

A. Why Should We Pray?

1. God Is the Source of Everything Good

James 1:17 -- In this modern, science-oriented, mechanical society in which we live, it is easy to forget that God is the source of every good gift. Even some members of God's Church sometimes look

to God only as a last resort -- when they are really desperate.

God is the source of wisdom, understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 3:6, James 1:5). He is the source of peace (John 14:27) and of power, love and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:7). God is the source of promotion and advancement, not men (Psalm 75:6-7). He is our protector (Psalm 91). He forgives us and heals us (Psalm 103:3). And when our ways please Him, He grants us favor even with those who hate us (Proverbs 16:7).

John 3:27 -- Once God calls and begins to work with us, we can receive nothing apart from Him. Realizing this, we should be diligent to seek Him in prayer regularly. Without His direction, guidance, favor, power and help, we can accomplish nothing worthwhile (John 15:5). What we do ultimately accomplish, or the spiritual progress we make or fail to make, is in direct proportion to our realization of this fact (Psalm 127:1).

2. God Requires That We Ask

Matthew 7:7-11 -- God knows our needs even before we ask, but He requires that we ask and seek that which we need to draw near to Him in a close, personal, father-child relationship. He wants us to learn to trust, rely on and look to Him as the source of everything.

Luke 18:1-8 -- In addition, God wants us to learn to persevere in prayer. The parable of the unjust judge shows us this principle. By praying faithfully and steadfastly about problems or needs until God definitely answers one way or another, we build perseverance and faith into our character (I Corinthians 15:58).

B. When Should We Pray?

There is nothing permanent about a spiritual mind in a physical body. Therefore, we must renew God's Spirit in us daily (II Corinthians 4:16). God tells us to ask, seek, come to Him positively and persistently, regularly and often, to receive the power of His Spirit (Luke 11:5-13). A light bulb is useless unless it is in contact with the source of power, and so are we.

1. Example of Jesus

Jesus set the example for us of getting up early in the morning and spending the first part of His

day in prayer before anything else could interrupt (Mark 1:35). David said in Psalm 5:3 that he also prayed early in the morning.

2. Example of Daniel and David

In Daniel 6:10 and Psalm 55:16-17 Daniel and David, men entrusted with the highest governmental powers of major kingdoms, very busy men, set the example for us of coming before God in prayer regularly. We need to make these examples part of our way of life.

Praying people are producing people, without exception. You must pray regularly. Nothing is more important. The closer you can stay to God and the more often you come to Him in prayer, the less you will sin and the more you will accomplish.

If you really grasp the fact that all you need and want comes from God -- that your success or failure, happiness or troubles are in direct proportion to the extent to which you commit everything to Him in believing prayer -- you will not make plans or do anything without seeking His counsel and help (Proverbs 3:5-6).

3. Pray Always

Be instant in prayer. Ask for wisdom before business meetings, protection before traveling, compassion and patience before going home tired to your wife and family at night. You need to pray always and begin to literally walk and talk with God (I Thessalonians 5:17-18).

C. Have a Proper Attitude and Perspective in Prayer

1. Pray With Purpose

While it may be helpful, when one is first converted, to "pray by the clock" to learn how to pray, leaders in the local church should have progressed beyond that stage. If you are praying merely to log time or "get in" your prayer, you are not as effective as you should be. Frankly, a much more practical approach than "clock watching" is to develop and maintain your individual prayer list.

After you have prayed, do you feel closer to God, realizing that your prayer was heard and that it will accomplish something, or do you merely feel relieved that you have "gotten in" your prayer for

the day? Most of us find ourselves slipping into this rut from time to time. Resolve to pray with more purpose.

Just before you pray, remind yourself that you aren't going through the motions of prayer just because as a Christian you are supposed to pray, but you are praying because you need to pray -- because you need the help and spiritual strength that only God can give. Ask God to help you pray with more purpose and to help you get rid of any tendency to approach prayer as a daily ritual.

2. Realize to Whom You Are Praying and That God Is Listening

As you come before God in prayer, be fully conscious and aware of the power, majesty and holiness of the eternal Creator God to whom you are praying. Don't approach Him sleepily, carelessly or casually and fail to have a deeply respectful, humble attitude. Realize that you are coming before the very throne of the ruler of the universe!

Just as important, realize as you pray that you have the undivided attention of this magnificently brilliant, all-powerful divine being. Unless you do sense and feel that you are getting through to God, your prayers won't be truly effective.

3. Be Positive and Big-Minded in Prayer

Hebrews 4:16 -- We should come confidently and boldly to the throne of grace. We should be positive in prayer, confident that God is hearing us and will answer (Matthew 21:22).

Philippians 4:6 -- Don't neglect to sincerely and wholeheartedly thank God for the many blessings you have received. This is an important way to be positive as you pray, focusing your attention on positive aspects of your calling and your life.

Another important part of your prayer should be for God's Work. By praying for God's Work we become more big-minded in our perspective and get our minds off our own day-to-day problems, which are generally of little importance by comparison.

IV. Fasting

A. Why Do You Fast?

Many in God's Church fast only because they realize

that Christ taught His disciples to do so, and they feel that it is something they should do as a part of the routine of Christian living. They don't fast with a real understanding of the purpose of fasting. As a result, they may go without food and drink for a day without receiving much real spiritual benefit from the fast.

How about you? Do you fast to measure up to some self-righteous standard you have set for yourself, or do you fast with the sincere intent to draw closer to God and to humble yourself before Him?

Fasting is one of the greatest tools God gives to help us think like Him and to act like Him. Jesus Christ can mold and shape our spiritual thinking through our drawing near to Him. Our goal is to become like God -- not to be an ascetic, purposely hurting ourselves to gain favor with God.

To take on God's nature, we need to overcome our own carnal nature and the pull of Satan. Fasting gives us the help we need to counterattack these destructive attitudes and pulls.

Fasting shows that we rely on God totally. Complete abstinence from food and water shows our utter weakness as humans while reassuring us of God's supreme power to change our lives. The true fast -- the fast with the purpose of drawing closer to God -- is the fast that God blesses.

B. How to Fast More Effectively

A fast that is pleasing to God and is effective involves more than merely going without food and drink for a day. Here are three points that will help you fast more effectively.

1. Fast With a Purpose in Mind

The Bible examples of fasting indicate that you should have some specific purpose in mind when you fast. (A few examples are: II Samuel 12:16 -- David fasted when he wanted God to heal his son; II Chronicles 20:3 -- Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast when the Moabites and Ammonites invaded Judah; Matthew 4:2 -- Christ fasted to draw especially close to God before His temptation by Satan).

Your purpose might be to beseech God for help with a particular problem -- physical or spiritual. It might be to show God your serious concern in praying for someone's healing. It might be to

seek to know God's will in a particular matter, or it may be just a matter of realizing you have not been as close to God as you should be and you want to earnestly seek to draw close to Him. You may want to fast in order to pray more fervently for God's Work.



The point is that you should have some specific purpose or purposes in mind. If you have more than one purpose in mind, limit yourself to two or three at the most, so that you can better concentrate on them during your fast.

2. Devote Your Full Attention to the Fast

Isaiah 58:3 -- If we go about our regular routine when we fast, either seeking pleasure or exacting all our labors, our fast will not be effective in helping us draw near to God.

Think about some of the Bible examples of fasts. You can be sure that David did not go about his routine activities while fasting and beseeching God to heal his son. And Christ got away from His regular routine for His 40-day fast. In fact, He even left His disciples and His usual environment to go into the wilderness. We usually can't do that, but if we could, our fasts would be more effective and we would be able to draw closer to God.

The principle to remember is to take whatever steps are possible in your particular case when you fast in order to give yourself as much as possible to prayer, study and meditation.

3. Center Your Prayer, Study and Meditation on the Purpose of Your Fast

Use your time to pray, study and meditate about the specific purpose you have in mind. Don't spend a lot of time studying or praying about some other problems or subjects. Zero in on and concentrate on the particular problem or problems at hand.

V. Meditation

A. What Is Meditation and Why Meditate?

Meditation is simply taking a certain theme, problem or scripture and dwelling on it -- asking why, how, when, where and what is the end result -- then determining whether or not that is the result you want. It is a matter of looking at things from God's

point of view, and is the key to keeping things in their proper perspective.

You can meditate about God's purpose for mankind and your part in it. You can meditate about your weaknesses and faults and what you need to do in order to overcome them. You can meditate about a particular passage of Scripture.

Take Leviticus 26:14-16 as an example. Do you know what terror is? Do you want to find out? Read the rest of the chapter. Dwell on it. Roll it over in your mind -- make it personal. This is God's promise to you if you won't change. Do you want it? Of course not.

After meditating and dwelling on it, you see much more graphically the need to change. Without meditation, you can understand the Scriptures, but you cannot convict yourself of the need for personal change.

B. How to Meditate

Proverbs 4:26 -- Ponder your course of action -- your way of life. Consider the end -- look before you leap. The book of Proverbs is a ready-made key to meditation. These are the conclusions Solomon came to through meditation. Read them and reverse the process. Read the conclusion and go back and fill in the thinking and meditation.

Psalms 1:1-6 -- Blessed is the man who savors and loves God's law, because it is good and right, and who meditates on it day and night. The ungodly do not meditate and are not grounded and rooted in God's Word, but are shallow like chaff.

Joshua 1:8 -- God commands you to meditate on His laws day and night, so that you obey and do them.

The place to begin is with the Ten Commandments. Let's take, for example, the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land." It is the first among those that govern our human relationships.

The Church has long emphasized the importance of family. The family is the basis for decent society. Meditate on what that actually means! Understand why obedience to parents and respect for authority leads to happiness and stability. Bring it down to the grassroots level of your own home and family.

The reason to obey the Fifth Commandment is awesome! You'll realize this more and more deeply as you run this theme through your mind.

Another positive example of how to meditate would be to think about the peace the world will enjoy in the Millennium. No more will collective selfishness cause the heartache and problems we see today. It will be a society based on outgoing concern for others. Think how you can live that way of love now. Deeds are just our thoughts in action!

C. When to Meditate

Genesis 24:63 -- Isaac meditated in the evening. That can be one very good time, because the pressure of the day is over and you are in a reflective mood. Of course, anytime you feel the need to be alone and consider a matter of importance is the right time. At any rate, don't just daydream and let your mind wander. Meditate on a definite theme in conjunction with God's Word and law, or on a personal problem or situation in your life. You'll be amazed at the results and the changes you make in your life.

VI. Conclusion

In this lecture we have examined the topics of prayer, fasting and meditation. They are the tools of our spiritual trade. And just as any master workman should be adept at using the tools of his profession, so also should we who have been called to build the spiritual house of God be sure to excel at the use of these spiritual helps.

Interoffice Memo

To: All Pastors

Department

Date

November 3, 1989

From: Joe Tkach Jr.

Department

Phone

Church Administration

Subject: **Deacon/Elder Lecture Series**

This lecture for January is the last in the series. We plan to take a two-year break and resume with a slightly different format after the Feast of Tabernacles in 1991. No more DELS binders will be sent to new deacons and elders as of this mailing. Deacons and elders ordained in the meantime will not receive the materials until the program resumes in 1991. But if you feel there is a need to provide information such as that contained in "The Duties and Responsibilities of a Local Church Elder" or "The Duties and Responsibilities of Deacons and Deaconesses" you may share your copy on a temporary basis.

If you have comments and suggestions for the DELS program, we'd be glad to hear them. We want to make the next program as useful as possible.

Thank you for your hard work in making the series successful!

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 21

Visiting and Spiritual Counseling

I. Introduction

A. Qualifications of a Good Pastor

"A good pastor must have:

The strength of an ox,
The tenacity of a bulldog,
The daring of a lion,
The wisdom of an owl,
The harmlessness of a dove,
The industry of a beaver,
The gentleness of a sheep,
The versatility of a chameleon,
The vision of an eagle,
The hide of a rhinoceros,
The perspective of a giraffe,
The disposition of an angel,
The endurance of a camel,
The bounce of a kangaroo,
The stomach of a horse,
The loyalty of an apostle,
The faithfulness of a prophet,
The tenderness of a shepherd,
The fervency of an evangelist,
The devotion of a mother,

And then, he wouldn't please everybody!" --
Parables, Etc., August 1989

- B. From the above quotation we can see that ministering to God's people is a multifaceted job. A minister must be competent in Bible knowledge. He must be apt to teach and preach (Titus 1:9, I Timothy 3:2, II Timothy 4:2). He must also be effective in counseling and visiting if he is going to care for God's flock properly (I Timothy 3:5).

II. SPS

This lecture gives important principles that will make your visiting and counseling more effective.

III. Why Visit the Brethren

A. To establish bonds.

Visiting and counseling with God's people are vehicles for trust and openness to be established. Visiting and counseling create an elder/deacon-member relationship that helps the brethren grow (II Corinthians 1:24).

At the same time, visiting and counseling build a respect for the minister. Not all elders and ministers are excellent speakers. However, when the brethren feel a love and respect that comes through personal interaction on visits and in counseling, the minister's overall image is greatly enhanced.

Visiting the brethren is important in forming healthy bonds with them. Sharing an hour or so with a member brings about a closeness that will allow the member to feel free to discuss matters of importance with you in the future.

B. To see how they are doing.

Paul and Barnabas visited the brethren for this purpose (Acts 15:36).

C. To build rapport.

Brethren will not generally bring problems or questions to the minister unless they feel comfortable with him.

D. Preventive maintenance.

Visiting is like maintenance work on an automobile. One doesn't wait until the engine sounds terrible before having the oil changed or the car lubricated. Visiting serves the purpose of helping the person run his life smoothly.

E. To provide leadership.

Leading the member to see a point is far better than driving or coercing him.

IV. Why Improve Counseling Skills

A. Most of the minister's time is usually spent in visiting and counseling.

A major part of a minister's role is in visiting and counseling. Bible studies and Sabbath sermonettes and

sermons require preparation and time, but visiting and counseling requires even more effort.

B. Having the authority and having the ability are two different matters.

A minister is given the privilege, in counseling and visiting, to address almost any issue. A wise minister will learn what his limitations are and study to improve himself or he will refer the lay person to someone who is more qualified.

C. Counseling and visiting are ongoing processes and take time to be successful.

Many of the brethren's issues will require numerous regularly-scheduled counseling sessions. Watch the "quick fix" approach (II Corinthians 11:28-29).

V. Types of Visiting

A. The Elderly

Elderly people especially appreciate being looked after more regularly. Be aware of their needs -- to have a leaky faucet fixed, or to have the lawn maintained or any other needs that might be presented.

Elderly people need to be made to feel that they are important to the Church (James 1:27). Remember to treat them with respect (I Timothy 5:1). Help the elderly see they are a valuable resource to the Church by pointing out their wisdom, experience and stability.

B. The Sick

The infirm are in need of more regular visits. We must be sure to support and encourage and not condemn. Place responsibility for their actions upon their shoulders. Be careful not to use "Here's what I'd do if I were you" statements. A flower, reading material or candy brought along do wonders to let a sick person know you care.

In the event of a person who is terminally ill, we want to make every effort to regularly visit and encourage him. According to Kubler-Ross in On Death and Dying, five typical stages include: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Be sure to make follow-up visits to the family as they grieve for a long period of time after the funeral. Remember to attend to the surviving members needs.

C. New People

After initially warming up with general conversation, it is important to relate to new people through our common interest, the Work. The key is to get them talking by inquiring about their experience coming into the truth. Ask them about their background in religion and what level of commitment they had in their previous beliefs. Don't try to cover too much ground on the initial visit.

Do they have any questions about our beliefs in comparison to what they have believed previously? Don't feel you have to correct every fault that becomes apparent. Recommending basic literature from headquarters points them to headquarters and gives them a chance to digest the material at their own rate.

Definitely plan a follow-up by suggesting a possible meeting to discuss more of their questions next time. This little prod will help them realize you are interested in them.

D. Problem Visiting

Addressing problems is a delicate matter. The best approach is that of Proverbs 15:1 ("A soft answer turns away wrath") and Galatians 6:1 ("Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness").

The idea is to try to cure the person -- not to "get him" (I Corinthians 9). Firmness may be required, but don't lose your cool. When we get (angry), the other person hears our anger, not our words (Jude 22-23, James 5:20).

VI. General Principles of Counseling

A. Counseling differs from visiting

Counseling deals with more specific issues. Visiting is more general to see how the brethren are doing (Acts 15:36). Counseling may involve instruction and dialogue on issues or problems which need follow-up sessions.

B. General principles of counseling

Empathy is being with the person as he is at that time. If you like people, they will feel it. Genuineness is being aware of your feelings and thoughts at the time. Positive regard involves a

respect for the person as he is. A counselor must never do anything to hurt those being counseled.

W Undivided attention is rare, so give as much as possible. Listen to the person without making judgments. Sense and observe the situation and circumstances, but don't pre-judge. A good trait is to stay one step behind the person. Follow his thoughts rather than trying to think ahead of him.

Having the proper place to meet is appropriate. It needs to be private and safe for the person. It may be essential to have an assistant or your wife with you in some circumstances.

Usually counseling only goes for one hour. Do not try to accomplish too much in one counseling. It may be overwhelming. You may wish to make notes on the counseling if it needs to be ongoing. This will refresh your mind when the person returns and will help you chart your progress.

△ Remember: We are not the "answer man." We can say "I don't know" and try to find the answer for next time. Suggest options and get the counselee to state what he or she wants to achieve through the counseling.

C. Listening to others is not merely hearing

Listening involves blocking out other thoughts and distractions and giving undivided attention. It is work, because you hear and mentally process words quicker than one speaks, so there is "spare" time. Avoid thinking of your comeback while the person is talking, and follow along.

△ Sense what they are feeling. What did they mean by those words? Clarify if necessary by asking, "Is this what you meant by that?" Note what is not said when the counselee is speaking of others. Who is not included? Listening takes work, but is rewarding to the counselor and counselee (James 1:19).

VII. Types of Counseling

A. Baptism Counseling

1. Counseling for baptism will tend to be more instructional, though you will want feedback from the baptismal candidate.
2. Ask questions about why the person wishes to be baptized. What does baptism mean to him? What does he expect from baptism?

3. Explain about the need to believe in God, in Christ and His sacrifice, in the Bible and in the Church (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 8:16). Ask if there is any teaching that he does not believe or does resist.
4. What does repentance mean? The person needs to repent of both the sins and of being the sinner he sees he is. Psalm 32:5 and Isaiah 55:7-8 talk of confession to God and forsaking sin as essentials of repentance. Seeing God in the process results in godly repentance (Romans 2:4, II Corinthians 7:8-10). Psalm 51 is excellent to read.
5. Counting the cost and commitment are expounded in Luke 14:25-33 and Romans 6:1-13.
6. These counselings take place over a period of several weeks (usually one aspect per week). It is then up to the person to contact you and state he is ready.
7. A good suggestion at the outset of the baptism counseling is to have the candidate take notes of the sessions. Also, he should note feelings regarding faith, repentance and counting the cost in his notebook. If he files this away after baptism (with the date baptized) he will have a complete file to review each Passover. Having the baptism notes will be a great help to recapture the process he went through if he ever doubts his conversion.

B. Pre-marriage Counseling

Counseling a couple for marriage will normally take several sessions. In this type of counseling, there would be more interaction, though instruction plays an important part. A typical format might include:

1. Get acquainted and establish your counseling plan.
2. The biblical basis for marriage.
3. Does each prospective mate know him/herself?
4. What are the ideals and expectations of each of the parties?
5. Personal statements of commitment to each other.
6. Finance and budgeting.
7. Helping the couple know how to deal with problems when they come up.

8. Discussing wedding, ceremony, honeymoon, etc.

C. Marriage-problem Counseling

1. Counseling a couple will consist of fact finding from both sides.
2. Next will be the need to remind both of their roles scripturally (Ephesians 5, I Peter 3).
3. It is important that both be in the give mode and look for ways to compromise on issues not involving God's law.
4. If God is revered in the marriage, there is a much greater chance for success.
5. When one partner comes alone to see you, using an empty chair to symbolize the absent partner is a good technique to bring the absent partner into the discussion.
6. It will take time to discover the whole problem and time to work it through.
7. Don't be in a hurry to patch up the difficulty, or you may miss the real issues.

D. Antagonistic Mates

1. Hostile mates pose other problems.
2. Encourage the converted mate not to neglect the antagonistic husband or wife. Converted mates should be sure to spend enough time with their nonmember mates.
3. Help the converted mate to invest his or her energies in trying to make the marriage work, so as to defuse the hostile feelings of the other.
4. If the antagonistic mate wants to see you, take another man with you and perhaps meet in a public place so as to minimize any chance of violence.
5. I Peter 3 talks about the winning of such by the righteous conduct of the converted mate.

D. Teenagers

1. Working with teenagers can be rewarding or frustrating.
2. Seeing their potential and future value to the

Church and society will give you, the counselor, encouragement in working with them.

3. Teenagers are going through tremendous changes in body and mind and are subject to mood swings. They are growing into adulthood from adolescence.
4. They are no longer likely to respond happily to power tactics. Teens are looking for self-identity, trying to find themselves.
5. Peers are very important to them at this stage of their lives. Having a social identity is important.
6. Don't make the mistake of expecting them to react as converted Christians when they are not yet baptized. They may do things we adults consider "abnormal" but the teens are just growing through a very difficult period in life. Sometimes we expect more of teens than of converted brethren.
7. They have a keen sense of fairness and like to have everything explained.
8. Boys are typically trying to build their bodies, and girls want to be thought of as beautiful.
9. Again, their sense of fairness and discernment will tell them whether you really like them or not.
10. Get them talking about their problems, listen to them and hear them out. Then you'll have a better idea of how to approach the problem.
11. Be firm but fair, and they will appreciate your guidance.

E. Single Parents

Single parenting is not an easy task. However, it is not impossible. The parent must assume the duties of both parents while realizing he or she cannot be both a dad and a mom. Yet, firm boundaries and family rules must be maintained for the sake of order and well-being. The minister must be careful not to "do it for the person," but rather, help the single parent feel the sense of power and responsibility he or she has in dealing with children.

VIII. Confrontations

Confrontations are inevitable, but how an elder or deacon reacts to them is under his control. We should not

be looking for a fight. In fact, when tempers flair and anger rules, we do not hear the words or reasons. The anger overpowers reason, and anger is what is heard.

Remain calm in the face of confrontation. Look for ways to relate to and understand the troubled individual. Compromise (not with God's law, but situationally) can help defuse the situation. If the emotions are being exhibited too keenly, you may suggest a cooling off period. Say, for example, "Let's calm down and think this over and meet in two days."

When the minister elects to confront another person, it should be by pointing out discrepancies while keeping emotional control (Galatians 6:1). If we find ourselves yelling at or browbeating an individual, how much does God's Spirit have to do with it? If the person is converted, then God's Spirit will bring him the knowledge by making him sensitive to the discrepancies you are discussing (I John 16:7-10, 13).

Those who oppose the truth doctrinally will have to be rebuked and convicted by you to preserve the flock (Titus 1:11-13). Note: This is not the normal approach in dealing with faithful, converted brethren, though. Argumentative members pose other problems:

- A. First, don't assume a person who has a question is argumentative. Questions help clarify understanding.
- B. Take time to give clear answers, but you may have to elect not to answer those who are argumentative (Proverbs 26:4, II Timothy 2:16, 23).
- C. We ought to warn the members that they are not approaching life in a normal way by being argumentative. James 3:17-18 talks of the wisdom from above being "easy to be entreated."
- D. Find out what is causing the argumentative mood and then help the person deal with it.

Suspensions and disfellowshipping are to be done by the pastor or the associate pastor.

In the event an antagonistic mate or other person tries to perpetrate violence upon you, you have the right to restrain such a person. You do not have to just submit to being physically attacked.

IX. Legal Problems

- A. Don't give financial advice about someone's business. Let him find a financial consultant. Explain tithing. Let the consultant do the rest.

B. Don't give medical advice or "home remedies." The ministry are not doctors, so be careful not to advise on medical issues.

C. Suicide attempts are to be taken seriously. Therapists and neurologists can provide biological, physiological and psychiatric help while you provide the pastoral.

D. Abused children require special care. Advise the pastor of any verbal, physical, mental or sexual abuse. He will then report the matter to Church Administration and/or the Legal Department.

E. It is a good idea to establish contacts with reputable professionals (doctors, therapists and specialists) to whom you may make referrals when necessary. Their relationship with you as a professional will help them understand where the Church members are coming from and ease the way for treatment.

X. Communicating With Headquarters

Let your pastor know of any major difficulties so that he may inform headquarters about what is happening when problems arise. When you need help or perceive possible difficulties for the Church because of a problem, let headquarters know. Notifying Church Administration early can prevent adverse publicity and give you the needed help to work with the problem.

Matters such as divorce and remarriage, racial problems, child abuse, etc., should be brought to the pastor's attention. He then may write the information up for headquarters. Other matters the pastor may choose to discuss over the phone or, if possible, in person, in order to help you with the situation.

Headquarters personnel cannot help if they are not informed. So please remember to call if there is a need.

XI. Conclusion

Caring for God's people is a vital part of ministering and doing the Work. A minister has to care (I Timothy 3:5) and do it with proper feeling (I Thessalonians 2:7-8). Remember: The flock belongs to God. They need to be treated tenderly and lovingly. The pastors of ancient Israel were criticized for neglecting the flock and not visiting them (Jeremiah 23:2, Ezekiel 34:2-4).

Remember to be "up" for visiting. A minister's moods are infectious. Get rid of any wrong moods before visiting and be positive. The brethren will pick up our feelings,

negative or positive. The main approach is to, by all means, help and serve those we visit (I Corinthians 9:19).

Let's apply these principles of visiting and counseling so we may serve God's people effectively. One of God's names is Counselor (Isaiah 9:6). Let's learn to be as He is for the benefit of the Church of God.

Recommended Books on Counseling

There are many helpful books available to help improve our knowledge of people's problems to be able to help them. Books on alcoholism, suicide, children of alcoholics, pre-marriage and marriage counseling are available to name a few. Of course, we must learn to throw away the "chaff," but there is "wheat" available also.

Alcoholism

Co-alcoholic Para-alcoholic (Jael Greenleaf)
Conquering Drug Abuse (Worldwide Church of God)
The Responsibility Trap (Claudia Bepko and Jo Ann Kreston)
Under the Influence (James Robert Milan)
Conquering Alcohol Abuse (Worldwide Church of God)

Death

Death: The Final Stage of Growth (Kubler-Ross)
On Death and Dying (Kubler-Ross)

Depression

Counseling the Depressed (Archibald D. Hart, Ph.D.)
Volume 5 of *Resources for Christian Counseling*

Family

Bradshaw on the Family (John Bradshaw)
Counseling Families (George A. Rekers, Ph.D.)
Volume 14 of *Resources for Christian Counseling*
How to Really Love Your Child (Ross Campbell)
How to Really Love Your Teenager (Ross Campbell)
Promises to Peter (Charles Shedd)

General Counseling

Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Howard J. Clinebell Jr.)
How to Help People Change (Jay E. Adams)
The Art of Counseling (Rollo May)

Marriage/Premarriage

Before You Say I Do (Wes Roberts)

Letters to Karen (Charles Shedd)

Letters to Philip (Charles Shedd)

Love, Marriage and Sex (Worldwide Church of God)

Pre-marital Counselling (H. Norman Wright)

The Act of Marriage (Tim and Beverly LaHaye)

The Minister as Marriage Counselor (Charles William Stewart)

Sex

Incest/Therapy (Maltz/Halman)

New Sex Therapy (Helen S. Kaplan)

Sexually Transmissible Diseases (Worldwide Church of God)

Suicide

Suicide: Prevention, Intervention, Postvention (Earl A. Grollman)

Difficult Scriptures

2/2/8
A. MARRIED
ANGELS

I. Scripture: Genesis 6:1-4

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some maintain that these verses mean angels married women before the Flood and engendered a race of giants.

III. True Explanation

- A. This scripture does not say that angels married women. It states that the "sons of God...took them wives of all which they chose" (verse 2). These sons of God were not angels. The fact is that angels do not marry. Jesus said those in the resurrection "neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels" (Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25).
- B. Angels cannot cohabit with women and reproduce sexually. Angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14). Women are human beings. Here we have two different kinds. God established a law that each kind produces only after its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12, 21). This is made clear by the context as well. In Genesis 6:3-4 God states, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." God is speaking of mankind, not angels. Verse 4 shows that the children of the sons of God and the daughters of men were "mighty men," not angels. They were "mighty," yes, but still only men.
- C. In the Bible the phrase "sons of God" can have different meanings. The phrase sometimes refers to spirit-begotten Christians (Romans 8:14, I John 3:2). Also, angels are called "sons of God" (Job 1:6, 38:4-7). But remember angels "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." A third meaning refers to mankind in general, because all men are sons of God by creation (Psalm 82:6, Malachi 2:10, Luke 3:38). Since these were obviously not spirit-begotten Christians, and could not be angels, it is evident that these "sons of God" were simply mankind in general, who had forsaken God and were intermarrying in defiance of God's law.
- D. One final clarification: Giants were not exclusively the progeny of these specific marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of men. Verse 4 shows that the giants existed before the sons of God married the daughters of men and afterward as well, but does not state that they were the result only of these marriages.

Difficult Scriptures

Assign: G. KING
30-3-8
RE-ASSIGN LATER
(ONE RECENT)

I. Scripture: I Chronicles 13:9-10

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

The usual question here is, Why did God kill Uzza? Some turn to this verse to support their contention that God is a hard, harsh monster who zaps people dead with little or no justification.

III. True Explanation

- A. Preliminary thoughts: God is love (I John 4:8), and Christ gave His life to save people from their sins (John 3:16). Certainly, therefore, anyone who would see in this episode proof that God is harsh has the entire weight of the rest of the Bible against him, and simply misunderstands why and how God acts. God acts only in people's ultimate best interest.
- B. David wanted to bring the ark back from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. In doing so, he had the ark carried on a new cart. As they were going, the oxen stumbled and Uzza put his hand on the ark to steady it -- to keep it from falling. Because Uzza touched the ark, God killed him (I Chronicles 13:1-10).
- C. This is an example of disobedience that ended in disaster. The ark should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites, not on a new cart (Numbers 7:9, Deuteronomy 10:8). In using a cart, the Israelites were following the example of the pagan Philistines who had returned the ark to Israel that way (see I Samuel 6:7). Also, in Numbers 4:15 God warned the Levites that they were not to touch any of the holy things they were to carry lest they die.
- D. The parallel account in II Samuel 6:6-7 explains that God smote Uzza for "his error." The word error is rendered "rashness" in the margin. It was a rash act to touch the ark of God that even the Levites were forbidden to touch. The ark was so holy that at one time God killed more than 50,000 Israelites for profaning it by opening it and looking inside (I Samuel 6:19).
- E. I Chronicles 15:2 shows that David later realized what he had done wrong. He learned after the death of Uzza how the ark should be transported: It was to be

carried (with poles) on the shoulders of the Levites. In verses 12 and 13, David told the Levites to sanctify themselves so that they could carry the ark. Because they hadn't carried the ark at first, God made a breach upon them. They hadn't sought God after "the due order."

- F. When they did everything according to God's instructions, they were able to bring up the ark with joy (I Chronicles 15:15, 25-26). The principle to learn is that we must do exactly as God commands -- not use our own reasoning or water down His instructions. Also, we must deeply respect anything God has made holy -- for example, the Sabbath and Holy Days.
- G. Notice that when God smote Uzza even David became angry and seemed to resent God's actions (I Chronicles 13:11-12). But God knows that when we begin to stray from His directions and begin to believe we can trust our own way (no matter how well-intentioned), the end of such actions will be for us to stray further and further from Him. That way ends in death (Proverbs 14:12).
- H. Remember, Uzza is dead now but will be resurrected and given a chance for salvation. Probably the lesson his death teaches us makes him far more valuable to us, God and himself than if he had lived a long, uneventful life. Truly, God knows best and treats all with love.

28-4-8
Assigned: B. Huse

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Proverbs 23:19-31

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

These verses are quoted by those who believe it is wrong to drink alcoholic beverages. They say this passage proves it is wrong to drink wine, and, by extension, any drink containing alcohol.

III. True Explanation

- A. This scripture does not say it is wrong to drink wine. It does say we should not tarry long at the wine (verse 30). One who tarries long at wine becomes a winebibber, or, in plain English, a drunkard, and no drunkard will inherit God's Kingdom (Galatians 5:21).
- B. Verse 31 says not to look upon the wine "when it is red...when it moveth itself aright." The terms red and moveth itself refer to wine when it is in the process of fermentation. This is before the wine is fully fermented. If at this time you "look on it" so as to finally drink it, you will become sick and possibly even die. In fact, instances are recorded of winery workers becoming asphyxiated by merely leaning over the wine vats "looking on" the fermenting wine and being overcome by the poisonous gases, then falling into the vats and drowning.
- C. God's Word shows it is perfectly all right to drink wine in moderation. The first miracle Jesus performed was to turn water into wine (John 2:1-11). The Greek word translated wine in John 2:1-11 is oinos. It means fermented wine. The apostle Paul even advised Timothy to drink some wine for his stomach problems (I Timothy 5:23).
- D. God gave us wine and alcoholic beverages so we may learn to use them properly. We develop character by properly exercising wisdom and self-control with them. The proper use of alcohol is a great responsibility, but it is only the wrong use of it that is sin.

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Proverbs 26:4-5

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

These verses contain a seeming contradiction. They might be pointed to by someone who wishes to show the Bible contradicts itself and therefore is not inspired. The questions here are whether there is a contradiction and whether we should "answer a fool" or not.

III. True Explanation

- A. First of all, we need to realize that the Bible does not contradict itself. God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and the Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).
- B. These two verses are not contradictory. They complement each other. The last part of each proverb shows the set of circumstances under which each is to be used.
- C. Verse 4 tells us not to answer a fool according to his folly lest we be like him. In this situation, to answer the fool's specific statement or question, you would be descending to his level and end up in a * pointless argument.

An example of this is given in Luke 20:1-8, where the Pharisees asked Christ by whose authority He did certain things. The Pharisees were not there seeking to learn anything. To avoid being like the fools they were, Christ didn't answer their question. Rather, He asked them a question that they couldn't answer without condemning themselves. Since the Pharisees couldn't answer His question, the discussion was dropped.

- D. Verse 5 tells us that under another set of circumstances we must answer the fool according to his folly -- by a foolish answer, which exposes how ridiculous his statement, claim or question is -- or he will be wise in his own conceit.

This case is well illustrated by Paul's example in II Corinthians 11:23. Certain men at Corinth claimed to be true apostles of Christ, but they were false apostles (II Corinthians 11:13). For Paul to have remained silent at the time would have given tacit

approval of these men who were leading the Church astray. They would have appeared wise in their own conceit.

Therefore in verse 23 Paul said: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." These men had been boasting of their qualifications, and in this epistle Paul was exposing these men for what they were. Paul answered these false apostles' claims so they would not appear wise.

These scriptures do not contradict, but taken together they explain two different methods of handling the questions and statements of fools. You need wisdom to know just when and how to apply these principles, and wisdom comes from God.

Cor.
Middle

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Matthew 3:11

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some point to this verse to say we should seek the "baptism of fire" mentioned here.

III. True Explanation

- A. Notice the context: John was not speaking to Christians. He was reproofing the Pharisees and Sadducees for their self-righteous attitudes (verses 7-9). He told them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance (verse 8).
- B. John explained that he was baptizing with water unto repentance (verse 11), but Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- C. Notice verse 12. This fire is described as an unquenchable fire that would burn up the chaff.
- D. Malachi 4:3 describes the results of this same fire. The wicked are to be ashes -- completely burned up -- under the feet of the righteous. This is speaking of the second death, as described in Revelation 20:14-15.

N. B. B. B.
L. M. M. M.
Seite 1

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Luke 16:9

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some misread this verse to say that we in the Church should use our money to make friends among the people of this world (i.e., to make friends of the world through unrighteous mammon).

III. True Explanation

- A. Notice the setting of the parable in which this statement occurs. Christ was talking to His own disciples (verse 1). After giving the parable, He then began to expound its meaning to them (verse 8).
- B. Through this analogy Christ was showing them that the unconverted are wiser on many occasions than the converted, and that the converted ought to correct this by doing a particular thing.
- C. In verse 9 He shows us how to correct this lack of wisdom by making to ourselves friends with or by means of (proper translation from the Greek) the mammon of unrighteousness. That, "when ye fail" (or, more correctly in the Greek, "when you die") those (friends) who have been converted through the aid of your tithes and offerings may receive you into God's Kingdom at the resurrection.
- D. Christ was not telling His disciples to make friends of the world through unrighteous mammon, but to help convert some in the world through the proper use of mammon -- tithes, offerings, etc. Notice verses 10 and 11, which carry on the context and show we should be faithful in using our money wisely -- by investing it in God's Work.

27-10-8
NEWS
NEWMAN

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Matthew 19:23-24

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some point to these verses to say that it is a sin to be wealthy. They say these verses state that a rich man cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

III. True Explanation

- A. Christ said it was difficult for a rich man to enter God's Kingdom. He was referring to the example of the rich young man who turned down an opportunity to become one of Christ's disciples because he did not want to give up his wealth (verses 16-22).
- B. In the parallel account (Mark 10:24), Christ emphasized that it was trusting in riches that would keep a rich man out of the Kingdom. Paul showed that the love of money could keep a man from entering the Kingdom of God (I Timothy 6:10). Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare (I Timothy 6:9). They become lustful. The more they get, the more they want. Soon they are more intent on getting riches than on striving to enter the Kingdom of God. Wealth becomes their god (Colossians 3:5).
- C. Christians are to flee the lust of wealth and concentrate on living a godly life and striving to lay hold on eternal life. A Christian can't serve God and mammon (mammon is a Greek word meaning "wealth" or "riches") (Matthew 6:24). Jesus said where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21).
- D. God is not opposed to wealth. His desire is that we prosper (III John 2). Many of God's servants were wealthy. Joseph was a prosperous man (Genesis 39:2). Job was the greatest man in the East (Job 1:3). Abraham was rich in cattle, silver and gold (Genesis 13:2). These men were wealthy, but they did not put their trust in riches nor seek their own blessings. They obeyed God and were blessed materially by Him, and they will be in God's Kingdom.
- E. It is physically impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). It is only through God's miraculous help that a rich man -- or anyone else -- can enter God's Kingdom.

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Romans 3:28

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

This verse is used by some to try to prove that the law has been done away, or at least that we don't have to keep the law, since we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

III. True Explanation

- A. Remember that although people say you don't have to keep the law, they really don't mean this literally. Do they mean you can kill or steal or murder with impunity? No, of course not. What they do mean is that you can break the Sabbath, not tithe and not keep the Holy Days, etc. Remember this when you explain such verses so, if need be, you can point out this inconsistent and hypocritical stance toward the law.
- B. The verse does not say the "deeds of the law" are not necessary. The subject under discussion is "justification" and whether the "deeds of the law" can "justify" a person. Being justified in the biblical sense means being made just or right before God, which means having your sins forgiven and completely blotted out. The question being settled is not "Should we keep the law?" but, rather, "Does present obedience to the law somehow bring a person into a right standing before God and make up for his past sins?"
- C. If a man commits a crime, his obedience to the law in the future does not make him any less guilty of his past offense. This is also true of us spiritually. Paul showed in verse 20 that the "deeds of the law" do not justify anyone, and he went on to explain in verses 24-27 that justification (forgiveness of sins that are past -- verse 25) can come only by grace, through Christ's sacrifice.
- D. The conclusion is (verse 28) that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law. "Without" (in the Authorized Version) could be more clearly translated "apart from" or "outside of."

29/21
My New Year

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Romans 6:14

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some point to this verse to try to prove we don't have to keep the law, or that it has been done away. Specifically, the argument here is that we don't have to obey the law because we are under grace, not under law.

III. True Explanation

- A. Remember that although people say you don't have to keep the law, they really don't mean this literally. Do they mean you can kill or steal or murder with impunity? No, of course not. What they do mean is that you can break the Sabbath, not tithe and not keep the Holy Days, etc. Remember this when you explain such verses so, if need be, you can point out this inconsistent and hypocritical stance toward the law.
- B. This scripture does not say we don't have to obey the law. It does say we are not under the law, but under grace. The term "under the law" refers to being under the penalty of the law -- not under the jurisdiction of the law.
- C. When we sin -- break God's law (I John 3:4) -- the law has a claim over our lives (Romans 6:23). We are then under the law -- under its penalty. It is the sinner who is under the law. On the other hand, when we repent and receive God's grace, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, we are pardoned and the penalty of death is taken away. Then we are no longer "under the law" -- in other words, we are no longer under the penalty of death for having broken the law.
- D. Does this give us free license to sin (break the law) because we are under grace and not under the law? Paul asks this very question in verse 15 and answers it by saying, "God forbid." It is like a condemned murderer on death row waiting for execution. At the last minute the governor grants him a pardon. He is now a free man, but that does not mean he is at liberty to murder again. That would be absurd. His pardon covers only the past offense -- not future crimes.

E. If grace did away with the law, there would be no sin, because where there is no law, there is no sin (Romans 4:15). The fact that sin exists and that there is a need for grace to remove the penalty of sin shows that a law is being broken and therefore that the law is still in effect today.

23-2-
(unc HSE)

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: I Corinthians 10:27

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some say this verse means that if you are invited to dinner and are served unclean meat such as pork, you should eat it without question to avoid offending your host.

III. True Explanation

- A. The context has nothing to do with clean or unclean meats, but with meat offered to idols (verses 19, 28). If you want to take this verse out of context, then if your host puts cyanide, razor blades or a bowl of acid in front of you, you should eat it, lest you offend him. This is, of course, ridiculous.
- B. You usually would not have to ask whether or not what you are eating is pork; you can usually discern that. The true meaning is that if the Christians to whom Paul was writing went to an unconverted person's house for a meal, they didn't have to ask him if the meat he served them had been offered to an idol. Idols are nothing to true Christians, and whether or not the meat had been offered to an idol is of no importance.
- C. However, if the host or someone else brought up the subject and told them the meat was offered in sacrifice to an idol (and did so in a way that led the hearers to believe the speaker thought the hearers should not eat it), they should refuse it -- not because it harmed them, but because of the conscience of the other person. This might cause the other person to think that idol worship was all right, or cause him to think they were hypocrites for claiming to be Christians and appearing to worship the idol by eating meat sacrificed to it (verse 28).
- D. The whole topic of discussion is whether or not to eat meats previously offered to idols, not clean and unclean meats.

26.4.82
N. G. S.
J. D. A. N. A. W.
S. R. H.

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: I Thessalonians 4:17

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

This is one of many texts used to "prove" heaven is the reward of the saved. Specifically, it is twisted to say that Christians will go to heaven and be there with Christ forever.

III. True Explanation

A. Since those who misunderstand this verse believe it to confirm that the reward of the saved is heaven, you should review the general subject of what God's Kingdom really is and what the reward of the saved is.

B. Paul was speaking of the resurrection of Christians at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (verse 16). We will rise to meet Christ in the air -- the atmosphere over this earth (verse 17). Thus we will be with the Lord.

Then what? Where do we go from there? Since we will be with Christ, the question to ask is, "Where will Christ be?"

C. Christ is coming to this earth. Zechariah 14:4 shows that on the very day mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:17, Christ will be standing on the Mount of Olives, which is on this earth.

D. Christ is coming with all glory and with His angels to judge all nations (Matthew 25:31-32). His saints will be given power to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26-27). They will be kings and priests with Him and will reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10).

28/6/88
GARY PEARSON
Scribe: JOHN CRAIG

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Luke 5:36-39

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

These verses are difficult in the sense that their meaning can be obscure and unclear, rather than that they are used to support some false concept. The usual question is, What does this parable of the garments and the wine bottles mean, and what does it have to do with fasting?

III. True Explanation

- A. Jesus was answering a question. "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?" (verse 33). Jesus used this parable to help answer the question.
- B. "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old" (verse 36). It doesn't make sense to put a new piece of cloth on an old garment to repair it. After washing, the new cloth will shrink and tear the old.
- C. "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish" (verse 37). Strong's Concordance shows the Greek word here translated "bottles" really means "wineskins." It would be ridiculous to put new wine into an old wineskin. An old wineskin has already stretched and the fermentation of new wine would burst it.
- D. The new cloth and the new wine symbolize the new way of life Christ was bringing. We must change our total approach to God -- our methods and purposes in fasting, prayer and obedience -- when we are converted. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).
- E. Jesus gave these two examples as a lesson in incongruities. It would make as little sense for His disciples to fast while He was there as it would to put new cloth on an old garment or new wine in an old wineskin. We can't fit God's truth into our old way of

life. For instance, if we try to mix the truth of the Sabbath with our old way of life and concepts learned so we may be like one of the churches of this world, it will indeed seem "hard" and "burdensome" to obey God and will cause a "rent."

The main reason for fasting is to get closer to God. Jesus' disciples didn't fast. They didn't need to fast to get closer to Him because He was already with them. "And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:34-35).

- F. "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (verse 39). Christ had already explained why His disciples didn't fast at that time. This last analogy was to show why the Pharisees and John's disciples did fast. These men were not ready to accept the example of Christ and His disciples as being right. They didn't want to drink the "new wine" -- the new way of life that Christ was bringing -- because they felt the "old wine" of their customs, doctrines and practices was better.

Difficult Scriptures

Handwritten notes: "OK GIVEN" and "no B" with a signature.

I. Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-9

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

People sometimes use this verse to say we don't need works, because we are saved by grace through faith and not by works. By "works" a person might mean the law in general; or just the Sabbath, tithing and the Holy Days; or good works of charity in general.

III. True Explanation

- A. Preliminary thoughts: Remember that although people say you don't have to keep the law, they really don't mean this literally. Do they mean you can kill or steal or murder with impunity? No, of course not. What they do mean is that you can break the Sabbath, not tithe and not keep the Holy Days, etc. Remember this when you explain such verses so, if need be, you can point out this inconsistent and hypocritical stance toward the law.
- B. This scripture shows that we are saved by faith -- not works -- but it does not in any way show that works are not needed. In fact, the very next verse -- verse 10 -- shows that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus "unto good works." That is the purpose for which we are alive.
- C. Salvation comes as a gift from God. We could never earn salvation in a million lifetimes of perfect obedience, but many scriptures prove that obedience is a condition we must meet before God will give us, as a free gift, salvation. "If thou wilt enter into life," said Christ, "keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). God gives His holy spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). If any man says he knows God and doesn't keep His commandments, he is a liar (I John 2:4).
- D. Faith and works go together. Faith without works is dead, and faith is perfected by our works (James 2:20-22).

28/11/10
Newman
R. DAMEZ

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: I John 5:16

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some say this verse proves there are some sins one can commit and not incur the penalty of eternal death.

III. True Explanation

- A. The wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23) -- there are no exceptions. God does not categorize sin, but Hebrews 10:26-27 shows that it is a willful sin that brings "fiery indignation" -- eternal death. Of course, any sin can be forgiven if it is repented of -- if it is "confessed" (I John 1:9), and any sin can lead to eternal death if it is allowed to continue in the Christian's life.
- B. A sin "not unto death," then, is one that does not involve a willful violation of God's will.
- C. If any of us sees a brother who is striving to obey God "sin a sin which is not unto death" -- sin out of ignorance or weakness -- we ought to ask God to help the brother recognize his error and repent of it. When we do so God will "give him life" -- God will hear our prayers for him. This is the kind of concern we ought to have for one another. This is one way that we can bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- D. On the other hand, a brother has sinned "unto death" if he has willfully turned from God's way. This, by the way, would not include all disfellowshipped people -- only those who have willfully rejected God's way so that they could not be brought again to repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Obviously, this is difficult to determine. In fact, it is probably because of the extreme difficulty of discerning when this is the case that John says, "I do not say he shall pray for it" rather than "He shall not pray about it." His statement allows for our natural desire to hope the person has not gone too far -- to hope that he will repent -- and does not prohibit prayer, even in such a case.

We would all probably rather err on the side of praying than not praying. Hence John says our prayer may be futile, but does not say it is a sin to pray even for a seemingly hopeless case, as long as we don't know for sure it is hopeless.

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Luke 17:21

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some say this verse means the Kingdom of God is not literal, but something merely "in the hearts of men."

III. True Explanation

- A. Notice the context of this verse. Jesus was talking to the Pharisees (verse 20). In Matthew 23:15-19, He called them hypocrites and blind fools. A number of them will never be in God's Kingdom (Luke 13:27-28). Christ was not saying the Kingdom of God was in the hearts of those self-righteous, hypocritical Pharisees.
- B. The Kingdom of God cannot be in the heart of any human being. I Corinthians 15:50 shows that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.
- C. In order for anything to be considered a kingdom, four requirements must be met: 1) a king or ruler, 2) subjects or people being ruled, 3) a territory and 4) laws by which the people are governed. These cannot be in the heart of a person. Certainly no one can read Daniel 2:36-45 and doubt that the Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom.
- D. The Greek word translated "within" in Luke 17:21 is entos. This word can also be rendered "among" or, as the Englishman's Greek New Testament has it, "in the midst of." The marginal references of many Bibles show "among" as an alternate translation. Jesus Christ, as the representative of God's Kingdom, was standing among them or in the midst of them. The Jews were looking for a Messiah to bring the Kingdom with power in their own day, and hence did not believe Christ was that Messiah. Christ's statement here was intended to tell them He was the Messiah and that they were overlooking Him in their spiritual ignorance.

17 Miller
Eds. 15
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2011
Don G. Good

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Acts 10:12-13

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

This verse, among others, is pointed to by those who wish to prove that the New Testament allows the eating of unclean animals. Specifically, they say that this section proves that God by this vision showed Peter it is all right to eat all meats, clean and unclean.

III. True Explanation

- A. Peter was in a trance (verse 10). He saw the sheet filled with unclean creatures as a vision (verse 17). He did not actually eat any of those creatures.
- B. Peter did not know what the vision meant (verse 17). He did not assume that it meant it was fine for him to eat unclean meats from now on.
- C. The meaning of the vision is given in verse 28. God was showing Peter that he should call no man common (ceremonially defiled) or unclean. The Jews regarded gentiles as unclean and unfit for their company. God used this vision to show Peter that gentiles should not be shunned and considered unclean.