

A Training Program for Young Preachers



Compiled by Paul R. Blake, May 2007,
For the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ

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Preacher Training Syllabus

(Author's note: This is a work in progress. It is at present a compilation of the material I assembled in the spring of 2007 for a young man who came to work with us here at Tomlinson Run. I plan to edit, format, and publish this material in its entirety with the correct citations and documentation. The first seven pages of this material were taken from my handwritten notes used in conjunction with the outlines; hence, the rather disorganized structure of said pages. I used this material to teach an eight week program in which the student spent three hours each morning in instruction, and then spent his afternoons in study and lesson preparation. In addition, I took him with me on visits and calls to the sick. Please limit your use of this material to your local work and do not distribute this to others. It collectively represents years of my own work and study (as well as the works of other authors cited in the material) and I intend to publish it. I humbly ask that you respect this request. Thank you. ---Paul R. Blake)

1. Make arrangements for the student to have opportunities to preach at the local church as well as neighboring congregations that will allow the young man to come. This broadens his experience by preaching in a number of venues rather than one congregation.
2. If possible, arrange for the student to teach a few classes where most of the students are older than he is, perhaps an adult class. When he begins preaching, he will be teaching an audience composed on average of people older than he is.
3. Arrange for the student to present several Wednesday evening invitations. Emphasize the importance of developing a message that will edify and persuade in a very brief period of time.
4. Have the student write a 700 to 800 word article each week. Publish the best of the articles in the local bulletin or newspaper.
5. Have the student develop two funeral sermons, one for a member of the church and one for a person outside of Christ. Have him preach both of them for your consideration.
6. Have the student write:
 - a. One 1500-2000 word article for magazine on a current issue
 - b. One letter requesting support
 - c. One resume
 - d. One welcome and introduction Power Point script to run before services
7. Teach the student how to use Power Point as a visual aid in such a way that it does not become a distraction.

Wednesday Invitation

Purpose: Teach a Bible principle to the Church as collectively and invite obedience to the Gospel

1) Teach Bible Principle

A) Singular

B) 2-7 minutes - no less than 2, no more than 7; 5 is ideal

C) Choose some illustration to begin with to capture audience attention

Letter requesting support

- 1st Where work? Size, prospects in community
How much support they can provide?
How much it will cost to live there?
- 2nd Cover letter; letter of interest
 - Introduction and description of self
 - Description of the work you intend to undertake
 - Declaration of need
 - support lined up
 - cost of living there
 - how much you need
 - Request for help
 - Assurance
 - Promise to do your best
 - Promise to be accountable
- 3rd Standard resume
- 4th References

General Instruction, Lesson One

Sound - Spiritually healthy; practicing scriptural doctrine regarding organization, work and worship for the church. Free from error.

Digressive - Practicing something other than what is written
 "Truth is not at the extremes of human opinion, nor is it in the golden mean between them. Truth is where God put it; in His word." PRB

Scale

Progressive Liberal (Denominational churches of Christ)
 Social Institutional (Mainstream Liberal)
 Conservative Institutional
 Moderate Evangelical
 Sound
 Issue Oriented Conservative
 Ultra Conservative

Definitions

Progressive Liberal - Contemporary worship corrupted work - entirely social gospel organization - professional clergy staff changed the doctrine - baptism not necessary - remove the name of Christ

Mainstream Liberal - Social Gospel, Entertainment, Fellowship Halls, Gymnasiums
 Conservative Institutional - Have institutions, but not social gospel

Moderate Evangelical - Sound in practice, but weak in doctrine

Issue Conservative - Sound doctrine, occasionally add doctrines, binding where God has not bound

Ultra Conservative - Bind issues; Invent new issues, twist scripture - One cup church; no Bible class, mutual edifications, no Christian/government interaction

Progress of Tolerating Sin at Corinth

1. Reported Commonly - The Church is harmed; influence of church is damaged
2. Sin Among Them - Unhealthy environment
3. Not Known Among Pagans - Worse than sinners
4. Theft/Stole Father's Wife - Church is unfair
5. Puffed up - Church is proud of sin
6. Leaven - Church has become polluted

Syllogism

1. IF - necessary condition
2. AND - sufficient condition
3. THEREFORE - required conclusion

1. All have sinned - Rom. 3:33
2. Sin brings death - Rom. 6:23
3. All will die

1. All will die
2. Jesus alone can save from death
3. All need Jesus

Age of Accountability?

Hearing - Gospel with understanding

-Convicts one of sin

-Develops faith

Believe - Apprehend or acquire conviction

Repent - Regret sin; embrace righteousness

Confess - Declare commitment of faith

Baptism - Commitment to lifelong service

	APOSTOLIC	JESUS
Hearing	Rom. 10:17	Matt. 13:15
Repentance	Acts 2:38	Luke 13:3
Believe	Heb. 11:6	John 8:24
Confess	Rom. 10:9-10	Matt. 10:32
Baptism	Rom. 6:4	Mark 16:16
Matt. 28:19-20		
Teach/Baptize/Teach - Teacher		
Learn (Restored)/Grow/Persevere - Christian		
Repent/Confess/Petition (Prayer) - Fallen Christians		

Outline Structure

I. Main Point

A. Sub Point

1. Support
2. Summary
3. Application

B.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

II. Repeat above structure twice more (a good sermon has three main points)

Work of an evangelist

1) Reading/Doctrine - Study

Meditate - Progress - visual results

2) Be an Example or Model

3) Steadfastness & Self-examination

4) Instruct the Brethren - edification, admonishment, encouragement, reproof, exhort

5) Command

Kerux - herald/proclaimer

Evangelion - one sent out with a message

Church:

Saints

Elders

Deacons

Servant or Ministers of the Word

Teachers

Roles:

S -Elders Pastoring or Leadership - Spiritual needs

A -Ministers Servants of the Elders - Material needs

I -Deacons Servants of the Word

N -Teachers Teach the Word

T -Members

S

Not/But Comparative Form

	NOT	BUT
1Cor. 1:17	Baptize	Preach
John 6:27	Physical food	Spiritual food
1Tim. 2:9-10	Physical adornment	Godly adornment
Sinner--Hearing--Needs faith		Preacher--Preaching--Has the Faith (Gospel)
Preaching Word→1 Hear (Sinner)→2	Believe (Sinner)→3	Obey (Sinner)

Funeral

Preparation Ahead of Time is Essential!

Purpose:

- Comfort - 2Cor. 1:3-4
 - Direct grief along healthy channels
 - God comforts us - we comfort others - with the same comfort
 - Acts 8:2
- Teaching of Living
- Memorialize the Dead
 - Reading obituary
 - Do eulogy
 - Avoid being too descriptive of wicked
 - Careful of flattering the righteous

Pattern: (30 minutes total)

- Opening statement - Formal and structured
- Reading the obituary - make it readable
- Eulogy - Remember the life of the departed
- Body: (18-20 minutes)
 - Transition from good person to the good word they lived by
 - Teaching a Bible message

- Draw it to a conclusion - make an application
- Prayer - Close

Interment Service

Purpose: Committal - Separation (8-10 min.)

Pattern:

- Statement of Purpose
- Body (no more than 5 minutes)
 - scripture about death
- reminder of life
 - point them to scripture and Christians for comfort
- Closing Statement
- Prayer

Wedding Service:

Statement of Purpose

- Father with bride
- Who gives this woman?
- Seat Audience - Join Bride & Groom

Wedding Sermon - 10-15 minutes

- Bible Principles of marriage
- Transition to vows
- Face each other
- Start with groom

Pronouncement

- Kiss

Bulletin Articles

-500-800 words

-1/3/1 article

- Introduction or thesis
 - theme
 - brief listing of points
 - transition to body
- Three Points of Body
- Conclusion or summary
 - restate theme
 - develop application

Three Levels of Bible Understanding

- Factual - know what the text says (Textual)
- Spiritual - knowing how text applies to you (Contextual)
- Panoramic - know how the text fits into God's scheme of things (Harmonic)

Doctrine - God has spoken

- The matter is closed
- The matter is restrictive

Matters of Individual Conscience

-God has spoken or not, but the matter is unclear, or a defined liberty, or God is indifferent to our practice

-By permissive authority

-Practice is determined by individual conscience

Restrictive Authority - only one course

Permissive Authority - multiple courses can be chosen

-allowed but not required

-meats

-days

-preacher salary

-Divinely granted liberty

-enjoy and thank God

-restrict self more than God has restricted you

Context will determine between restrictive and permissive authority

Preachers may not:

1. Make a matter of restrictive authority permissive

2. Make a matter of liberty into a test of fellowship or restrictive authority

Meeting Announcement - 4 weeks before meeting

-List 5 names and addresses of people they want to invite to the meeting

-Copy list and return original

-10 days before meeting

-Ask members to hand write a personal invitation and include meeting announcement and send it to each of the five

-7 days before meeting

-I send a signed invitation on church stationary along with flyer to same persons

-Lowest 11.5% Best 17%

- $500 \times 10\% = 50$

Relationships and Assumptions**ROAD RAGE****FORMULA**

A. Cut you off in traffic

A. Incident

B. Idiot; you almost killed me!

B. Self Talk

C. Rage, fear, revenge

C. Emotion

D. Upset Behavior, tailgate;

D. Action

Take it out on others

ROAD REASONABLE

A. Cut off in traffic

B. What a relief; I'm glad no one was hurt

C. Relief; glad

D. Go on your way untroubled by incident

BROTHER GRUMPY BEAR

- A. He ignores me
- B. What's his problem? What did I do wrong? What a jerk!
- C. Paranoid; upset; vengeful
- D. I act like him

BROTHER BEAR WITH

- A. He ignored me
- B. He must be having a bad day. I wonder if someone is sick.
- C. Sympathetic; caring; concerned
- D. Get involved; offer help

WITCHY WOMAN

- A. Home from work tired; wife greets you with a rebuke
- B. Retaliate with arguing
- C. Wrathful; vindictive; vicious
- D. Do harm; escalate tensions

WOMAN I LOVE

- A. Same incident
- B. Self - I love this woman; I do not want her to hurt
- C. Affection; compassion; interest in her well-being
- D. You're right; I wish you had a better day; What can I do to fix it?

THE PERFECT PREACHER QUALIFICATIONS OF A PREACHER

Introduction:

A. What is the perfect preacher?

1. Preaches a riveting, profound lesson in only 25 minutes.
2. Condemns sin in such a way that no one feels any remorse or embarrassment.
3. He works from seven AM to midnight and is also the janitor and groundskeeper.
4. He makes \$60.00 per week, wears new suits, drives a big car, and contributes \$50.00 per week.
5. He is 28 years old with 25 years of experience preaching.
6. He is good looking with no defects in appearance, but is not vain.
7. He is wonderful with teenagers and spends many hours with the elderly.
8. He makes 15 visits daily and is always in the office when needed.
9. Facetious, but it makes the point that there are varied and conflicting expectations about preachers.

B. Attitudes toward the preacher vary widely as well.

1. Worship of a preacher. Rely on him entirely for the truth, accepting everything he has to say without question. Treat him as if he were 2 steps above elders.
 - a. Makes prima donnas.
2. Belligerence and disrespect toward the preacher. Criticize everything he has to say. Refuse to cooperate or even be civil. Assume he is a parasite trying to live off of "MY" contribution.
 - a. Joe Winland - "Preachers only work on Sunday anyway."
3. Disposable preachers.... wring everything out of him that we can and trade him in for a new one every few years.
4. "He is the brother that preaches for us."
 - a. I like that!

C. Preaching is important business.

1. God only has one begotten Son, and He made Him a preacher.
2. Preachers have an essential role to fill in Church growth and function - Ephesians 4:11-12.
3. 1Cor. 1:17-25 - Preaching is the medium through which God intended that the world might hear and be saved.
 - a. Romans 10:13-17

D. A misunderstood profession.

1. We have many lessons on elders and deacons and their work; husbands and wives and their roles, etc.
2. Why so few on preachers?
 - a. Some feel they would be tooting own horn.
 - b. Some are afraid of what some might think.
 - c. Conflict of interest. "He's looking for a raise."
3. Important to preach on preaching anyway.
 - a. Both I and potential preachers need a yardstick to measure ourselves.
 - b. Helps brethren to better evaluate and evangelist's work by the Lord's standards.
 - c. Part of the whole counsel of God.

- E. First, we must see what qualifies a man to preach in God's eyes.
 - 1. Sometimes difficult to live up to God's standards.
 - a. Much harm can be done by men who fall short.
 - 2. But it is even harder to live up to the arbitrary standards some folks establish for preachers.
 - 3. We would not accept personal preferences with regard to the qualifications of elders and deacons.
 - a. We must also use the Bible's list of qualifications for evangelists instead of our own preferences.

I. SOME MAN-MADE QUALIFICATIONS EXAMINED (Human nature revealed)

A. Proper marital status

- 1. Translation: Married with children
 - a. On some occasions: "We want a single man who won't need much support."
- 2. This qualification would eliminate three of the finest preachers ever.
 - a. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry - Jer. 16:2.
 - b. There was no indication Jesus ever married.
 - c. The apostle Paul was single - 1Cor. 9:7, 7:7.
- 3. Being married may have its advantages in some cases, but we cannot make it a qualification where God has not.
 - a. How many preachers in the Bible do you know were married?
- 4. Sometimes have a qualifications list for the preacher's wife, too.
 - a. Two for the price of one."
 - b. Only qualification in NT for preacher's wife is that she be a Christian – 1Cor. 9:5.

B. Proper education

- 1. Not against education; getting a little more myself.
 - a. Valuable tool; can help effectiveness.
- 2. When insisted on, usually reveals denominational spirit of trained clergy instead of Biblical perspective of gospel preacher.
- 3. As far as we know, only one NT preacher had formal education, and he counted it a loss.
 - a. Apostle Paul - Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:7.
- 4. Most of them were like our Lord, ordinary working folk.
 - a. Acts 4:13; John 7:15.

C. The right age

- 1. Hard to determine:
 - a. Young; to young to be able to handle our needs.
 - 1) "Older, more experienced man."
 - b. Older; too old to have the energy we need to grow.
 - c. Seen congregations settle for a middle aged milk-toast, when they could have had young Timothy or an aged John.
 - d. Both have their strengths and could be an asset to any work
- 2. To set an arbitrary age limit is contrary to NT teaching.

D. A good personality

- 1. All Christians should try to develop a good personality.
- 2. Translation: "We want a good mixer."
- 3. 1Peter 3:8; Romans 12:9-18
- 4. We want a social butterfly, dynamic personality, etc.

5. Tryout in Dallas: “You preached the truth and know how to teach a class, but you are socially awkward and have a lack of ability to communicate.
 6. What draws people to Christ?
 - a. 1Cor. 2:1-5; 2Cor. 10:10
 7. We are building a church of Christ, not a personality cult.
- E. Must come well recommended
1. We need to learn something: One’s friends will always speak favorably, and his enemies won’t.
 2. A man can be a marital cheat, a lousy worker, and a draft dodger and someone will recommend him.
 3. Or he can be a hard working, family loving, good citizen and someone will find something to attack.
 4. Happens with preachers, too.
 - a. Unwritten rule among preachers to never say something bad, no matter how true or important. Old boys Network.
 - b. Or he could be a devout servant of Christ, run off by a church for his unwavering stand for truth.
 5. Recommendations are only valid when:
 - a. The one recommending is well acquainted with the person being recommended.
 - b. Well known to those seeking the recommendation.
 - c. A recommendation is only as good as the person making it.
 - d. Phil. 2:19-20
 - e. Paul with Corinthians: “examine my work.”
 6. Not saying, don’t investigate preachers; just be wary of glowing recommendations.
- F. And many others.
1. Bottom line: We should not require more of a man seeking to become an evangelist than the Lord does.
 2. Wonder how many have ceased preaching for this reason?
 3. Preachers should feel little need to live up to unreasonable standards.
 4. Count myself fortunate that I have yet to work with a church that required more of me than does the Lord. When I came here sole concern was that I preach the word.

II. QUALIFICATIONS GOD HAS GIVEN

- A. A genuine Christian, not one who just wears the name, but lives the life.
 1. Paul taught this to trainee Timothy - 1Tim. 4:12-16, 6:11.
 2. This characterized other great preachers:
 - a. Jesus - Acts 1:1.
 - b. Paul - 2Thes. 3:7-10.
 - c. Ezra - Ezra 7:10.
- B. A careful student
 1. Fundamental requirement for preacher is to teach - 2Tim. 2:24
 2. Not “you either have it or not,” but a matter of growth - Heb. 5:11-14.
 3. 1Peter 2:2; 1Tim. 4:16; 2Tim. 2:15.
- C. Boldness and confidence
 1. Eph. 6:19-20 - Paul asked for prayers for this.
 2. Going to need it - 2Tim. 4:1-4; 1Tim. 5:20-21; Gal. 2:11.
 3. Needs confidence in the gospel rather than self - Rom. 1:16.

D. Kindness, patience, and gentleness.

1. 2Tim. 2:24 - Brother Big Mean Mouth "I guess I told them" is not what the Lord means.
2. Preach the truth in love - Eph. 4:15.

E. Steadfastness

1. 2Tim. 4:5; 1Cor. 4:1-7
2. Preachers, in spite of the tender care of godly members, will suffer upon occasion.
 - a. Paul - 2Cor. 11:23; 2Tim 2:3, 3:12.
 - b. Jesus Christ - John 15:20-22.
3. Must be determined to go to heaven no matter what other do around him - Joshua 24:15.
 - a. 1Sam. 8:7 - "protest solemnly."

Conclusion:

- A. Dearth of preachers:
 1. One full time preacher for every five churches.
 2. One in seven churches is fully self-supporting.
- B. 270 million in USA; 6 billion in the world.
 1. Some of you are going to have to become preachers.
- C. All of you are going to have to become Christians.

THE SCRIPTURAL WORK OF A PREACHER

Introduction:

- A. 1Tim. 4:6, 9-16
- B. A call to arms for potential preachers here.
 - 1. The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few.
 - 2. It is not hard to get started.
 - a. Begin incorporating lesson preparation into your daily Bible studies.
 - b. Try extending an invitation and teaching a class.
 - c. Stick with it.
 - 1) TR producing preachers. Used to be one of the works that elders in every congregation would encourage.
- C. What on earth in heaven's name is a preacher? Isaiah 6:5-11
- D. He is:
 - 1. An earthly man answering a heavenly duty.
 - 2. He is an earthly man proclaiming what heaven has authorized.
 - 3. He is on earth proclaiming heaven's will by God's grace.
- G. Some are unwilling to accept this definition.
 - 1. Hang titles, roles, and responsibilities on him that God never intended.
 - 2. Lets examine this question from a negative and then a positive approach.
 - 3. Let's expose the error and expound the truth.

Man's Concept of the Preacher's Work:

I. THE CHURCH'S "GO-FER"

- A. A gofer to do all of the:
 - 1. Personal work.
 - 2. Visit the straying sheep of the congregation.
 - 3. Drop everything to run church errands.
 - 4. Maintain the church property.
 - 5. He is the Lord's servant, not the church's errand boy.
- B. I'm not saying that the evangelist does not have any responsibility along these lines AS A CHRISTIAN, but they are not his job as the preacher. If you think they are his jobs, where is the NT authority?
 - 1. Some of these would qualify as the specific work of elders, or deacons, but not the preacher.
 - 2. "But if we don't have elders, shouldn't the preacher do them?"
 - 3. No more than he should do the other work of the elders in overseeing the local congregation - Acts 20:28.
 - 4. In cases of congregations without elders, ALL members including the preacher should shoulder the load together.
 - 5. Occasionally, the preacher has greater opportunity to do these; however, he does so as a member, not as the preacher.
 - 6. Need to shake loose some of the denominational influence we have absorbed in wanting an official clergy.
 - 7. Those who want a clergyman, often want someone to do their own work.
- C. Consider Acts 6:2-4; Hosea 4:6.

II. THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL ORGANIZER

- A. All Christians are to be sociable - 1Cor. 5:10; Heb. 13:1-3.

- B. Often a schedule of continuous social visits invited or not, takes time away from what God has commanded that the evangelist do.
 1. A good evangelist will not hesitate to visit a home for a Bible study or to discuss a spiritual solution to a problem one may have.
 2. Yet to expect him to visit just because he is the preacher is an unscriptural expectation. Shatters illusions, but we walk by the word not by our wants.

IV. THE CHURCH NURSE

- A. Some may choke me for saying this but, the NT does not teach that visiting the sick is the responsibility of the evangelist.
 1. Visiting the sick is the duty of every Christian.
 - a. Matt. 25:34-40; Gal. 6:10
 2. If anyone has a special responsibility to visit the sick it is the elders.
 - a. James 5:14
 3. Preachers must visit the sick as Christians, not as clergy.
 4. Preachers should be happy to visit the sick just like any other Christian should, but his prayers have no more special power than that of any other Christian.

V. THE CHURCH YOUTH LEADER

- A. Some feel the church needs a special program for the young, and that the preacher needs to head it up.
 1. Tryout requirements: "Good with young people."
 2. I've got the same program for the young that the Lord has....
 3. 1Tim. 5:21; Rom. 1:16; Ecc. 12:1
- B. This program works with the young, old, and in between.
 1. Anything more is the duty of parents.

VI. THE CHURCH OVERSEER

- A. Some preachers want to take charge, and some congregations let them.
 1. Such is the work of Jesus Christ, working through the word and scripturally ordained elders.
- B. Leads to the pastor system.
 1. The preacher has no more personal authority than any other member.
 2. That is when he speaks his own words; when he speaks as the messenger of God, faithfully declaring the truth, that's another matter.
- C. If preachers focused on the duties God gives them in the Bible, no time would be left for these other man made tasks.
- D. The only source of authority for the qualifications and work of an evangelist is the word of God.
 1. Not your personal preferences, or local traditions, or carry-overs from denominations.
 2. You have no more authority to add to the list of qualifications and works of a preacher than you have for a piano or fellowship hall. So stop doing it.

What Does God Say About the Work of a Preacher?

I. HE IS A STUDENT OF THE WORD

- A. 1Tim. 4:6, 12-16

II. HE IS AN EVANGELIST

- A. A messenger of good - 2Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11.
- B. Put these two terms together and you get a good job description.
 - 1. A herald of good news - Rom. 10:15.
- C. He is a preacher; He forth-tells - 2Tim. 1:10-11; Rom. 10:13-14; 1Tim. 2:5-7.
- D. He is a prompter - 1Tim. 4:6; 2Tim. 2:2; Titus 3:8, 14

III. HE IS THE LORD'S BOND SERVANT

- A. The term applies to all Christians - 1Cor. 6:20; 7:22-23; Rom. 6:17.
- B. Sometimes specifically applied to those who preach.
 - 1. Gal. 1:10; Phil 1:1; 2Tim. 2:23-25
- C. As Christ's slave, he does not have the option of pleasing men or obeying any other master.
 - 1. He works for Jesus Christ, not magazines, editors, big name preacher fan clubs, rich, educated, poor, blue collar, conservative, or modernist factions.

IV. HE IS A MINISTER

- A. Servant - all Christians are God's workmen - Eph. 2:10.
 - 1. All have a place of service, a ministry, and therefore are ministers.
- B. The area of service for a preacher is the gospel.
 - 1. Eph. 3:6-8; 1Cor. 3:5-6
 - 2. Ministers to spiritual things - 1Cor. 9:1
 - 3. Point of definition that the religious world stumbles.

V. HE IS A MAN OF GOD

- A. 1Tim. 6:11
 - 1. Used in Old Testament to describe spokesmen of the will of God.
- B. Links Timothy and other evangelists with prophets of old.
 - 1. God's man with God's plan for God's people.

VI. HE IS COMMISSIONED

- A. Four usages of the term apostle:
 - 1. Witnesses and representatives of Jesus - Acts 1:21-22.
 - 2. One who received a personal commission from Christ (Paul) - 1Cor. 15:8-10.
 - 3. One who was sent out to preach (also the definition of apostle).
 - a. Acts 14:4, 14; 13:4; 1Thes. 1:1, 2:6
 - 4. Anyone sent out - Phil. 2:25; 1Cor. 8:23.
 - a. Jesus Christ was called an apostle in Heb. 3:1.
- B. No faithful Bible student would call anyone an apostle in the first two senses.
 - 1. Wisdom would dictate that a preacher should not use this title in order that there will be no confusion.
- C. BUT, I have been sent out on business for my King.
 - 1. As His ambassador, it behooves me to keep my life above reproach to the best of my ability.
- D. Please note: These are not titles; they are descriptions.
 - 1. To use them as titles violates Matt. 23:8-12.
 - 2. (Clipped from the Beaver County Times, August 1995)
 - "Q. Who was the first minister to be addressed as "Reverend"?
 - A. One Thomas Blake. So titled by his flock on June 11, 1657, according to records left by his descendants. Of whom there are many, one might add. Numerous Blakes trace back to the original Reverend."

3. A preacher is not titled, period. Especially with a name that belongs to God - Psalm 111:9.

E. Scriptural patterns and examples

1. Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3, 15:1-4, 22, 35; 1Cor. 16:10; 1Thes. 3:1-3

Conclusion:

A. As the Lord's Church, we will do Bible things in Bible ways and call them by Bible names. We will provide book, chapter, and verse for every aspect of the work, worship, and organization of the church. We will not add to nor diminish ought from what is written. That includes the qualifications and work of an evangelist. To do otherwise would make this congregation unsound.

What Must I Preach To Be Saved?

1Timothy 4:6-16

(Adapted from a sermon by Connie Adams)

I. I Must Preach By God's Rules.

- a. God chose preaching as the means.
 - i. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1Cor. 1:21).
- b. God closely watches preachers.
 - i. "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the stricter judgment" (James 3:1).
- c. God requires that preachers give warning.
 - i. "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 9. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 33:7-9).
- d. The preacher is not accountable for how the message is received.
 - i. Ez. 33:30-33
- e. What must the preacher preach in order to be saved?
 - i. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1Timothy 4:16).

II. I Must Preach That Humankind Needs A Savior.

- a. "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe" (1Tim. 4:10).
- b. Why do we need a Savior?
 - i. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
 - ii. "For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23).

III. I Must Preach The Divine Plan Of Salvation For Sinners.

- a. Luke 24:46-47 - "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
- b. Matt. 28:18 - "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
- c. Mark 16:15-16 - "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

IV. I Must Preach The Divine Plan Of Restoration For Christians.

- a. Can one who has been baptized fall out of favor with God and be lost?
 - i. 2Peter 2:20-22 - "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are

again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

- b. What must the Christian do to remain saved?
 - i. Matt. 28:20 - “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - ii. 2Peter 1:5 - “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
 - iii. 1John 1:9 - 2:2 - “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 2:1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

V. I Must Preach The Divine Plan Of Work And Worship.

- a. Epistles to Timothy and Titus: instruction in Christian works.
 - i. 2Tim. 3:16-17 - “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
- b. The Book of Acts: instruction in Christian worship - Acts 2:42-47.
 - i. Apostolic teaching
 - ii. Communion
 - iii. Prayers
 - iv. Giving Benevolence
 - v. Daily Bible study
 - vi. Praising God

VI. I Must Preach The Whole Word Of God, And Only The Word Of God.

- a. What happens when something other than the word of God is taught?
 - i. 1Tim. 4:1-3 - “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with

- thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
- b. The Divine defense against apostasy.
 - i. 2Tim. 4:1 - “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”
 - c. God becomes very angry when a sinner or erring Christian backbites a preacher for simply declaring the whole counsel of God!
 - i. 1Kings 18:17-18 - “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18. And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.”
 - ii. 1Kings 21:20-21 - “And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. 21. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity.”
 - iii. 1Kings 16:30 - “And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. 31. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, that he took to wife Jezebel, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 33. And Ahab made a grove to Baal; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.”

VII. I Must Preach Against Religious Errors And False Doctrines.

- a. Jesus preached against false teachers - Matt. 15:6-9.
 - i. “...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
- b. Apostle Paul preached against false teachers - 1Tim. 6:3-5.
 - i. “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”
- c. Apostle John preached against false teachers - 2John 9-11.
 - i. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
- d. Can I treat errorists with greater kindness than Christ, Paul, and John, and still expect to be saved?
 - i. Rom. 16:17-18 - “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause

divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

- e. I don't have a choice if I want to be saved. I must expose liberalism, denominationalism, Pentecostalism, Premillennialism, and all of the other isms that threaten the souls of men.

VIII. I Must Preach Against Tolerating Sin.

- a. Gal. 5:16-21 - “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
- b. What effects did tolerating sin have on the church at Corinth?
 - i. 1Cor. 5:1-2,6-7 - “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 6. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.”
- c. What happens to the restaurateur who does not put out a wet floor warning sign?
 - i. What will happen to the preacher who does not warn his brethren of the consequences of tolerated, un-confessed sins?

IX. I Must Preach That All Persons Outside The Body Of Christ Are Lost.

- a. Eph. 1:22-23 - “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
- b. 4:4 - “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
- c. Why is it that most folks believe in the oneness of all of these items except the church?

X. I Must Preach These Things If I Want To Be Saved.

- a. 1Tim. 4:16 - “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
- b. 2Cor. 5:20 - “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

XI. Conclusion:

- a. But when I have preached the word of God, I have discharged my duty.
 - i. Your obligation has begun.
- b. Just as the preacher is required to speak the word of God...
 - i. The hearer is required to obey it.
- c. You have heard the word of God this day.
- d. Will you obey it?

Beware of the Preacher

By C. G. (Colly) Caldwell, III

(The following article is reprinted from the May 1964 issue of Searching the Scriptures.) From the lips of one bound in the chains of Roman imprisonment come these words of summons to a young evangelist and to all gospel preachers from that day to this: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2Tim. 4:2). The proclamation of the gospel to a world dying in sin is a work ordained by God and expected by Christ of His faithful disciples. When one accepts the responsibility involved in preaching God's word, he obligates himself to teach and persuade men to surrender their lives in complete submission to the will of their Maker. Although he is speaking explicitly of those who spoke by direct revelation, Paul expresses the necessity of preaching Christ by asking, "How then shall they (either Jew or Greek, vs. 12) call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" And then he goes on to quote from Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace..." (Rom. 10:14-15).

In another letter Paul grants that preaching Christ crucified is foolishness to unbelievers: but, at the same time, asserts its necessity to salvation. The Jews sought a miraculous sign as proof that the apostle's preaching was truth. The Gentiles, on the other had, demanded a philosophic explanation of this Jesus who claimed supernatural powers and of the salvation He offered. It seemed absurd nonsense to them to believe that the dying of a Jew on a Roman cross could bring salvation to anyone. But Paul insists that God's wisdom is not man's wisdom and that to those who accept it as God's will, the preaching of the cross of Christ is the drawing agent to salvation which God has chosen (1Cor. 1:18-25). Today we have no miraculous signs nor philosophic wisdom, but we do have the means of bringing men to salvation, the preaching of the gospel of our Lord.

The world is dreadfully in need of God-fearing men who are willing to devote their lives to bringing others to Christ. Often, however, those who do seek to teach God's will lose sight of their goal and instruct for reasons other than those appointed by Christ. When this occurs, more often than not, the illegal reasons for teaching lead the man into teaching illegal doctrine. This is why we beseech brethren to listen to their preachers, learn the truths they present to be sure, but beware lest they corrupt with error.

Peter devotes the entire second chapter of his second general epistle to warning Christians against false teachers, who, he says, shall bring in "damning heresies." The world in our day, as well as that in which Peter lived, is filled with preachers of error. Unsuspecting listeners are being led away by men who in time past sought to follow God's plan but who now deny the Lord seeking to promote their own schemes or gain for themselves some personal advantage. Our theme, "Back to the Bible," has been replaced by these men with the appeal, "Times have changed. We don't need Bible authority!" In the words of Peter, those who bring in such "damnable heresies" shall "bring upon themselves swift destruction."

The Apostle describes this type preacher in two metaphors (vs. 17). He says they are "wells without water." Nothing could be more exasperating to the weary laborer than to drop his pail into an empty well. And nothing could be so discouraging to the exhausted traveler as to come to the dry bed of a promising spring. Peter's application is to false teachers. They promise to those who hear their words great springs of living water but their promises are vain. In John the fourth chapter, Jesus describes "living water" as that which He shall give us. This "water" shall be in us who drink of it "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The "water" Christ promised is that upon which we can sustain our spiritual life and it is found only in the teachings of Christ. Outside of the instruction found in the gospel He has given to us we cannot find the spiritual sustenance which we need to live eternally. Any man who tries to pour down us

any water which comes not from God's living well is denying the Lord. Any man who presents doctrine not found in God's holy Book is a "well without water." Beware of him.

Peter illustrates his point further by stating that they are "clouds which are carried with a tempest." To the harassed farmer nothing is so disappointing as to view the swelling of great clouds which promise to water his parched fields only to have them blow out of sight with the rise of each light breeze. False teachers arise promising spiritual moisture to revive the lives of saints parched by the burning heat of Satan's rays only to blow away in the presence of each little wind of opposition, giving no relief whatever to the weary Christian. Their promises are vain, their doctrines are lies, and their gifts are damnation to their hearers.

Peter's words are certainly true. Those men who teach such "damnable heresies" are those who will be most easily swayed by each little wind of doctrine. A change of teaching because of opposition is a mark of the false teacher. A turning from God's word because of popular opinion, or for a better position, or to gain a greater salary, is a sign of a servant of corruption. Peter says that the latter end of those who so turn will be worse than the beginning: "It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2Pet. 2:22). They have lost all sense of things sacred. They had rather sell out their own souls and the souls of their fellowmen for a mess of earthly pottage than to allow Jehovah to provide them with food for eternal life. The church today is filled with such men. We say again, Beware!

Paul exhorted the brethren in Galatia saying, "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." He said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ?" (Gal. 1:8, 10).

To the preachers we admonish, remember our two-fold purpose in this life. We must first keep under our bodies lest we lose our own souls (1Cor. 9:27). Then we must work with all our might that others also may be saved. This is our life's work. Remember it. Do not surrender in the face of battle. Be strong. Do not back off in the presence of opposition. Stand firm. Our battles for Christ must be won. Our responsibility to God must be fulfilled. It is exactly in religion as I recently heard a noted speaker say in reference to matters political: When principles of truth are at stake our silence is not golden: It's yellow!

To all the brethren we again plead, listen to your preachers, learn those truths which they present, but be sure they are truth. Prove them by God's word, the only truth, before you follow them for only by adhering to this divine standard can salvation be acquired. In the words of Paul, "Continue thou in the things which thou has learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them..." (2Tim. 3:14). The "mists of darkness" are reserved forever for those who teach you error. Do not allow them to draw you into the darkness of hell with them. Beware!

Sermon Structures

- Theme
 - Develop the theme or purpose for the sermon
 - Get the theme firmly fixed in the mind before developing the lesson
- Title
 - Make it simple
 - Make it memorable
 - Make it fit the theme
- Introduction
 - Gather the audiences' focus and attention
 - Brief story (1-2 minutes)
 - A little humor
 - Current event
 - Contemporary issues
 - A matter all Christians have in common
 - Create a bond or link between your theme and focus item
 - Use a scripture
 - Ask a question
 - Provoke a thought
 - Get the audience intellectually and emotionally involved in the theme
- Body of lesson
 - People have the capacity to focus on a single point for about eight minutes
 - A lesson should be limited to thirty to forty minutes
 - Therefore, a lesson should have three main points (eight minutes per point times three points is 24 minutes; combined with introduction and closing will make the sermon approximately 35 minutes)
- Conclusion
 - Restatement of theme
 - Brief summary
 - Address to relevance
- Invitation
 - Separate invitation from the lesson by asking the audience to get songbooks
 - Appeal for a response
 - Review plan of salvation for sinners
 - Call for erring Christians

Types of Sermons

- Persuasive
 - An effort to convince, influence, and plead with the audience to take a particular scriptural course of action
- Encouragement
 - An effort to praise, uplift, and motivate the audience to a particular scriptural course of action
- Informative

- An examination of a certain issue or set of facts for the purpose of enlightening and informing the audience
- Expository (textual)
 - An examination of a scripture or passage of scriptures for the purpose of edifying the audience; can be done for the purpose of persuasion, encouragement, information, or reproof
- Reproof
 - A lesson intended to bring the audience aware of some error, issue, or breach of scripture for the purpose of warning, exhortation, or rebuke

Sample Structure for Sermon Outline

Title

Text

Introduction

I. Main Point

A. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

B. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

II. Main Point

A. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

B. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

III. Main Point

A. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

B. Sub point

1. Supporting point

2. Supporting point

Conclusion

Invitation

(Note: not all sermons necessarily have to perfectly follow this pattern; variation will be inevitable and based on the subject, material, sermon type, setting, and audience)

Preparation for Preaching - I

"There is an urgent need for men-- for strong, fearless, mature, wise, kind and honorable men; for men who bear pain without whimpering, criticism without cowering, and persecution without complaining; for men who have convictions -- deep, vibrant, urgent and compelling convictions to whom compromise is cowardice, surrender unthinkable, and triumph inevitable. We need men who have faith, a faith that is farsighted, giving strength for the present and future; faith that is able to provide hope in adversity, love in turmoil, and which placates present disappointment by future expectation; a faith that moves to act at the slightest command of God, nothing doubting; a faith that moves brethren to step forward because it is right-- despite the fact that there is doubt of personal ability." (via Pause-Ponder-Profit, 1968)

WHY STUDY THIS SUBJECT?

1. To help you to do what you are now doing but would like to be able to do better.
2. To help you to be prepared to do work in the church you may never expect to do but may be forced upon you some day through unexpected circumstances. You may find yourself in a small congregation where your leadership will be all that the congregation may have.
3. To help you to be prepared to recognize opportunities in the vineyard of the Lord that you may be overlooking daily. Training you would receive in this class will help you to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1).
4. To help you to be convinced that you are neither too old nor too young to develop into greater usefulness in the church. In most cases it is not lack of ability or scarcity of material which causes men and boys in the church to hesitate to try to take a public part such as reading the Scriptures, teaching a class, making a talk, leading in prayer, leading singing, etc., but rather the fear of failure. Few realize that the greatest of all failures is that of not trying! When one does his best, he has not failed, no matter how unskilled his execution may be. By trying, he has succeeded in doing something worthwhile. And each trial will be a new and more glorious success. The more he tries, the less he will fear failure. Instead of continuing to suffer embarrassment when a mistake is made, he will soon find himself accepting each error as a challenge to do better the next time.
5. It shall not be the purpose of this course of study to set forth fixed set of rules for speaking. It is the hope of the author that I may be able to offer helpful suggestions, simply stated and as practical as possible. A list of books on the subject of Public Speaking will be given as recommended reading for those who may be interested in a more extensive and technical study in this field.
6. It is unacceptable for a Christian to state: "I'm doing as well as I think I can. God and my brethren are just going to have to accept that. I'm not going to make the effort to change or improve."

ESSENTIALS TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1. Christian character. Since we are interested in preparing for greater service as Christians, it is well that we consider, at the outset, some things that are essential to serving in a public way as members of the church. Christian character has been listed as the first one because this is logical. Until a member of the body of Christ is earnestly endeavoring to live the Christian life, he should be ashamed to appear in public as a leader of any kind in the work of the church. People who know of his ungodly living will have no confidence him and he will prove to be a stumbling block in the way of others. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching" (1Tim. 4:16). He charged the elders of the church at Ephesus as follows: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops..." (Acts 20:28). It is significant that in both of these cases he placed first emphasis upon personal

living. The proper place to begin an effort to develop as servant of Christ is with Christian living. The talk you make or the prayer you lead will carry far greater weight if those who are in the audience have confidence in YOU because of what you are!

2. A knowledge of the truth. This does not mean that you must know the Bible from "cover to cover." It does not mean that you must be able to quote long passages of Scripture. But, it does mean that when you stand before a group to teach a lesson, or to make a talk, you should know as much as you have been able to learn by careful study what the Bible teaches on that subject. The teacher who openly admits in his introduction that he has not prepared his lesson might as well sit down for all the good he will do. And the teacher who may be unprepared but tries to conceal his ignorance of the subject will not hold the attention of his audience for very long. Study the Bible on the subject you are to talk about so you can talk with confidence, sincerity, and humility.

3. A desire to serve. If you really want to serve, you can. In all probability, you will find that you will not only be able to do all that you desire to do, but you will learn to do far more than you now imagine that you could ever do. Learning to take a public part in the work of the church is like learning to do anything else well. If the desire is not there, you will not have the necessary interest to stimulate effort. But, if you really WANT to improve, YOU will be more surprised than anyone else at the progress you will show in the course of six months. Try it and see!

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Class Motto: "I will try!" No "high pressure" will be used on individuals to get them to serve, but encouragement will be given in every way possible. When asked to do any thing, even if it be something you have never tried before, just say, "I will try!" and, so far as you are concerned, the class will be a great success.

When you stand before the church to do anything, just remember that "there is no one here but us." Most, if not all, of those present are "in the same boat with you." Nobody will ridicule you. All are in sympathy with you and are anxious to see you develop.

When assigned to read a passage of Scripture, acquaint yourself with the text. This can be done in but one way, and that is by reading it over and over until you are familiar with its contents. Before you can read in such a way as to express thought, you must know what the thoughts are. Practice reading aloud at home. Stand before the mirror and read to yourself. The best practice for oral reading is to read orally.

When assigned to make a talk, have something to say and say it. Thoughts do not work themselves into a speech; they must be put there by the speaker. Devote as much time and thought as you can to the preparation of your talk. When you stand before the class, remember that no one knows as much about your subject as you do. If you leave out a little of it, the chances are no one will ever know it. If you get the thoughts a little disarranged from the original plan you had in mind, few, if any, will ever notice it.

When assigned to lead in prayer, remember that you are talking to God and not to man. If the prayer is within Scriptural limits and from a sincere heart, God will accept it regardless of what men may think of it.

WHAT IS PUBLIC SPEAKING?

When you and another person sit down and talk about some subject in which you are both interested, you are carrying on a conversation. It may happen that you are better prepared to discuss the subject than the other person. You have some information you desire to impart to him. Or, it may be that he seeks the information which he thinks you have. So, because of this you do most of the talking. You may talk for thirty minutes or an hour without the other person's oral comment, but, just the same, he is participating in the discussion. He is thinking as you talk. He weighs the thoughts which you present. He accepts or rejects what you have to say. What you have to say makes some impression upon his mind. While you are talking, your behavior is

natural. The tone of your voice, your facial expression, your breathing, and the movements of your hands are under the control of your mind. All of these are brought into action in such a way as to make what you are saying more effective.

While you are thus talking to this one friend, suppose other interested individuals come along and sit down with you to listen to what you have to say. This continues until there are fifty present. All fifty are just as interested as the first person. All wish to hear what you have to say on the subject. The only difference is the need for increased volume as you speak in order that all may hear, and it is better for you to stand as you talk so all may see. However, what you are trying to do now is exactly the same as what you were attempting when you were talking to one person. So, your tone of voice, facial expressions, breathing, and gestures should still be controlled by your thinking in order that your speech may accomplish the desired purpose of getting your thoughts across to the hearers. The principal difference in what you are now doing and what you were doing before the forty-nine late-comers arrived is that you are talking a little louder and you are standing instead of sitting. What you are saying is the same; the way you are saying it is the same. What is there to be afraid of?

WHAT MAKES A SPEECH EFFECTIVE?

Briefly stated, an effective speech is one which holds the attention of the audience and one which has been the means of conveying thought to the audience. It is a mistake to think of a speech as a mere public performance. The speaker who forgets that his audience is an important part of his speech will fail. The speech you are making is important only in so far as it affects your listeners. If you do not speak in such a way as to convey your thoughts to them, provided they make an effort to understand you, your speech is a failure. Many of the comments often heard after a speaker has finished reveal the reasons why some speeches are ineffective. Consider the following remarks about a speaker or his speech: "I thought he would never quit." "He was too deep for me!" " He used too many big words." "I never could get what he was driving at." "His speech was too rambling." "He repeated too much." "He stumbled around with too many 'ers' and 'uhs' and 'ahs.'" "He talked in a monotone." Someone has suggested that the way to make a good speech is "have something to say - say it - then quit."

1. It is certainly important that we have something to say. One who is not willing to make the effort to be prepared to talk should be honest enough with his would-be audience not to accept the responsibility of speaking to it. Every minute that a speaker uses in actually saying something worthwhile represents hours or days, and maybe even years of preparation. It is one thing to stand before audience and "talk", but to stand before an audience with something to say is quite a different matter.

2. Even though the speaker's mind may be filled with valuable thoughts, gathered from careful preparation, if he fails to present them effectively, they may be lost to his audience.

3. One of the most important things for any speaker to know is when to quit. The author well remembers the fatherly advice which he received from an old preacher a few days before he preached his first sermon. The old preacher said "Don't preach with the idea of filling in a certain amount of time. Have your lesson filled with truth well-arranged. Preach your sermon to save souls and quit when you are through." If you are speaking without a time limit having been fixed, do not feel that you are at liberty to talk forever. Be practical. Use enough time to get your thoughts over and sit down. If you have been asked to keep your talk within a certain time limit, do so without apology. It is a mark of conceit for a speaker to feel that the audience wants others to "boil it down" but will be glad to have him "roll on and on!" It may also show a lack of preparation when the speech is prolonged. It takes much more study to be able to present a number of thoughts in twenty or thirty minutes than it does to present the same number of thoughts in an hour or more.

"WHAT SHALL I TALK ABOUT?"

When left to choose your own subject, the choice you make will have much to do with how well you succeed. First of all, think of subjects that are important to those to whom you are to speak. From this list choose a subject in which you are interested. Regardless of how important it may be, if you are not interested in it you need not expect to be able to interest your audience. In the third place, select an important subject in which you are interested and which you are capable of handling. You may be interested in some important subject that would be unwise for you to attempt to discuss publicly until you have had more experience. So, use common sense in selecting your subject.

"WHERE SHALL I GET MATERIAL FOR MY TALK?"

Since this is written as a guide to training classes in connection with the work of the church, suggestions as to where material for Bible talks may be found claim our interest. The first place to go for material is to the Bible. However, many good books have been written which prove helpful in preparing talks on various Bible texts and subjects. Elsewhere in this volume, a list of good books will be found. It is important that you have a good copy of the Bible with references, maps, concordance, etc. In addition to your Bible, a good Bible Dictionary and some commentaries are useful. Ideas and suggestions for talks may be found in sermon outline books and old issues of sound Gospel Magazines.

"WHY AM I AFRAID?"

When a person first appears before an audience, it is only natural that he should suffer some stage fright. The extent to which one is frightened may vary with different individuals, but most persons experience some fear at the first. Some may never completely overcome all fear. More will be said of this later. A little reflection will help you to realize that there is not much to fear when you stand to address an audience.

1. There is no need to fear the audience. There are not many occasions in this country when the speaker has grounds to fear that someone in the audience will seek to harm him. True, there may be those who disagree with what he says, and some may even become offended, but even then there is no cause to fear that they will attack you bodily. To express your convictions is your constitutional right. There is nothing to be afraid of from that standpoint.

2. It may be that you fear failure. If you have prepared a lesson which consists of truth, and you do your very best to put it over to your audience, there is one sense in which you have not failed even if you should fail to impress your audience. You have, at the least, succeeded in TRYING! The very fact that you have made an effort to teach the truth of God is a victory for you. It will place you in a better position to be more successful with your audience the next time.

3. If you fear because you feel the lack of preparation, you lessen this cause of fear by giving your best in the preparation of your lessons. However, some fear of failure may prove helpful. So long as you recognize the danger of failing, you are apt to be more diligent in your preparation. Too much self-confidence can be detrimental. You need enough self-confidence that you will try, but not enough to keep you from doing your best.

4. One thing which may contribute to stage fright is self-consciousness. The speaker divides his attention between his speech and himself. He thinks of his hands until they feel as large as hams of meat. The more he thinks of what to do with them, the larger they feel. He feels a slight shaking of the knees and he wonders if the audience sees his shaking trousers' legs. The more he wonders about this, the more his knees shake. Most of this type of fear is the result of his imagination. The audience is not concerned with the size of the speaker's hands, but rather with what he has to say. So, strive to give your speech first place in your thinking, and the more you concentrate on it, the smaller your hands will feel and the quieter your knees will become until you are no longer more conscious of them than when you are engaged in a conversation with one person.

"HOW MAY I OVERCOME FEAR?"

By careful consideration, learn the things you need to do and the things you need to overcome in order to improve your efforts. Having learned your needs, make a determined effort to improve along these lines. This will give you confidence.

Learn how to prepare your talk and work diligently at preparing it. Use every opportunity you have to speak. Most mistakes in speaking can be corrected through practice. The only place to learn to swim is in the water. You may read a whole library of instruction on swimming, but if you never practice, you will never be able to swim. Given enough practice and the average individual can swim well with but little instruction. The same is true of speaking in public. Books by the dozens may be read on rules and theories governing the art of public speaking, but without practice one can never expect to learn to talk in public. A little instruction and a lot of practice is far better than much instruction with little practice. So, practice, practice, practice!

Don't expect a miracle by expecting your fear to disappear suddenly. It will gradually decrease as you continue to practice speaking. However, if you never succeed in overcoming fear completely there is nothing to be alarmed about. Famous actors, great preachers, and others have been known to suffer some from fear at times as long as they lived. However, one who never overcomes it completely can learn to "live with it" in such a way as to keep it from being a hindrance.

THREE MEANS OF EXPRESSION

As was pointed out in Lesson One, public speaking is the art of one person conveying the thoughts of his mind to the mind the audience. To do this, he must give expression to his thoughts. This is done in three ways: by words, tones, and gestures.

Words -- what we say

1. The speaker should cultivate the practice of selecting the proper words to express his thoughts. Efforts should be made to enlarge and improve the vocabulary. Frequent use of the dictionary when reading and while preparing a talk will help in this respect.

2. The words we use should be correctly pronounced and distinctly spoken. The effectiveness of the speech will depend to a great extent upon the clearness of the words spoken. Words that are chopped off, or slurred, or flatly spoken will do much to destroy effectiveness of the speech. Don't "chew your words!" Open your mouth and speak out!

Tones -- how we say it .

1. The tone of the voice does much toward revealing the attitude of the speaker's mind. Emotions of joy and sorrow, anger and pity, hostility and friendliness are expressed by tone color or the lack of it.

2. True tone color is regulated by the mind and by natural breathing. It is not to be affected by intentional and mechanic handling of the voice. To thus affect tone color often becomes offensive to the hearer. It may make the speech ineffective by causing the audience to doubt the sincerity of the speaker.

3. Cultivate the practice of deep breathing. This will help to enrich the tone of your voice.

Gestures -- How we act when we say it.

1. Definition of "gesture": "A motion of the body or limbs expressive of sentiment or passion; any action or posture intended to express an idea or a passion, or to enforce an argument, opinion, etc." (Twentieth Century Dictionary)

2. A gesture should be the result of the body giving expression to the speaker's frame of mind in a natural way just as the tone is the result of the effect of the speaker's attitude of mind on his voice. Gestures should not be mechanical. If the speaker relies upon carefully planned gestures, he may get confused and make the wrong gesture at a given point in his speech. Or, like one speaker is reported to have done, he may hit the table with his fist several seconds after his strong point has been made. Actually, gestures should never be made except when the speaker feels the need of them to emphasize the thought he is expressing.

AVOIDING A MONOTONE

With reference to the art of speaking, the Twentieth Century Dictionary defines "monotone" as "a sameness of sound, or the utterance of successive syllables in one unvaried key, without inflection or cadence." Nothing is more distracting when listening to a reader or a speaker than for him to "grind" along in the same tone with no rising or falling of the voice on key words and at the end of a sentence.

Textbooks which are designed to train the students as professionals in the art of public speaking devote pages to a discussion of inflection, change of pitch, pause, loudness, phrasing, etc. But for the average student in this course of study, a number of general statements will suffice.

No fixed rules for lowering or raising the voice while reading or speaking can be set forth. The best readers are those who THINK and FEEL. That is, if the speaker has a clear grasp of the thoughts to which he is seeking to give expression and if his emotions are controlled by those thoughts, the change in thought and feeling will naturally call for a change in pitch. There may be cases where, because of a physical defect, one's voice may be lacking in flexibility and for this reason it is impossible to give natural expression to one's thoughts and feelings through the modulation of the voice. But, in most cases those who read or speak in a monotone do so because they do not have clearness of thought and/or do not "feel" what they are attempting to present.

In view of the foregoing general statements, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Before attempting to read or speak, become thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts you are to present. Form a mental picture of the ideas. Remember, you cannot give to others that which you do not have. It is impossible to present with clearness ideas and thoughts to others which you do not have clearly fixed in your own mind.

2. "Feel" your thoughts. If you are to present a talk in which you wish to convince your audience that a certain proposition is right, you must first be thoroughly convinced within your own mind that the proposition is true. If you are seeking to warn your hearers against some impending danger, you must first be fully aware of the danger. If you are presenting a message of joy or of sadness, unless you feel happy or sad about it, as the case may be, your delivery will lack force and in all probability you will grind along in the same tone of voice.

3. Be yourself. Being yourself includes giving way to your own frame of mind while speaking. If you try to plan ahead of time just when and where to raise or lower your voice, etc., you will be mechanical and unnatural in your delivery. This will tend to destroy the effectiveness of your speech. It is good to watch and listen to good speakers for the purpose of learning by observation, but it is a mistake to try to "copy" another speaker. The result of such effort will be a double failure. (1) You will fail to be like the speaker you are trying to copy. (2) By trying to be like him you will do the best of which you are capable. So be yourself! But, seek to be yourself developed and improved.

4. Again, we emphasize the value of practice. Just as stage fright and other hindrances can be conquered by practice, so it is with learning how to handle the voice properly. Read about it if you wish. This is good. But, all of your reading will be in vain without diligent practice. So, use every opportunity this class and other occasion, afford you to practice, practice, practice!

POSTURE

This has to do with the position of the body while before audience. Such questions as "How should I stand?", "What shall do with my hands?", "Should I move around or stand still?" often give the beginner great concern.

The following suggestions should prove helpful:

1. Try to be as natural as possible in the way you handle yourself on the platform, yet never allow your "naturalness" to reach the point of carelessness.

2. As a general practice, one should stand erect, holding his head up enough to be able to look at his audience so as to keep his contact with the hearers while, at the same time, he should avoid "looking down his nose" at his audience. The position of the body should be changed enough to avoid the appearance of stiffness. If speaking behind a stand, it is well to hold to it occasionally, but NEVER lie down on it! The speaker should be enough at ease to move his feet at times, even taking a few steps in one direction or the other. However, not many speakers can hold the attention of the audience while they pace back and forth constantly.

3. One thing that is almost certain to divide the attention of the audience between the speaker and his actions is for him to constantly twirl his glasses, play with his handkerchief, thumb a piece of chalk from one hand to the other, etc.

4. The speaker should seek to cultivate the practice of handling himself in such a way as to help emphasize his thoughts rather than to detract from them.

5. This is something else that must come with practice. Learn to think on your feet. This will help you to be more at ease and to assume the proper position on the platform. The only way to learn to think on your feet is to give yourself the opportunity by appearing before an audience.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

When your time comes to speak, walk to the platform briskly with the appearance of alertness and purpose. Do not run, but do not drag your feet timidly. Step with determination.

As you take your position, take a deep breath. This will serve to relax your muscles and add force to your first statements. As you wait for attention, look your audience over. This will help you to command attention and it will give you the needed feeling that, while you are addressing the audience, you are the master of the situation. Never go before an audience without giving attention to your appearance. Neatness of appearance will do much toward gaining the respect of your audience. In addition to clean hands, clean and well shaven face, see that your hair is combed. Your clothes need not be the finest, but they should be clean and well pressed. The dust should be brushed from your shoes. Put all pens and pencils in the INSIDE pockets of your coat. Never get before an audience (whether it be to speak, read, lead the singing, to help serve the Lord's Supper, or to usher) with some other book or paper sticking out of your pocket. Surely some place can be found to store it while you are before the audience!

THREE TYPES OF BIBLE TALKS

1. Textual. The speaker selects a verse or a few verses of Scripture as his text and starts from it in preparing the lesson to be presented. The topic for the talk is suggested by the text; also the field of thought to be covered is determined by the nature of the text.

2. Topical. The speaker selects a topic to be discussed. He may choose to talk on the subject of "Love," or "Obedience," etc. In such a lesson, he endeavors to present in logical arrangement of that which the Bible teaches upon the subject. In choosing a topic, the speaker should take the circumstances into consideration. He should consider the needs of his audience. He should also take his own knowledge and ability into consideration. For example: A beginner might do an excellent job speaking on the subject of "Faith" whereas it might be unwise for him to undertake to speak on "The Sin Against The Holy Spirit."

3. Expository. The speaker attempts to explain or analyze a verse, or a paragraph, or even a chapter. Those who have had little experience may find it easier to present this type of lesson. A beginner can usually draw excellent lessons from the account of the Prodigal Son, or the Rich Fool, or the Parable of the Sower. One thing to be avoided in attempting this type of talk is that of becoming tedious to the audience by giving too much attention to minor details.

OUTLINING YOUR TALK

An outline is simply a brief summary of the thoughts you plan to present in logical arrangement. An outline should be kept as simple as possible. Different preachers have their own plan of outline. Most of the plans that are used are similar in style. To help you learn to outline your lessons in order that you may be able to present them with greater clearness, the following plan is suggested:

1. TITLE
2. TEXT: List reference of Scripture to be read.
3. INTRODUCTION: Appropriate remarks in greeting audience and introducing the subject. The aim or purpose of the lesson should be given here. Any definition of the terms contained in the title, etc.
4. MAIN DIVISIONS: These should be arranged in logical order. Limit the number of main divisions as much as possible, but use the necessary number to fully develop the subject. It is well for the beginner to plan talks which need only three or four main divisions.
5. SUB-DIVISIONS: These consist of minor points given in support of the main divisions. Sometimes it is necessary to sub-divide the sub-divisions.
6. CONCLUSION: Final application of the lesson to the audience. Present an appeal to the hearers to act on the truths which have been presented.

The following form for this plan is as follows:

Title:

Text:

Introduction:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I. Main Division

A. Sub-division

1. Sub-division
 - a. Sub-division
 - b.

2.

B. etc.

II. Main Division

A. etc.

See the example of an outline below:

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Text: 1 Peter 2:13

Introduction:

1. The text tells us that it is possible for God's children to grow,
2. It tells us that it is God's will that they should grow,
3. It tells us how we may grow.

I. IMPORTANCE OF GROWTH

A. As seen in the natural realm.

1. The plant bears fruit only through the process of growth.
 - a. Corn, apple
2. Full-grown animal comes only through growth.
3. An infant grows to be a man.
 - a. Do not expect as much of an infant as we do of a grown man.
 - b. Neither do we expect infants to remain infants forever.

- B. As seen in the spiritual realm.
 1. Impossible to have strong, well developed children of God without Christian growth.
 2. God does not expect as much of a newborn babe in Christ as He does of older members.
 3. Neither does He expect to see His children remain babes.
 - a. When growth is not evident, He is displeased. (Heb. 5:11-13)
 - b. Example: Laodiceans (Rev 3:14-22).

II. ESSENTIALS TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

- A. In this respect, also, spiritual growth is comparable to physical growth.
- B. The proper food.
 1. Proper dieting consists of eliminating the wrong kind of food and including the right kind.
 2. Instructions for doing this are given in the text.
- C. The proper environment.
 1. Physically, this consists of ventilation, lighting, sanitation.
 2. Spiritually, it consists of avoiding evil in all forms (1Cor. 15:3; Rom. 12:9).
- D. The proper exercise.
 1. Without it the physical body cannot develop and remain strong.
 2. Same is true of the spiritual man (Heb. 5:11-14).
 3. Spiritual exercise consists of--
 - a. Prayer (2Thes. 5:16, 17).
 - b. Worship (Matt. 4:10; Heb. 10:25).
 - c. Self-denial (Matt. 16:24).
 - d. Service (Mk. 9:35).
 - e. Steadfastness (Acts 2:42; Jas. 1:2-4).
- E. The proper clothing - humility (1Pet. 5:5).

III. SOME BENEFITS OR ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

- A. Ability to discern good and evil (Phil. 1:9, 10).
- B. Fruit-bearing (Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:9-11).
- C. Ability to teach others (Heb. 5:11-14).

Conclusion:

1. It should be the desire of every child of God to become and to be the strongest Christian it is possible for him to be.
2. To sinners: Before you can experience Christian growth, you must first become a Christian (Briefly relate the terms of pardon to an alien sinner and appeal to those in the audience).

THE PROPER USE OF NOTES

The author recommends, unreservedly, the practice of making a written outline of the lesson to be presented. This will make for unity. It will serve to discipline the speaker in his presentation of the lesson. The speaker who prepares his lesson from an outline which he has written out is far less likely to ramble in his talk than the man who makes no written outline.

Whether one carries his notes to the platform and refers to them as he speaks is purely a matter of choice. However, given a sufficient amount of time to make preparation, the average speaker can train himself to speak more effectively without notes. If one prefers to use notes as he speaks, he should train himself to look at them as little as possible, and then to do it as inconspicuously as possible. Do not allow your notes to become your master.

PREPARATION FOR PREACHING - II

The man who wishes to develop himself in the work of teaching Bible classes and making talks on the Scriptures will do well to invest a few dollars in good books. The best way for the average man to build a good library, whether it be large or small, is to purchase one or two books at a time. If one waits until he thinks he is in a position to buy a large number of books before purchasing the ones he needs, the chances are he will never buy them. By purchasing one or two books each month, it will not take long to have your book shelves filled with useful works in preparing your lessons. Listed below are only a few of the hundreds of good books that you might find helpful.

TRAINING SUGGESTIONS FOR PREACHERS

Personal Study:

1. Regardless of the study done to prepare sermons and class material, one will need to study to develop character, integrity, and spiritual mindedness. Study for sermons, etc. is done to answer error and promote truth. Personal study is done to develop one's self.
2. Set up a specific time for DAILY Bible study and document it until the habit is firmly set. (document by making notes, outlines, diary, or tape summary)
3. Vary the topics of personal study. Change the subject at least once per week; return to it at a later time in order to prevent burnout. A variety of studies will round out one's knowledge as well as keep interest in bible study fresh.

Sermon Development:

1. Full-time evangelists should create at least one new sermon per week. It is acceptable to use a old lesson as long as one studies it to the point that it becomes imperative to preach it. Part time preachers should make at least two new sermons per month.
2. It is unacceptable to use another person's sermon without permission, and without adapting it to the needs of the congregation to which it is presented. It is necessary to use your own illustrations and style of presentation.
3. Vary the topics in order to prevent getting into a rut. Series sermons are acceptable only in moderation, with specific limited time span, and only after being well researched. Suggested styles: exegesis, persuasive (negative or positive), informative (topical), comparison/contrast, historical, doctrinal.
4. Develop both a draft and finalized outline. Where possible, share with mentor for constructive critique.
5. Present new lessons within a reasonable time after development. Interest and zeal for topic tends to dwindle over time due to interest in other subjects.
6. Create a ritual or habit in order to prepare to preach the sermon. (Example: rise an hour early, sit alone with the outline, Bible, and a cup of coffee; sit and review your notes, pray and meditate for an hour)

Writing:

1. A full-time evangelist should write a minimum of two articles per month. Part time preachers should write at least one.
2. Length of article should be between five hundred to one thousand words. Never copy another writer's words or style without giving credit.
3. Diversify topics just as with sermons.
4. Write at the reading level of your projected readership.
5. Vary your readership; write for bulletins, magazines, computer bulletin boards, and in your own personal journal.

Counsel Offered to My Fellow Servants of Christ

Preach for love's sake. Become a servant of Jesus Christ because you love Him and the sacrifice He made that the world might be saved. Although it is a joy to be saved ourselves, our love for Christ compels us to make His sacrifice mean more by carrying news of it to more and more people. When I survey the wondrous cross, I see the pain twisted visage of the Savior looking back in love. How can I respond to that love other than to get other people to gaze at the cross with me?

Become a preacher because you love God and His word. I am proud of my Dad, and I tell others about him; but more than this, I am honored to be called a child of the heavenly Father, and I long to share this with the world. Our Father has spoken to us in words more profound than this world can bear. How can we do otherwise than love this word and dive deep into its wisdom and intricacies?

Be a preacher because you love souls. Every soul is precious to God. What is puzzling to us is why God values souls so much. God's love for the soul extends beyond the mere fact that each is unique; it is more than just the fact that the soul is eternal. God loves souls regardless of how righteous they may or may not be. There is some intrinsic value in every soul, some quality and goodness that if cultivated will transform a life and could change the world. The nearly limitless potential for good in each soul is what makes them so precious. Preacher, learn to see this in all of humankind, Christian and sinner alike.

Be a preacher because you love yourself. Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is a challenge that presses and lifts a man to become the best he can be. Preaching renders a tremendous sense of fulfillment that makes rising each day and going to bed each night a meaningful experience. Preaching fills many needs within the Christian man that often go unsated in other pursuits in life. As an evangelist, one has increased opportunity to study God's word, increased opportunity to visit the physically and spiritually ill, increased opportunity to carry the message of peace and truth to the lost, and increased opportunity to have fellowship with the saved. Without dismissing the hardships that come with being a servant of Christ, being a preacher has become my way of treating myself to a happy life.

Preach for the right reason... because you love the Lord, the Father, the truth, and the souls of men. Some wrong reasons for preaching:

1. Because I want to "straighten out" my brethren.
2. Because I want to "slam-dunk" false teachers.
3. Because I want to make a living.
4. Because someone else wants me to be a preacher.
5. Because I enjoy the public attention. (PRB)

TEACHING A BIBLE CLASS

The purpose of a Bible class necessarily becomes the purpose of the Bible teacher, to teach the Bible. When you are called upon to teach a Bible class, you are being given an opportunity to have a part in leading souls to learn and do the will of God! No greater opportunity could be desired or expected.

One who may never expect to stand before a large audience and preach from the pulpit can do a wonderful work within the walls of a classroom teaching the Bible to a smaller group.

Using The Proper Method Of Teaching

The method will vary in different groups. The aim should be the same in every class, that is, to teach the pupils the truth and to guide them into a life of Christian service. The method used by the teacher should be the one which will best achieve this aim. The method must be adapted to the age, ability and needs of the pupil. Also, another factor in determining the method to be used is the teacher's own natural ability. Some teachers can use one method better than others.

Methods of Teaching

1. The recitation method. By a systematic use of questions, the teacher leads the students into expressing themselves. They recite what they know about the lesson. This method has certain advantages: (1) The teacher is able to learn whether the pupils are grasping the lesson materials, (2) It encourages class participation and individual development, (3) It helps the teacher to know of erroneous impressions in the minds of the students that he may seek to correct them. However, the danger of the pupils' relying upon memorized answers must be guarded against. Also there is the danger of allowing one or two less timid pupils to monopolize the time and give most of the answers.

2. The drill. This is an excellent method for children. Drill them in fundamental facts about the Bible and its contents.

3. The conversational method, or class discussion. Great good may come from the use of this method by the skillful teacher. When another method is being used, it may be good to have a short period of class discussion near the close of each session of the class. The teacher must control the discussion to keep it from drifting away from the subject. There is the danger of lingering too long on one thought or of spending too much time in the discussion of minor details. The discussion should not be allowed to descend into an endless and aimless wrangle between two or three members of the class.

4. The lecture method. The teacher does most of the talking. This method is more effective in adult classes than in classes of the young. Where the lecture method is used it is well to close the session with a thought provoking question or two to be discussed by the class or to ask questions from the class to be openly discussed.

Preparing The Lesson

The procedure in preparing the lesson and the amount of time spent in preparation must be determined by the nature of the subject and materials, the age and ability of the class, and the method being used.

In addition to his Bible, the teacher should have access to a good dictionary, a Bible dictionary, a good concordance, maps, and a reliable commentary or two.

General Suggestions

1. Preparation should begin well in advance. Spend a few minutes each day for a week if possible.

2. First get your subject clearly fixed in your mind; then let your subject "get" you!

3. Read the text and the context carefully. Get a thorough understanding of the setting and background of the text.

4. Try to think of questions that some in the class are apt to ask and seek to be prepared to answer them.

5. Make a list of the chief points in the lesson. Plan to emphasize these in your discussion.

6. Each time you sit down to study your lesson, begin that period of study with prayer. Go before the class in a prayerful attitude.

7. Remember that the salvation of some soul may depend up, how well you are prepared to teach the lesson when you stand before the class.

(Material adapted and compiled by Paul R. Blake for the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ Tuesday Men's Class (8/27/01) from the following sources: The Men's Class by John Cox; Homeletics by Dee Bowman; Speech & Communication by L. Landis; The Men's Training Class by L. Willis, P. Blake, D. Roush, L. DeVore, J. Walsh, & K. Storment, Akron 1998)

Moral and Ethical Considerations of Preaching

- The preacher and his family live a fishbowl life.
 - They, and especially he, are under constant scrutiny by the members.
 - It is doubly important that the preacher follow the Bible pattern for ministers of the word: learn it, live it, then preach it.
- Integrity: your good name and influence is one of your most valuable personal assets; protect it
 - Never lie for any reason, under any circumstances
 - Learn to keep the confidences of vulnerable, suffering people
 - Always provide a clear accounting of money and materials associated with your work as an evangelist; keep receipts of expenses
- Work ethic: it is better to be known as a preacher who works too much than to be known as a preacher who must be watched
 - I do not believe it is possible for an evangelist to do justice to the work in a 40 hour work week. I have over 30 years experience and still need to work 50 to 60 hours per week to do the job right.
 - It is better to err on the side of too much than to do too little
 - Keep records of your weekly hours for a few years to help you structure your time and to be certain you are doing an honest days work for a days wages
- Sexual morality: do not come close to the line
 - Be completely faithful to your mate; never speak or behave in such a way as to leave doubt in any mind
 - Never get closer to another woman than you are to your own wife
 - Never use sexual innuendo at any time or place
 - Never “counsel” a woman alone
 - Never visit a woman under the age of 60 without someone else present
- Financial: money has the power to break the best of men
 - Always live within your means; develop a budget and stick to it
 - Do not borrow if it can be helped
 - Do not become so financially dependent on the brethren that the fear of losing your income makes you a hireling
 - Be certain to make your complete financial needs and salary expectations clear to the brethren before accepting any work
 - Matters that must be considered when developing an evangelist’s budget:
 - Taxes are seldom withheld by churches; you will be responsible
 - Self-employment tax for preachers is double what social security is for the members
 - You will need to provide health insurance
 - You will need to develop and pay into a retirement account
 - This is in addition to the normal expenses of providing for a family
- Misuse of influence
 - Never use the pulpit to promote any agenda other than Christ’s
 - Do not use your position as a preacher to attack, exact revenge, or humiliate anyone

- Avoid joining factions or cliques; do not work with men who seem to always be involved in stirring up a controversy
 - Cultivate a reputation for working for Jesus; do not adopt the philosophy: “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”
 - Be humble! Learn how to say: “I do not know the answer to that,” and “I was mistaken.”
- Do not hesitate to seek the advice and guidance of an older preacher who has an honorable manner of life.
 - Do not be ashamed of the complications that come to you due to the added responsibilities that come with preaching. Experienced men have been there and survived, and are happy to help younger preachers to avoid these pitfalls

Recommended Library for Beginning Preachers

By Paul R. Blake

Bibles:

King James Bible
 New King James Bible
 American Standard Version Bible
 English Standard Version Bible
 Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English
 Hendrickson's Interlinear Bible

Historical Background Resources:

Baker's Bible Atlas
 Old Testament Times by Harrison
 New Testament Times by Tenney
 Chronological Charts of the Old Testament by John Walton
 Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament by Wayne House
 The Works of Flavius Josephus
 Manners and Customs of Bible Times by Gower
 New Testament History by Reese
 The Victor Journey Through the Bible

Reference Works:

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
 Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words
 Thayers Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament
 Hermeneutics by Dungan
 The New Bible Dictionary by Tyndale Press
 Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible by Haley
 Reese Chronological Bible
 Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament by Zerwick
 The Expositor's Greek Testament by W. Robertson Nicoll
 Wuest's Word Studies
 Apostolic Fathers 38 volumes
 Alexander Maclaren Expositions of Holy Scriptures

Commentaries:

The Pulpit Commentary (23 vol.) by Eerdmans
 Job thru Song of Solomon by Dehoff
 Isaiah by Hailey
 Daniel by Calvin
 Minor Prophets by Hailey
 Minor Prophets by Robinson
 Fourfold Gospel by McGarvey
 That You May Believe (commentary on John) by Hailey
 Acts by McGarvey
 Romans by R.L. Whiteside
 Reading Romans by R. Turner
 Guardian of Truth Commentaries on the New Testament
 Thes, Cor, Gal, Romans by McGarvey

Jesus Christ Today (Hebrews) by Lightfoot
 Revelation by Foy E. Wallace, Jr.
 Barne's Notes
 Matthew Henry's Commentaries
 Gill's Commentaries
 Adam Clarks Commentary
 Keil & Deltizsch Commentaries

Morality:

Good Homes in a Wicked World by Lee
 The Battle for the Family by LaHaye
 " " " " Mind " "
 " " " " Public Schools by Lahaye
 Against the Tide by LaHaye

Catholicism:

Catholicism Against Itself by Lambert, Vols. 1 & 2
 The Faith of Our Fathers by Cardinal Gibbons
 Lives of the Saints by Butler

For Preachers:

Preaching in a Changing World by Lee
 Here am I Send Me by Diestelkamp
 Attitudes and Consequences by Hailey
 Trail Blazers for Christ by Tope
 Reminiscences by A.C. Grider
 Carrying Out the Great Commission by Hailey
 Let's Go Fishing for Men by Hailey

Evolution:

Genes, Genesis, and Evolution by Klotz
 The Genesis Flood by Whitcomb and Morris
 The Bone Peddlers by W. Fix
 The Monkey Puzzle by Gribbon and Cherfas

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage:

Is It Lawful? by Allan and Fisher
 And I Say Unto You by Baird
 Bales Position Explained and Denied by Moffit
 Smith Lovelady Debate on MD&R

Miscellaneous:

What the Bible Teaches About the Promised Messiah by Smith
 Handbook of Denominations by Mead
 Building a Successful Marriage by Landis
 Scriptural Elders and Deacons by Philips
 The Stones and Scriptures by Yamauchi
 Union on the Kings Highway by Mills
 The Stone Campbell Movement by Garrett
 Daniel Sommer by W. Wallace
 Answers for Our Hope by Patton

The Cogdill Woods Debate (plus a number of other debate books)
 Why I am a Member of the Church of Christ by Brownlee
 Greatest Questions in the Old Testament by Brownlee
 Greatest Questions in the New Testament by Brownlee
 The Fool of God by Cochran
 Raccoon John Smith by Cochran
 The Search for the Ancient Order by West
 W. W. Otey by Cecil Willis
 Book, Chapter and Verse by Thomson
 How We got the Bible by Lightfoot
 The Passover Plot by Schonfield
 Miracles by C. S. Lewis
 Mere Christianity by Lewis
 Healing by Dr. Nolan
 Wanderings by Chaim Potok
 The Bible as History by Keller
 The Existence of God: A Debate
 Hath God Spoken by A. O. Schnabel
 Bible Wines by Patton
 None of these Diseases by Dr. McMillen
 The Indwelling of Deity by Maurice Lusk
 Traditions of Men vs the Word of God by Jennings
 The AD 70 Theory by Jackson
 A Study of Premillennialism by G.O.T.
 Sound Doctrine Vols. 1-5 by R. L. Whiteside & C. R. Nichols
 W.W. Otey, Contender for the Faith by Willis
 Churches of Christ in the 20th Century by Harrell
 Reviving the Ancient Faith by Hughes
 Neander's History of the Christian Religion
 Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire
 The Psychology of Religion by Johnson
 The Philosophy of Religion by Evans
 Explore the Book by Baxter
 The Promised Messiah by Smith
 Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by Gottman
 Guide to Rational Living by Ellis
 The Anger Trap by Carter

Periodicals:

Truth Magazine
 Biblical Insights Magazine
 Think
 Imprimis
 Expository Files

The above list contains the books that I consider to be the core of my library, although I have many, many more volumes in it. Other books can be added at your own discretion. Simply because a book appears on this list is not necessarily an endorsement of everything the author has to say. These books have been helpful to me.

(The following is a list of the top 20 books that have most influenced my thinking over the years. However, I have read many books and periodicals that have helped to shape my thinking that have not made this list.)

The Bible

Critical Thinking by Waller

Good Homes in a Wicked World by Lee

W.W. Otey, Contender for the Faith by Willis

Churches of Christ in the 20th Century by Harrell

Reviving the Ancient Faith by Hughes

Preaching in a Changing World by Lee

Closing of the American Mind by Bloom

Democracy in America by Tocqueville

Civilization Past and Present by Wallbank

A World of Ideas by Moyer

Exposition of the Constitution of the United States by Story

Sound Doctrine Vols. 1-5 by R. L. Whiteside & C. R. Nichols

Adult Development and Aging by Perlmutter

Psychology by Bernstein

Overcoming Destructive Beliefs, Feelings, and Behaviors by Albert Ellis

Emotional Intelligence by Goleman

Anthology of Plato, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius by Collier

The Phantom Tollbooth by Juster

The Works of Louis L'Amour

MATTERS OF DOCTRINE VS MATTERS OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

PROBLEM: Many problems exist in the Church today as a result of enmity over matters of individual conscience being taught for doctrine.

SOLUTION: The problems could be eliminated by a two step process...

1. Determine between matters of revealed doctrine and matters of individual conscience,
2. Follow NT instructions in dealing with matters of individual conscience.

I. GENERAL RULES FOR BIBLE STUDY

- A. Pray for wisdom, understanding, a humble heart, and an open mind.
- B. Use the Bible as the final authority in doctrinal matters.
- C. Approach study without preconceived answers.
- D. Accept all of the teaching that is revealed on any given subject.
- E. Maintain the purity of the context.
- F. Be aware of the time period (re: dispensation).
- G. Consider the speaker and his authority.
- H. Consider the condition of the person addressed.
- I. Determine whether prophetic language is literal or figurative.
- J. Distinguish between individual and collective matters.
- K. Distinguish between matters of doctrine and matters of individual conscience.
- L. Re-examine your conclusions.

II. IDENTIFYING A MATTER OF DOCTRINE

- A. Definitions:
 1. Doctrine - "The act and content of teaching; the body of teaching used as a standard of orthodoxy" (The New Bible Dictionary, Tyndale Press).
 2. 2John 9; 2Tim. 1:13, 3:16-17; Titus 1:13, 2:1; Rom. 10:17.
 3. A matter of doctrine is an act, objection, or an affair that a Christian is responsible for based on clearly defined, divinely revealed truths.
- B. Examples:
 1. Baptism for remission of sins and entrance into the kingdom of God is authorized by New Testament commands, qualified by Divinely approved examples of its occurrence.
 2. The Lord's Supper as a memorial feast is authorized by New Testament instruction and qualified by examples and essential conclusions.
- C. Foundations:
 1. Command...
 - a. General - a general order that leaves unqualified options open for the discretion of the one observing the command.
 - b. Subsequently qualified - a general command whose boundaries of compliance are revealed in examples and implications provided in other texts.
 - c. Specific - an order that leaves no options to the observer except strict compliance.

2. Divinely approved example...
 - a. An example of a generic or specific command being carried out whose Divine approval can be determined from the context and the harmony of the scriptures.
 - b. Types:
 - 1) Sample - permissive authority; one is permitted to engage in a spiritual activity, but it is not necessarily required; James 5:10; 1Cor. 9:12.
 - 2) Model - a Divinely approved action that is enjoined upon all for strict compliance; Acts 20:7.
 - c. Examples not Divinely approved is one that is merely the random actions of individuals and can be determined by the context and harmony of the scriptures; Gal. 2:11-13.
3. Necessary inference...
 - a. A conclusion drawn from what is implied in the text based on the harmony and consistency of all command and examples pertaining to a specific doctrine.
 - 1) Example of use - Heb. 8:13.
 - 2) Mark 16:16 - "He that believeth..." does not preclude "she"
 - 3) Acts 20:7 - "on the first day of the week" implies all first days of the week.

III. IDENTIFYING A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

- A. Definitions:
 1. Conscience - "The faculty by which the individual apprehends the demands of God, and which causes him pain when he falls short of these demands" (The New Bible Dictionary, Tyndale Press).
 - a. Note... It is possible for one's conscience to be inadequately disciplined (1Cor. 8:7), to become weakened (Vs 12), and even defiled (Vs 7; Titus 1:15), and to grow seared and ultimately insensible (1Tim. 4:2). It is essential that the conscience be properly informed and educated.
 2. A matter of individual conscience (MOIC) is an act, objection, or an affair that an individual Christian is responsible for based on his own personal choice or faith, and not upon New Testament doctrine.
- B. Examples:
 1. The ban on eating meats was based on a weakness due to previous experience in pagan and Jewish religions.
 2. The refusal of Paul to accept wages from Corinth was based on his personal choice rather than an instruction from God.
- C. Origins:
 1. Weakness... 1Cor. 8:10-12.
 - a. Newborn Christians and those who develop at a different rate.
 2. Previous false teaching... 1Cor. 10:25-33.
 - a. One converted out of religious error.
 - b. One who has not had the opportunity to learn.

- c. One continuing to adhere to old laws.
- 3. Teaching or testing...
 - a. One who proves a point - 1Cor. 9:1-6, 12, 19.
 - b. One who tests himself - 1Cor. 9:26-27.
 - c. Both are personal choices to surrender a liberty to strengthen one's self or one's cause.
- 4. Stubbornness... Rom. 14:1, 10, 14-17, 20
 - a. For appearances sake - Matt. 23:4-7.
 - b. Out of narrow-mindedness - Matt. 23:13, 15:9.
- D. PLEASE NOTE that the following is applicable to matters of individual conscience (MOIC). God's laws governing our differences over matters of revealed doctrine are not the same as those for MOICs.

IV. THE DUTY OF THE STRONG TOWARD THOSE WHO HOLD A MOIC

- A. Toward the weak:
 - 1. Strengthen them - Isa. 35:3-5; 1Thes. 5:14.
 - 2. Receive them - Rom. 14:1.
 - 3. Do not confuse them with disputing - Vs 1.
 - 4. Tolerate their MOIC until they are ready to leave it - Vs 3.
 - 5. Do not judge and isolate them for their weakness - Vs 4, 10.
 - 6. Do not influence them to violate their consciences - 1Cor. 8:10-12.
 - 7. Do not insist on your own liberty to their destruction - Vs 9.
 - 8. If necessary, surrender your liberty for their sake - Rom. 14:15; 1Cor. 8:13, 10:33
- B. Toward the falsely taught:
 - 1. Exercise your liberty, unless the weak brother asks you to forbear.
 - a. 1Cor. 10:25-29.
 - 2. Accommodate them until such time as (accommodate - see IV, A, 1-8):
 - a. They have been taught better and leave their weakness behind,
 - b. Or, they have been taught better and stubbornly persist in making their MOIC a test of fellowship.
 - 1) Gal. 2:3-5.
- C. Toward one proving a point or testing himself:
 - 1. Understand the purpose and motive for the MOIC.
 - a. 1Cor. 9:1-23
 - 2. Learn from his example.
 - 3. Respect his right for testing and strengthening.
 - 4. Respect his strength of character.
 - a. Phil. 2:25-30
- D. Toward the stubborn:
 - 1. Do not insist that the other's MOIC is wrong.
 - a. Rom. 14:22-23
 - b. Neither side is wrong in a MOIC unless one or both begin binding opinion as doctrine - Rom. 14:4, 13, 16
 - c. Try to avoid damaging debate - 2Tim. 2:23-25; Rom. 14:1, 9

2. Do not fear to exercise your liberty regardless of the protestations of the brother binding opinion as doctrine.
 - a. He promotes his MOIC in violation of NT doctrine to the detriment of the Kingdom - Rom. 14:17
 - b. He promotes his MOIC, not out of weakness, but from willfulness
 - c. He is not to be accommodated - Galatians 2:3-5.
3. If he persists in teaching his opinion as doctrine, he is to be disciplined.
 - a. Matt. 15:1-14; Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17-18

V. FOR THOSE WHO HOLD A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

- A. For the weak and falsely taught:
 1. Recognize the possibility that you are the weaker brother.
 - a. Rom. 14:1; 1Cor. 8:10-12
 2. Know that you are not under condemnation for holding a MOIC.
 - a. 1Cor. 8:8
 3. Realize that Bible study and Christian growth will eventually eliminate MOICs.
 - a. Heb. 5:12-14
- B. For the one proving or testing himself:
 1. Understand that you hold this MOIC by choice and not command.
 - a. 1Cor. 9:11-12, 17
 2. Be consistent with your example for the purpose of teaching.
 - a. Have a purpose - 1Cor. 9:17-18
 3. Do not try to bind your level of growth on those who have not yet matured.
 - a. 1Cor. 9:8-9, 14
- C. For the stubborn brother:
 1. Develop an open minded attitude when studying and discussing the word of God.
 2. Give serious consideration to the possibility that what you bind as doctrine might be in the realm of opinion.
 - a. 1Cor. 8:4, 7; Gal. 6:3; 1Cor. 10:12
 3. Cease teaching opinion as doctrine.
 - a. Rom. 14:4-6, 13; Gal. 1:7-9
 4. Utilize efforts previously used to teach your MOIC as doctrine to instead teach the gospel to the lost and to edify the saved.
 - a. Rom. 14:17-19
 5. Do not add to the burden of the weak.
 - a. Rom. 14:13; Col. 2:16-18

VI. MOICS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DIVIDE SOUND CHURCHES OF CHRIST

- A. Rom. 14:17-18
 1. The Kingdom does not consist of matters of individual conscience.
 2. Righteousness in this context is determined based upon how we treat one another in these matters.
 3. Peace will exist when all Christians heed the NT teachings on this issue

4. Joy will suffuse the hearts of those who work together for peace.
5. One who promotes these attitudes in the church pleases the Father and has the approval of spiritually minded people.

B. Rom. 14:19-20

1. No sound Christian will promote his MOIC to the detriment of the Church.
2. Peace is essential to edification; confusion and quarreling over MOIC does not promote peace nor edification.
 - a. Jude 3 and the admonition to "earnestly contend for the faith" does not grant permission to contend for our MOICs.
3. A MOIC does not take precedence over what God has clearly commanded.

C. 1Cor. 10:31-33

1. Insisting on one's personal liberty or MOIC to the detriment of another Christian or the Church is forbidden.
2. God judges our maturity and strength by how we treat one another in these matters.

VII. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REVEALED SOUND DOCTRINE, MATTERS OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE, AND FALSE TEACHING IN UNQUALIFIED MATTERS OF GENERAL OR PERMISSIVE AUTHORITY

- A. To do or not based on expediency in a matter of general or permissive authority is sound doctrine.
- B. To do or not based on a personal belief in a matter of general or permissive authority is a matter of individual conscience.
- C. To command others to do or not based on a personal belief in a matter of general or permissive authority is false teaching.

Paul R. Blake

10/5/88

EPAPHRODITUS

By Paul R. Blake

“With No Thought For Himself”

One cannot help but like Epaphroditus. He's one of those seldom noticed, infrequently mentioned, self-effacing heroes, who, working together single-mindedly with others like himself, spread the gospel throughout the whole world in 31 years. It is evident that Paul liked him, too. The imprisoned apostle calls Epaphroditus "my brother," describing him with such intense terms of praise as to leave no doubt about Paul's deep respect and affection for him. Paul's characterizations of him as worker and warrior, messenger and minister give insight into his unselfish, considerate nature (Phil. 2:25). This devout man who took no thought for himself and focused only on serving others becomes our model of quiet toil for Christ. He is worthy of admiration and imitation.

Worker

There are few awards for the common laborer. Managers and foremen get production bonuses and honors at the company dinner, while the laborers stand day after day sweating in assembly lines, unknown, and unsung. However, it is the combined efforts of these persistent, loyal workers that form the backbone of the business. In the kingdom, the apostles' names are remembered by everyone, but who talks about Epaphroditus, Tychicus, or Onesiphorus? But how much more difficult would the apostle's task of preaching the gospel to every creature without the quiet, unselfish services of hundreds of seldom noticed people like Epaphroditus.

Warrior

The soldier's life is not an easy one. He gives up a peaceful home life in a quiet neighborhood in exchange for unpleasant accommodations near the battle front. He trades good food and leisure time for uncertain fare and guard duty. He puts himself in harm's way enduring hardship, because a soldier must fight for another. He dies so that others might live. Epaphroditus risked his life to wait on Paul, leaving the comfort of his home in Philippi to hazard his life and health seeing to Paul's needs in prison.

Messenger

A messenger typifies the true servant of the Savior. He is not the author of the message. Another gets the credit for the information it contains. He is not the recipient of the message. Someone else benefits from the contents of the missive. The messenger just carries it from one to the other, braving the trials along the path, fearing the displeasure of the sender if he fails, and risking the anger of the receiver who may despise the message. Epaphroditus cared so much for those who would receive the message that it troubled him to hear they were worried for his health. In his estimation, his own physical state was too unimportant to concern others (Phil 2:26).

Minister

As Epaphroditus ministered to Paul's needs on behalf of the Philippians, he did so at the expense of his own health (Phil. 2:30). He understood that ministering to another required sacrifice; it meant that the minister must place greater value on the needs of his charge than on his own interests. This attitude reflects the character of Jesus who ministered to the spiritual needs of all men. Humankind's need for salvation was more important to Him than His own desire to remain in heaven with the Father. Man's liberty was a greater matter to Him than His own freedom from suffering and humiliation. To Him, new life for the lost outweighed His own potential loss of life. Epaphroditus walked in the steps of the Savior. Whether one ministers by

waiting at another's bedside or exhorts from a pulpit, one can profit by thinking less of what he is due and focusing more on what he can do.

Epaphroditus took no thought for himself. In so doing, he became a living example of the words of the Lord: "But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43, 45). Christians have been born anew, not to be waited on by others, but to wait upon others, not to be honored by men, but to give honor to God. "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation" (Phil. 2:29).

Which Church Would The Lord Assemble With Today?

(Adapted from a sermon by Sewell Hall)

Questions:

- A. What does Jesus want of us today?
 1. He wants the same thing as His Father.
 2. 2Peter 3:9 - He wants us to be saved.
- B. How would Jesus want to accomplish that?
 1. The same question was asked in Acts 2:36-37.
 2. Peter's sermon caused them to fear retribution and to seek to avoid it.
 3. Peter's answer - Acts 2:38-40.
 4. It is what Christ wanted him to say - Luke 24:46-49.
 5. It's what He told Peter to say about obtaining salvation - Matt. 28:18-20.
- C. How many plans of salvation did Jesus give to His disciples?
 1. Jesus did not make exceptions; all people are to be saved by His instructions.
 2. If He made exceptions, God would have a double standard.
 3. He would be a respecter of persons -- James 2:1-9; Acts 10:34; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:11
- D. Have conditions changed since then?
 1. Does man still need to be saved? - Rom. 3:23, 6:23
 2. Has God changed his word? - Gal. 1:8-9; Heb 13:8
 3. If that was needed then to be saved, that is what is needed today.
- E. Once we have been baptized and our sins washed away, what do we do next?
 1. Most believers know they must become part of a body of believers.
 2. Instinctive to become part of a Church - Acts 9:24.
 3. Many see that joining with a denomination just divides up the believers.
 - a. John 17:20-21; 1Cor. 1:10
 - b. Different creeds, leaderships, competitiveness, prejudice, etc.
 - c. Fighting among religious groups that profess to be followers of a peaceful Christ!
 4. Options:
 - a. Join it anyway, marring their original good intentions,
 - b. Join with the intention to unite all of them together (soon discouraged),
 - c. Give up and worship alone (displeasing to the Lord).
 5. There is a fourth option: do what Jesus would do.

I. WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

- A. What denomination would Jesus belong to today?
 1. "There were none in his day." Untrue!
 - a. There were a number of sects or parties in his day, equivalent to modern day denominations.
 - b. Sadducees - had a great zeal for the temple, but did not believe in the resurrection.
 - c. Pharisees - had a great zeal for scriptures, but held to human tradition and hated government.

- d. Herodians - obeyed the government but were morally bankrupt.
- e. Essenes - believed in abstinence & purity, but were isolationists
- f. There were denominations within the first 21 years -
1Cor. 1:12-13, 3:1-4
- 2. Jesus did not become a member of a sect, but was simply a believer and follower of God.
 - a. Did not try to organize all of the sects into one giant super denomination. (No unity in diversity)
 - b. Sought to unite himself with God rather than a sect of men.
 - c. He just did the will of God, His Father -
John 4:23-24, 34, 5:30, 6:38
 - d. What did he accomplish by this? - John 10:30, 37-38
- 3. What denomination would Jesus be a part of today? He would not be part of a sect of men! He would be united in fellowship with God.
- B. What next?
 - 1. The next thing Jesus did after uniting himself with God was to get others to be united with God.
 - 2. Get others to do the same - John 17:20-21.
 - 3. How; by creating some super denomination?
 - 4. By doing just what Jesus did - John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38.
 - 5. Can we know we are united with God?
 - a. When we keep God's will just like Jesus did - 2John 9; Eph. 3:3-4

II. IF JESUS DID NOT JOIN A DENOMINATION AND DID NOT TEACH US TO JOIN ONE, WHAT DENOMINATION SHOULD WE BECOME A MEMBER OF?

- A. Acts 2 - What denomination did they join?
 - 1. If they were just followers of Christ, why can't we be the same?
 - 2. What sermon would Peter preach if he were here today?
 - a. The same one he did on Pentecost.
 - b. If the message is the same, the response of the hearers should be the same, too.
- B. If Peter preached at the Local High School stadium and 3000 were baptized in the nearest body of water, to what denomination would they belong?
 - 1. They would be believers and followers of Christ!
- C. Suppose some formed a denomination; would that make the rest of the faithful believers and followers of Jesus Christ denominationalists?
- D. Now what do these believers and followers of Christ do when they get home? (Forget the matter?)
 - 1. Do what the believers did in Acts 2:42-47.
 - 2. The believers were in fellowship with each other.
 - 3. They assembled together as a body of followers of Christ, as some of the duties they were given couldn't be carried out individually.
 - 4. Some do not want to be part of a body of believers and followers of Christ as they do not want the responsibilities that come with the privileges.

- E. Groups of believers and followers of Christ in a given area were a local church
 - 1. Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4
 - 2. That church had a doctrine - Acts 2:42.
 - 3. That church had fellowship and sharing - Acts 2:43-46.
 - 4. That church worshipped together - Acts 2:42, 5:42.
 - 5. That church had a treasury - Acts 4:31-35.
 - 6. That church had an organization - Acts 6:1-6, 15:6. 11:29-30.
- F. Not a denomination, but a body of believers and followers of Jesus Christ!
 - 1. There is a difference between a body of believers and followers of Christ and a humanly devised denomination of men.
- G. That Church had a name.
 - 1. Christ is the Head - Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23
 - 2. Christ is the Builder - Matt. 16:18
 - 3. Christ is the foundation - Eph. 2:19-20; 1Cor. 3:11
 - 4. Christ's blood bought - Acts 20:28
 - 5. Christ is Savior of the Church - Eph. 5:23
 - 6. Christ's doctrine rules it - 2John 9-11
 - 7. The Church is the Bride of Christ - Rom. 7:4
 - 8. The Body of Christ - Col. 1:18, 24
 - 9. All Blessings are in Christ - Eph. 1:3
 - 10. We are baptized into Christ - Gal. 3:26-27; 1Cor. 12:12-13
 - 11. We must preach Christ only - Acts 8:4-5, 12; 1Cor. 2:2
 - 12. Salvation is only in Christ - Acts 4:12; John 14:6
- H. Whose name should the Church wear?!
 - 1. Jesus Christ would assemble with the Church that wears His name.
 - 2. Col. 1:18
 - 3. And now, where will you choose to assemble?

THE VOW OF CHRIST THE BUILDER

TEXT: Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction:

- A. The Church is one of the most important Bible subjects.
 1. Was not an after thought like some think. Christ could not establish His kingdom, so He made the Church as a temporary measure.
 2. Vital part of the panoramic, eon-spanning scheme of redemption.
 3. It is the Kingdom to rule all kingdoms; Nebuchadnezzar's statue of various substances struck by a stone that became a mountain that filled the earth.
 4. Eph. 5 tells us that it is where salvation can be found and maintained.
 5. It is Christ's soul saving institution on earth; when we work for the Church, we work directly for Christ.
 6. It remains the most expensive organization in history, purchased with the most priceless substance in the universe... the blood of Deity.
- B. Jesus Christ promised to build it; ironically, He promised to build it in the same chapter in which He discusses His own death.
 1. There is much to be learned about the Church from the vow of Christ the builder in Matt. 16.

I. "UPON THIS ROCK..."

- A. Matt. 16:13-16 - The great confession by a little man.
 1. The confession is the context, the topic, the theme, the object of discussion, the whole point of Christ's discourse.
 2. Anything other than the confession makes this text illogical, ungrammatical, deconstructive, unimportant, and disharmonious with the rest of the Bible.
- B. Matt. 16:17 + "Thou art Peter."
 1. This great confession could not come from a little man without Divine intervention.
 2. "Thou art Peter." emphasizes this point; keeps Peter's perspective; OUR perspective.
 3. Gal. 2:9 - Peter was a pillar in the Church, not the foundation.
 4. 1Cor. 3:10-11 - Christ is foundation upon which the Church is built.

II. "I WILL BUILD..."

- A. Ps. 127:1 - "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."
 1. The Church could not have been built by any man.
 2. Matt. 16:28 - He promised to do it in the lifetime of His apostles.
 3. See it happen - Matt. 16:19; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4, 36-41, 47.
 4. ANY church started after that is NOT the Lord's Church.
- B. Thousands of churches exist because men are dissatisfied with God's Builder and blueprints.
 1. THE Church was built by Christ; all others are Satan's imitations.

III. "MY CHURCH..."

A. The Church belongs to Christ.

1. Acts 20:28 - He holds the deed.
2. Rom. 16:16 - It wears His name: Christ, God the Son.
3. It is not the Christian's church, John the Baptist's church, Martin Luther's church, et cetera. - Matt. 15:13
4. Other churches wear the names of their founders and doctrines.
5. Poor counterfeits for the only true Church.

B. Jesus said: "My Church"; singular.

1. Prophets spoke of one church, not many.
2. Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44.
3. The New Testament witnesses that there is only one, not many.
4. Eph. 4:4, 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.
5. Salvation is only found in His Church, not others.
6. Eph. 5:23, 27.

IV. "THE GATES OF HADES SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT."

A. Ecc. 9:10 - death ends man's work on earth.

1. But Christ was not merely a man - Heb. 1:8; Col. 2:9.
2. The grave would not prevent Him from completing His work.
3. Acts 2:31 - Hades lost; Christ came back to finish.
4. 1Cor. 15:19-20, 27

V. "I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

A. A key affords entrance for the holder; the lack of a key prevents entrance to those without.

1. Peter and the other apostles passed the keys on to the whole world, beginning at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

B. All of the keys must be used to enter the kingdom.

1. Faith is essential - Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; John 8:24.
2. Repentance must be complete - Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38.
3. Faith without confession saves no one - Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33.
4. Baptism - Acts 2:38, 47; Gal. 3:26-27; Mark 16:16.

VI. "WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND... LOOSE..."

A. Peter revealed God's law as he was directed by the Holy Spirit.

1. John 14:26, 16:7, 13; 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:2-4
2. We do not deal with man's law and doctrines, but God's.

B. We must continue in God's law in order to remain saved.

1. 2John 9-11

Conclusion: 1Cor. 15:1-4

A. Christ promised to build His Church.

1. He fulfilled His promise to the uttermost.

B. You cannot afford to be outside of the body of Christ.

Keys to Growth

Ephesians 4:11-16 (read)

(Adapted from a sermon by Barry Kercheville)

Introduction:

I know there are several who work hard at this. Please be encouraged to continue. God's will is that every Christian be a soul winner. Just as important a command as to commune on the Lord's day. When only a few do this work, it is just as if only a few took communion on Sunday.

1. Keys to Growth - #1
 - a. Soul saving is the first work of a local church; all other works are second.
 - b. On a scale of 1 - 10 in importance, where do most congregations rank teaching and converting the lost in their neighborhood?
 - c. 2! (Survey done by Harold Comer)
 - d. Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
2. Keys to Growth - #2
 - a. Leaders must model evangelism in their own lives.
 - b. Elders and preachers must not leave the word of God to serve tables. Need to stop focusing on housekeeping.
 - c. Elders - 1Peter 5:3 - "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."
 - d. Preachers - 1Tim. 4:12 - "do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry."
3. Keys to Growth - #3
 - a. The local church must resolve to overcome the obstacles of those who do not want to grow.
 - b. Adult babies (not "babes in Christ") refuse to grow up. They divert time and resources and are destructive.
 - c. Spinning plates in a circus act.
 - d. Some do not want the church to grow. Growth requires changes in relationships, and brings in persons who are different.
 - e. Barry Kercheville and the Harley rider. Obeyed the gospel, married an elder's daughter, is an active member.
 - f. Galatians 2:4 - "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - g. 3John 9 - "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, received us not. 10. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

4. Keys to Growth - #4
 - a. Members must be given opportunities to use their abilities.
 - b. We've been studying personal evangelism for long enough. It is time to put what we know to work.
 - c. Like a ball team that is always practicing, but never gets in the game.
 - d. The reason we ask for participation in Bible class is to give you practice in expressing a scriptural thought and to build up confidence in your own abilities.
 - e. The best preacher makes his job unnecessary.
5. Keys to Growth - #5
 - a. Balanced, "equipping"- oriented preaching is mandatory.
 - b. 1Tim. 4:6 - "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."
 - c. Titus 2:1 - "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."
 - d. Hobbies, issues oriented, hyper-negativism, matters of conscience do not edify, strengthen, or encourage.
 - e. 1Tim. 6:3 - "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."
6. Keys to Growth - #6
 - a. Members of the church must seek out the lost and develop relationships with them.
 - b. Salt doesn't season locked away in the container. A lamp doesn't shine hidden under a bushel.
 - c. The aloof Christian is selfish and secretly arrogant, not pious.
 - d. Matt. 5:13 - "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."
7. Keys to Growth - #7
 - a. Members of the church must be able to speak with others of the gospel and reinforce it with scripture.
 - b. It takes from 2 to 5 years to become proficient.
 - c. 1Peter 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
8. Keys to Growth - #8
 - a. Training is ongoing, on the job, learn as you go. We don't wait around until we are good at it, and then go teach the lost.

- b. Nehemiah 3:1-12 (read)
 - c. 4:6 - "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work."
9. Keys to Growth - #9
- a. Stop Making Excuses!
 - b. God didn't ask for excuses, He asked for souls.
 - c. Nehemiah 4:7-12 (read)
 - d. "Give me another brick!"
10. The Right Mindset - #1
- a. "We are no better at converting our brethren to personal work, than we are at converting the lost to Christ." (Harold Comer)
 - b. The church grows to its leadership, from the top down.
 - c. Our job is to save souls, not money.
11. The Right Mindset - #2
- a. Barriers must be removed:
 - b. Clean the building - look like a place where people gather for worship
 - c. Clean the members - look like people gathered for worship
 - d. Warm the heart - cold routine isn't worship
12. The Right Mindset - #3
- a. Barriers must be removed:
 - b. Lazy, ill-prepared preacher - rebuke him. If that fails, fire him.
 - c. Likewise with others who lead in worship
 - d. Obstructionist members - "Move please, coming through."
13. The Right Mindset - #4
- a. Start with what you know.
 - b. Simple, casual invitations work best.
 - c. Take short steps at first.
 - d. "You can't eat an elephant in a few bites." (African proverb)
 - e. Build confidence and momentum.
14. The Right Mindset - #5
- a. Say to yourself: Reachable = Teachable.
 - b. Make new relationships.
 - c. "I don't want to neglect the friends I have."
 - d. Who has the greatest need?
 - e. YOU have to make contact with the lost!
 - f. Increase is accidental; growth is on purpose.
15. The Right Mindset - #6
- a. If it doesn't hurt you down in your heart and gut to know that someone you see daily is going to be lost, then you do not know the terror of the Lord."
 - b. 2Cor. 5:11 - "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"
 - c. Make the effort and get to work. This isn't a union regulated work environment.
16. The Right Mindset - #7
- a. God built difficulty and discouragement into personal evangelism, so that we would go sowing and reaping with our hearts deeply involved in it.
 - b. Psalm 126:5 - "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

- c. No single system was used in the NT. They used what they knew, and success came and went. It will be no different today.
17. How do I begin? - #1
- a. "My, isn't it good to be here away from the wicked world around us!" (lay it on thick) Isolating ourselves from prospects.
 - b. How do you speak of outsiders?
 - c. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners.
 - d. Don't talk negatively about them. "You can't teach a _____."
 - e. Don't talk negatively to them. "You wouldn't want to study the Bible would you?"
 - f. Some Christians have so hardened against sinners that they are without compassion.
18. How do I begin? - #2
- a. Have you asked a friend to read the Bible with you every day?
 - b. Most people find it easier to discipline themselves if they have a partner.
 - c. YOU have to ask. They may look at your number for years without calling.
 - d. Leaky BA. Insurance man who only leaves his card. Follow up.
19. How do I begin? - #3
- a. What kind of prospects are you looking for? You may be discarding jewels
 - b. What do you think visitors are here for?
 - c. What do you think they feel when they are ignored?
 - d. James 2:1 - "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."
20. Mistakes to Avoid - #1
- a. Don't start in the middle.
 - b. Going directly to controversy is like trying to teach calculus to someone who doesn't know basis mathematics.
 - c. Feeding meat to the Unborn.
21. Mistakes to Avoid - #2
- a. Don't make it your goal to prove them wrong.
 - b. You are there to win a soul, not a theological battle.
 - c. This is like building the side walls before the footer is poured.
22. Mistakes to Avoid - #3
- a. Don't act smug or superior.
 - b. Do not interrupt. Listen and learn what they need to be taught.
 - c. Do not tell them that they are wrong. Point out the scripture, let them read it and tell you what it means.
23. Mistakes to Avoid - #4
- a. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know the answer.
 - b. Never say, "We teach, we believe, we feel."
 - c. Never use the word opinion when talking about what is written. Scripture truth is absolute. There is NO room for ambiguity.
24. Handling Changes
- a. End the old way. Leave the old building, departing preacher, obsolete methods. While the gospel does not change, the means of carrying it to

the lost do change.

- b. Accept the uneasy period of transition with patience.
- c. Get behind the new works, make the adjustment, and commit to making it a success.

25. Use Youth - #1

- a. Young people are not part of the next generation of the church; they are part of this generation
- b. They need more than just getting their Bible lessons and passing communion.
- c. We avoid using young people because we are afraid they will make mistakes.
- d. Of course, we adults don't make mistakes... right?

26. Use Youth - #2

- a. Young people will show the same interest in the Lord's work as is shown to them.
- b. Members need to take the initiative in this. My job is to tell you how, not do it for you.
- c. Pray for the young, not just the elders and preacher.
- d. Commend the young, not just the elders, deacons, preacher, and song leader.

27. Use Youth - #3

- a. Make time to be with the young.
- b. Leaders need to be accessible.
- c. Have studies and potlucks from home to home so that everyone gets involved.
- d. Take them out of the classroom and put them in places and give them tasks where they can apply what they've learned with supervision.

28. Use Youth - #4

- a. Cynics, nay-sayers, and those who think they are too busy... get out of the way. This is the Lord's work, it is His church, and we are going to do it His way.
- b. It is not enough to be non-institutional and have the correct kind of worship. We must be doing the work for which He shed His blood... Saving Souls! And we will start with our young people.

29. How To Use Youth - #1

- a. Let them help in classes at an early age.
- b. Teaches confidence, builds a sense of responsibility
- c. One feels more of a sense of belonging and appreciation for matters in which they have invested themselves.
- d. Conditions: they must get their own Bible lessons for other classes, and they must behave in and out of the class.

30. How To Use Youth - #2

- a. Have them greet other teens.
- b. Distribute bulletins
- c. It tells visitors that young people are important in this congregation.
- d. The number one factor in the decision of where to worship for new

converts and Christians who have moved is “where are the young people?”.

31. How To Use Youth - #3
 - a. Visit the elderly, shut-ins, nursing homes.
 - b. Take the kids. When I visit these folks, they always tell me, “Next time, bring the family.”
 - c. Educate your children. I’ve learned more sitting and listening to older folks than I learned in 12 years of school and four years of college.
 - d. You will raise better children. Heather and sister Rice.
32. How To Use Youth - #4
 - a. Have them participate in gospel meeting preparation.
 - b. Keep the meeting preacher in your home.
 - c. Have the children prepare mail-outs.
 - d. Have them invite friends, and be there to provide transportation.
 - e. Rule of thumb: need to invite ten in order to get one to come.
33. How To Use Youth - #5
 - a. Develop a supplemental song book of new songs that young people know.
 - b. They love to sing.
 - c. Provide more opportunities for them to get together and sing.
34. How To Use Youth - #6
 - a. Get them to Sunday evening Bible drill!
 - b. No, you are not too busy.
 - c. That is one of my earliest memories of going to services at TR.
 - d. Adults, Be Quiet during Bible drill. Send the message that you think that class is important. Besides that, we might learn something!
35. How To Use Youth - #7
 - a. Train And Use the young men in worship.
 - b. If I hadn’t been encouraged to participate and been entrusted with the responsibility, I Would Not be preaching today.
36. Proof - #1
 - a. Proverbs 22:6 - “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
 - b. Not just the parent’s job.
 - c. Elders, preachers, teachers, grandparents must get involved by teaching, example, interest, and encouragement.
37. Proof - #2
 - a. Ephesians 6:4 - “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”
 - b. Fathers, that’s your job. You can’t delegate it to your wife or the local church.
 - c. Children whose fathers had an active role in their spiritual upbringing are six times more likely to obey the gospel and remain faithful than children who are taught by mothers and the leaders in the local church alone.
38. Proof - #3
 - a. 2Timothy 2:2 - “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to

teach others also.”

- b. That’s not just my job. This is a work that the elders can do, also.
- c. Members can be encouraging youth to become teachers.

39. Each One Bring One

- a. “A Christian wrapped up in his own life is a pretty small package.”
- b. Jesus could have made His apostles into anything He wanted. He made them soul winners.
- c. What makes the contemporary Christian think Christ expects less from him?
- d. *Matthew 28:18-20* - “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
- e. Hunter misses services, hides from a storm in a hollow log. Wood swells and he is stuck. Believes he is going to die, considers his selfish life, feels very small and crawls out of the log easily.

Conclusion:

“A soul I must save, if I would save my own; for heaven’s gates are closed to him who comes alone.”

The Temptations of Power on Leadership in the Church

(Why Churches Need Elders)

By Paul R. Blake

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"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton by John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, Lord Acton, April 5, 1887).

What a joy it is to work under the leadership of qualified and conscientious elders who humbly recognize their subjection to Jesus Christ, and who put much thought and care into their work. I have not always enjoyed this privilege. For 23 of the 25 years I've been preaching the gospel, I've worked with congregations that determined local church matters in business meetings. Here at Tomlinson Run, I've personally observed an example of the wisdom of God in organizing local churches with a plurality of bishops overseeing the work. This scriptural arrangement frees the local preacher to do only the work of an evangelist, so that he is not tempted to become a de facto pastor.

However, as I visit with congregations elsewhere from time to time, I've noticed that this scriptural pattern is not always followed. Instead, many churches are overseen by business meetings or by unqualified elders. While men in business meetings and unqualified elders may be well intentioned with the best interests of the local church at heart, the fact that they are unqualified makes them vulnerable to the temptations of power and its corrupting effects.

God wills that local churches be overseen by a plurality of qualified elders. Paul wrote to Titus: "For this reason I left you in Crete that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you" (Titus 1:5). When Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities where they had established local congregations on earlier journeys, they "appointed elders in every church" (Acts 14:23).

The work of elders is both vital and intricate. Elders are responsible for the spiritual nourishment of all Christians in the local church (Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:2). They must watch for souls that are beginning to manifest signs of drift and weakness, and then be prepared to exercise discipline if the erring do not repent (Heb. 13:7, 17; Titus 1:9). They must set examples of morality and dedication that inspire other Christians (Phil. 3:17; 1Peter 5:3). It takes special men, qualified men, to accomplish these things in a manner that will help and not harm the local church. Unqualified men in business meetings and unqualified elders cannot do these works long term, nor can they do these works with the skill and attention that will minimize the risk of damage, regardless of how hard they try or how well intentioned they may be.

Leadership, the power that elders hold as stewards, has the potential to corrupt men who are vulnerable to temptation. God knew that when He organized local churches under qualified elders. He wants the shepherds of local flocks to be men who have developed to the point where they are less likely to succumb to the temptations of power than men who have not measured up to the qualifications of bishops.

To offset the will of God in the organization of a local church, a myriad of excuses have been offered for keeping the business meeting system instead of ordaining an eldership, or for appointing unqualified men in the absence of qualified men. However, no excuse will ever justify the ordainment of unqualified men as elders. As for churches that hold business meetings for years instead of ordaining elders: a few years of

business meetings while men are developing the qualifications of elders is to be expected; but, many years of business meetings are an indicator of serious neglect in the local work. Either the men are lazy, fearful, immoral, and doing nothing toward meeting the qualifications; or, the congregation is unwilling to follow the leadership of the qualified men among them. Whatever the excuse, long term use of business meetings is a violation of a command of God for local churches. How can disciples from such congregations effectively teach institutional brethren about the scriptural work of the church, when they themselves are unscripturally organized? H. E. Phillips wrote: "There is not a single argument against the appointment of qualified elders in every church that will stand the test of God's word" (Scriptural Elders and Deacons, GOT Foundation Pub: 1959, p 30).

All that I have seen has taught me why the Lord chose qualified elders instead of men's business meetings to direct affairs in local churches. Leadership is too powerful of a temptation for unqualified men to handle. Consider the fruit of putting unqualified men in elderships and the effects of keeping the business meeting system in perpetuity.

--A two hour business meeting to decide the color of paint for two classrooms, how much to pay the janitor, and whether or not an unrepentant, unfaithful member with three DUI's should be withdrawn from. These men believe they are doing as well as qualified elders.

--Elders who refuse to be entreated as fathers, but rather rule as lords over the flock and are feared by the members.

--Elders who threaten one another to take their faction and start another church across town.

--Business meetings where faction leaders call all of their friends in advance to make certain they will vote the right way. These are men are not qualified to be elders and refuse to allow anyone else to be appointed as elders in that church, because they might lose their "say" in what goes on (Judges 17:6).

--Elders who will not visit and rebuke adulterous members, and who refuse to practice local church discipline toward the unfaithful.

--Business meetings attended by teenage boys and unfaithful men who sit and decide who will hold gospel meetings, who will be hired to preach, what will be studied in the Bible classes, and whether to discipline other unfaithful members.

--Elders who avoid controversy at the expense of truth, who choose to compromise with error to maintain peace, and who yield to the outspoken demands of the weak at the expense of the growth of the church.

--Business meetings that are controlled for many years by one man who is determined to remain the big duck in a little pond. He only allows people near him that he can manipulate or that agree with him (3John 9-10).

--Business meetings and elderships who would rather fire an evangelist who courageously preaches the truth, rather than accept responsibility to clean up the messes generated by their own neglect.

Each of these varied and unpleasant scenes have one element in common with all the others: each involves unqualified men who are unable to handle the corrupting effects of power. The Lord does not want unqualified men to be given the responsibility of shepherding the flock, whether it be by business meeting or by unqualified elders.

How does power corrupt unqualified men? The temptations of power come with a

three pronged attack: fear, pride, and greed.

Fear. Unqualified men know they are not up to the task of leadership, and they are afraid of this being discovered. They compromise with error because they are not skilled enough to answer it. They are afraid of controversy and postpone necessary decisions to keep peace (Titus 1:9-14). Fear is a sin.

Pride. Unqualified men are easily swelled up with pride. They let the position of leadership go to their heads, and instead of being appointed to serve, they think they are anointed to rule. The apostle Paul wrote of the qualifications of elders: "not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (1Tim. 3:6). Pride is a sin.

Greed. Power and control are like silver and gold: the more one has, the more he wants, and the more determined he is to keep it from others. How else does one explain why some elderships refuse to allow local churches to ordain other qualified men as elders? What is the motive behind men in a business meeting who refuse to ordain qualified elders, other than the fact that the unqualified men would lose the power they are hungry to keep and wield? Greed is a sin.

The New Testament solution to this problem is for local churches to ordain qualified elders. According to Bible examples, this process does not take many years. There exists no scriptural reason why churches today cannot organize the same way it was done in the apostles' day, and ordain qualified elders in every place within a few years. One cannot keep from thinking that if a church goes many years without elders that there is error or sin involved at some level. It is time to stop making excuses and start doing things God's way.

Furthermore, if local churches have unqualified men appointed as elders, the disciples in those congregations must ask them to resign until they measure up to God's standards. A malignant leadership is just as dangerous as no leadership at all. Do not fear to stand up to a Diotrephes and admonish him to repent of his sin or neglect.

It takes courage and dedication to do this. Christians must recognize the Lord's will for organization in the local church. They must develop men to fulfill these roles. They must appoint these men to the task. They must ask unqualified men to step aside. They must submit to the guidance of qualified elders. The Lord will have it no other way.

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS: THE NEED FOR ELDERS

Introduction (Lesson One):

- A. Establish rules for this study:
 - 1. Why am I teaching this subject?
 - a. Part of the whole counsel of God
 - b. Requested by the elders
 - 1) Bill Gailey's resignation due to health; Carl Parsons' health problems; age and attrition come to all.
 - c. To ensure and protect the future of this church
 - 1) We do not want to be reduced to the business meeting system for the work of this church.
 - 2. What do I expect of you?
 - a. To listen with open minds and open Bibles
 - b. To search the scriptures at home between lessons
 - c. To obey what God says; do the right thing
 - 3. What can you expect of me?
 - a. To preach all relevant NT doctrine on this matter
 - b. To preach only NT doctrine on this matter
 - c. I am not going to preach the traditions of men on the need, work, authority, and qualifications of elders.
 - d. I am going to disagree with you if you try to press traditions or opinions in this matter.
 - e. I will not change my understanding and preaching of any aspect of this matter unless you provide me with book, chapter and verse, and not just your views on elders.
- B. Too many misunderstandings about elders:
 - 1. Infallible - Man walking around the auditorium during worship: "I'm eldering."
 - 2. Are just ordinary men. No, they are uniquely qualified.
 - 3. Many do not have a clue. "Deacons deak and elders eld."
 - 4. Elders are unnecessary - WRONG! They are vital to the organization, health, work and growth of a local church.
- C. Why we need elders:

I. The need is seen in the duties they perform

- A. Feeding the flock - *Acts 20:28*
 - 1. To feed - "poimen" - to pasture or shepherd a flock
 - 2. To tend - *1Peter 5:2*
- B. Guarding the flock - *Acts 20:29-31*
 - 1. Watch against false teachers and false brethren
 - 2. Watch for strays - *Heb. 13:17*
- C. Rule well - Lead carefully - *1Tim. 5:17*
 - 1. Diligently - earnestness & zeal - *Rom. 12:8*
 - 2. Not with enforced inaction; pro-active

II. The need is seen in the command to have elders

A. *Titus 1:5* - Command

1. Notice that this responsibility was delegated to a relatively young gospel preacher. Not self-appointed, appointed by the Holy Spirit through the medium of inspired truth boldly taught.

B. Example - *Acts 14:21-23*

C. Divine implication - *1Tim. 3*

III. The need is seen in the dangers of the alternative

A. Voting in doctrinal matters is unscriptural.

1. The church is a monarchy (rule of one), not a democracy (rule of many).
2. Jesus Christ has all authority - *Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18*

B. Our responsibility as his subjects

1. To accept his authority - *Col. 3:17*
2. To obey him in all things - *2Cor. 5:10*

C. In the local Church, Christ has given some authority to the elders

1. To oversee the congregation - *1Peter 5:2*
2. But not to act as lords - *1Peter 5:3*
3. The congregation's duty to the elders: obey and submit to them - *Heb. 13:17*
4. Every local church needs qualified elders.

D. Dangerous to bring the world into the church.

1. Some Christians have thought of New Testament church government as a democracy.
2. Note this comment by bro. R.L. Whiteside: "Our thoughts and actions in business and politics influence our thoughts and actions in religious matters. The reason for this is plain. In every relationship in life, our thoughts and actions form and shape our character; and this character, in turn, manifests itself no matter where we are or what we are doing. The spirit of democracy, which has grown more or less luxuriantly on American soil for so long, has spread over the world as a result of the wars. Democracy, the rule of the people, is the cry. Wilson's plea to make the world safe for democracy spread like wild-fire. Monarchies fell, kings took a hasty departure, and thrones crumbled. Democracy was in the air, and the people everywhere became infected. It became a habit of thought to such an extent that it found its way into some churches of Christ, and majority rule became the order of procedure. In these churches, any man would, if he could muster up a majority vote, run rough-shod over God's overseers or even depose the elders and appoint others. It is the spirit of the world overriding the Spirit of God" (*Doctrinal Discourses*, 82, 85).

E. The dangers of deciding any church matter by majority vote are many:

1. It makes the church subject to unqualified men
2. It fails to distinguish experience and inexperience among members.
3. It encourages preachers to cater to the wishes of the majority.
 - a. Bro. Foy E. Wallace wrote, "Almost any preacher who is a good mixer can put it over with women, young people and generally indifferent members whose interest has been revived to 'take sides.'" ("*Majority Rule and Matters of Faith*")

- b. The Lord does not want men-pleasers as a preacher or elders -
Gal. 1:10; John 10:11-15
- 4. It provides occasion for politics and electioneering, resulting in division.
- 5. It breeds anarchy in the church
- F. "But what if we don't have qualified men!?"
 - 1. Get them.
 - 2. The churches in the New Testament ordained elders within a few years of beginning as a church.
 - 3. There are reasons why some churches do not have elders or find it difficult to appoint more.
 - a. Some people do not want to be in subjection to elders; they are not qualified, and therefore will lose their say if there are no more business meetings.
 - b. Some hobbyists elevate the qualifications until even Peter and James wouldn't be qualified.
 - c. Qualified men are too lazy or fearful to take up the task.

Conclusion:

- A. The only scripturally organized churches are churches with elders and deacons. To that end we labor. We will do New Testament things for NT reasons in NT ways.

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS: THE WORK OF ELDERS

Introduction (Lesson Two):

- A. Now that we know that it is important to have elders, we must learn what they do and what vital roles they are uniquely qualified to fill.
1. This will serve to reinforce our awareness of the need.
 2. May generate more interest and desire in becoming or ordaining elders.

I. SCRIPTURAL NAMES

- A. Presbuterion: derivation is presbuteros (elder, one older)
1. Primary meaning is age (relative).
 2. Term means an older person in the church without regard to an office or any work. Speaks to one's years and experience in Christ.
 3. One can be an elder (older person), and not necessarily hold the office of elder in the local church.
- B. Episcopos: overseer, man charged with duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly.
1. Synonym: a guardian, superintendent, or any curator
 2. *Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1Peter 2:25*
 3. "Bishop" means overseer or one who looks after the affairs of others.
- C. Poiman: to keep sheep - *Luke 17:7*
1. To feed - *John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 9:7; Jude 12*
 2. To rule, to govern - *Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 14:15*
 3. To shepherd - *Matt 9:36, 25:32, 26:31; John 10:2, 12*
 4. To pastor - *Eph. 4:11; 1Peter 2:25*
- D. Basic meaning is that of supervision and feeding.
1. "Shepherd" is commonly one who feeds, tends, and guards the spiritual interests of Christians in a given location.
 2. The nature of the work of an overseer: he who tends the flock must know who they are; they must lead the sheep. They must watch, and take the oversight and responsibility.
 4. "Pastor" has the same scriptural meaning as "shepherd."

II. THE DUTIES OF ELDERS

- A. Take heed to themselves - *Acts 20:28*
- B. To be guided by the word of God - *Acts 20:32; Titus 1:9*
- C. Be examples to the flock - *1Peter 5:3*
- D. Take the oversight - *1Peter 5:2*
- E. Take heed to the flock - *Acts 20:28*
- F. Rule well - *1Tim. 5:17*
- G. Feed the flock - *Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:1-2*
- H. Watch for grievous wolves - *Acts 20:29-30*
- I. Stop the mouths of vain talkers - *Titus 1:11*
- J. Settle differences in the church - *Acts 15:6*
- K. Admonish the church - *1Thes. 5:12*
- L. Support the weak - *Acts 20:35*

- M. Pray for the sick and administer to their needs - *James 5:14*
- N. Establish churches when necessary; to help in such work - *Acts 16:4-5*
- O. Watch for the souls of the church - *Heb. 13:17; Ez. 3:16-21*

III. DUTIES OF THE CHURCH TOWARD THE ELDERS

- A. Know the elders - *1Thes. 5:12*
- B. Esteem the elders highly in love - *1Thes. 5:13*
- C. Be submissive to the elders - *Heb. 13:17*
- D. Be at peace among yourselves - *1Thes. 5:13*
- E. Obey the elders - *Heb. 13:17*
- F. Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father - *1Tim. 5:1*
- G. Receive not an accusation against an elder except in the mouth of two or three witnesses - *1Tim. 5:19*
- H. Remember and imitate the elders - *Heb. 13:7*
- I. Count the elders worthy of double honor - *1Tim. 5:17-18*
- J. Call the elders when in need - *James 5:14*

Conclusion:

- A. No wonder Paul told Timothy "One who desire the office, desires a good WORK," for it is work indeed (*1Tim. 3:1*).

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS: THE AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

Introduction (Lesson Three):

- A. All things presented in these lessons will be based on what is written, and will not include the opinions and traditions that please men.
1. If you do not agree with what is preached in these lessons, you would be my friend if you spoke with me instead of someone else about it.
 2. I am approachable; I always give a friendly ear to any Bible question.
 3. However, I will insist on two things in advance:
 - a. You must prove your point from the word.
 - 1) "We always did it that way," or "Dear old brother So-and-so used to teach," does not constitute Bible authority.
 - b. That you do not become angry and leave without discussing it.
- B. What do the scriptures say about the authority of elders?

I. SOURCE of authority for the Elders

- A. Is it from themselves? Are elders the final authority, answerable to no one?
1. *Eph. 1:21-23; Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18*
 2. They are answerable to Christ.
 3. The only being not subject to Christ is the Father - *1Cor 15:27-28*
- B. Is it from the congregation? Is it a democracy?
1. "A form of government in which political power resides in all the people and is exercised by them directly or is given to elected representatives" (Funk & Wagnall, vol. 1, p 169).
 2. "The members chose the elders; the members can take them out if they don't like the elders' decisions." WRONG!
- C. Is it from the Preacher? Must the elders consult with the preacher for his approval on all decisions made?
1. Timothy and Titus were told to appoint elders in every church.
 2. Does this make the elders subject to the preacher?
 - a) "Evangelical oversight"?
 3. Preacher is to preach and teach, even to the elders.
 4. But elders are to have the oversight and are to rule well; therefore the preacher is subject to them.
- D. Is it from Christ? Does the eldership derive its authority from the Head?
1. Christ has all authority in the church. If authority is given, it must be from him - *Matt. 28:18*.
 2. Authority of elders is the authority of Christ. To rebel against scriptural elders is to rebel against Christ. This rejection of God's leaders brings one under condemnation.
 3. Consider:
 - a. Aaron and Miriam rebelled against authority of God given to Moses - *Num. 12:9-10*.
 - b. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - *Num. 16:21-24, 31-35*

II. NATURE of the authority of Elders

- A. It is not one man rule. It is an Eldership.
 - 1. Decisions to be made must be made by the whole.
 - 2. Every New Testament example is a plurality of elders.
 - a. How many? More than one.
- B. Two areas in which authority is administered.
 - 1. Divine laws - the making of laws.
 - 2. Human judgment - deciding how to act in agreement to practice established law.
- C. Do elders function in both areas?
 - 1. Elders cannot make any laws for the church. The making of laws belongs exclusively to Christ.
 - a. *James 4:12, 1:25*
 - 2. Can the elders make new laws for church work, discipline, or organization? NO!
 - a. The elders guide the flock by helping the members to keep law already given by Christ, not by making new laws.
 - 3. In matters of human judgment and decisions concerning the church and its course of action, elders are to exercise authority in the local church.
 - a. Individual members submit their personal judgment on collective matters into the hands or oversight of the elders.
 - 4. Examples:
 - a. Meeting times for worship - Can not change the day authorized by God, but can appoint best time of day. Time of day is not specified by God, but elders are authorized to appoint the best time of day to suit the needs of the local church.
 - b. Who will preach? Cannot choose an unsound preacher, but the specific choice of which man is made by the elders.
 - c. Who will teach Bible classes?
 - d. What Bible subjects will be studied?
 - e. When and who to have for a gospel meeting?
 - 5. Members may disagree with the judgment calls, but there should be no whining or murmuring unless the elders clearly violate the scriptures.
 - a. If a member disagrees, it is likely that he is mistaken, because as a member, he is not qualified to make those calls.
 - b. If elders are unreasonable or unapproachable, then they were improperly ordained; they aren't qualified. However, one must follow the NT pattern in correcting them.
 - c. *1Tim. 5:1, 19*
- D. Some misconceptions about the authority of elders:
 - 1. "An elder can rule by example only."
 - a. *1Peter 5:3* - "being ensamples to the flock"
 - b. False - *Heb. 13:7* - "egoumenon" (the ones having the rule) has to do with following the words and faith spoken by those who have a rule. Obviously this extends beyond just example.

2. "Elders have no authority outside of the church assemblies."
 - a. False - Elders must "watch in behalf of your souls" - *Heb. 13:17*.
 - b. Otherwise sins such as adultery, lying, drunkenness, hatred, etc., couldn't be disciplined unless committed in the assembly.

III. the scope of the authority of Elders

- A. Members of a local church must submit to the eldership in order to obey God.
 1. *Heb. 13:17; 1Tim. 5:17*
- B. However, the eldership must rule according to truth.
 1. *Titus 1:9; Heb. 13:7*
- C. Authority demands responsibility. What are the elders' responsibilities?
 1. Arranging orderly worship and all essentials to it.
 2. Directing the teaching program: classes, teachers, material, etc.
 - a. Could the church support a man preaching in another locality? If yes, then the supporting church has the obligation to monitor the work done by this man.
 - b. *Phil. 4:16-17*
 3. Initiating discipline. They "watch in behalf of your souls" - *Heb. 13:17*.
 4. Directing deacons in the work of benevolence for sick and needy saints.
- D. The limit of elders' authority:
 1. "Tend the flock of God which is among you" - *1Peter 5:2*.
 - a. Note: The autonomy of the local church must be respected.
 - b. "Autonomy"- right of self-government; a self governing state; an independent body.
 2. No local eldership has the right to oversee or rule over the affairs of any other local church under any circumstances.

Conclusion:

- A. There is wisdom in doing this God's way. There will always be strife and failure if we attempt to alter it. Let us simply say amen to God's plan for the church and fully comply without wavering or murmuring.

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS: QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Introduction (Lesson Four):

- A. To become an elder in the Lord's Church, one must be selected by the Holy Spirit - *Acts 20:28*.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit gave qualifications - *1Tim. 3:1-9; Titus 1:5-9*
 - 2. To ordain men according to these qualifications is the equivalent of having them appointed by the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. There are 23 qualifications mentioned in these texts.
- B. Twenty-three qualities are needed by a man who would help lead a local congregation as an elder.
 - 1. Not the twenty-three 'dis-qualifications.'
 - 2. The need for elders does not authorize churches to dismiss or reduce any of these qualifications.
 - 3. We will not permit self-will, stubbornness, jealousy, ignorance, or animosity to make them stricter than God stated them.
- C. Eighteen are qualities every Christian man should have.
 - 1. Only five of those listed are required before one can serve as an elder.
 - 2. While all Christian men should have these eighteen qualities, elders should have them to the extent that they are examples for others.

EIGHTEEN QUALITIES NEEDED BY ALL CHRISTIAN MEN:

I. WITHOUT REPROACH (Blameless - KJV)

- A. To live in such a way that charges of wrong doing are not believable and cannot be proven.
- B. The Holy Spirit is not requiring that an elder must be above sin, but that he corrects his sins as God instructs.

II. TEMPERATE (Vigilant - KJV; self-controlled - ASV)

- A. Watchful over himself by restraining his appetites and passions; uses all things in moderation.
- B. He has the power to control himself in the use of what is lawful.

III. SOBER-MINDED (Prudent - NASB)

- A. Calm, even tempered, cautious, circumspect, wise; sees all sides of an issue before acting; uses good sense in all judgments.
- B. He is stable enough mentally and emotionally to make sound decisions.

IV. ORDERLY (Of good behavior - KJV; Respectable - NASB)

- A. His conduct in business, home, recreation, dress, and manners demonstrates modesty and propriety.

V. HOSPITABLE (Philoxenia - "one who loves strangers")

- A. Cordially receives guests in order to supply their needs. Devoted to hospitality and derives pleasure from it.

VI. NO BRAWLER (NASB - not addicted to wine; KJV - not given to wine)

- A. One whose reputation and mind are both free from all influences of evil and intoxication, or any other thing destructive to objectivity and influence.
 - 1. This would include social drinking, drinking in the privacy of one's

home, any abuse of drugs, and the use of tobacco.

VII. NO STRIKER (Not pugnacious - NASB)

- A. One who is not quarrelsome, nor disposed to lash out at opposition.
 - 1. Even tempered, not easily excited, angered, or provoked.

VIII. GENTLE (KJV - Patient)

- A. Epieikes - "Seemly, fitting, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing."
- B. Patient and humble with those in weakness or distress, not inconsiderate, bitter or disagreeable with those in a poor station.

IX. NOT CONTENTIOUS (Adverse to fighting)

- A. Not a nit-picker or domineering, nor one who likes to have feuds going all of the time, locally or in the brotherhood.
- B. Often the last person to find out about a contentious man is the divisive man himself. Meanwhile the Lord's work suffers.

X. NO LOVER OF MONEY (KJV - not covetous)

- A. Grounds for discipline in *1Cor. 5*; one who loves money has the potential to be bribed or influenced by material concerns.
- B. *Titus 1:7* - forbids one who obtains money in an unlawful manner.

XI. ONE THAT RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE, HAVING HIS CHILDREN IN SUBJECTION WITH ALL GRAVITY (NASB - HE must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity)

- A. This describes his leadership ability.
- B. His role as a husband and father is a basis for judging him capable of leading a local congregation.
- C. In a well-ruled household, everyone recognizes and fulfills his or her role according to the NT blueprint.
 - 1. A man with a domineering wife is not elder material.
 - 2. A man with unruly children is not elder material.
 - 3. He is responsible for his own household, not another's.

XII. GOOD TESTIMONY FROM THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT (NASB - he must have a good reputation with those outside the church)

- A. He must be known to be a moral and honest man.
- B. A local church can only accomplish good with a good reputation; the church's reputation and influence often depends on the elders' good names.

XIII. NOT SELF-WILLED

- A. Cannot be stubborn, headstrong, or self-pleasing, and expect to get along with others in the local church.
- B. Must make decisions based on what is good for all concerned, not on what he personally likes or wants - *1Peter 5:2-3*.

XIV. NOT SOON ANGRY (Not quick tempered - NASB)

- A. Does not allow difficulty to impact his composure; even tempered and at peace under stress.

XV. LOVER OF GOOD (Loving what is good - NASB)

- A. He doesn't do well from a sense of duty, but loves goodness for its own sake.
- B. Imparts this love for goodness to others by example.

XVI. JUST

- A. Fair, impartial, without prejudice.

B. This quality is crucial in matters of discipline.

XVII. HOLY (Devout - NASB)

A. One who religiously observes every obligation to God and man; spiritually minded. Continues to pray and study all of his life.

XVIII. HOLDING FAST TO THE, FAITHFUL WORD

A. Must adhere to sound doctrine in order to:

1. Keep himself right - *Acts 20:28*.
2. Teach others to be right - *Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17*.

FIVE QUALITIES REQUIRED IN ALL ELDERS

Introduction:

A. These five qualifications are expected of all elders, but not necessarily of all Christian men.

1. I believe all Christian men should work toward being elders, but not all will succeed because of these five qualities.
2. These five are the most controversial of the qualifications, over which brethren have divided for many years.
3. The division occurs, not because God has been unclear on these matters, but because men have tried to either bind or loose more that what has been bound and loosed in heaven.

B. I am aware that there are some restrictive traditions held by a few here at TR with regard to the qualifications of elders.

1. I will present the NT teaching on each matter; it is up to you to accept it.
2. It may well be that contention over these things will arise so sharply that it threatens division. We will not allow it to get to that point.
3. Instead, we will follow the NT teaching with regard to the strong bearing with the scruples of the weak, and not force men upon you as elders to whom you object because of your conscience.
4. However, be it known that if we do not ordain a man or men in order to avoid division over these qualifications, it will not be for a scriptural reason; but due to traditions strongly held by those who are weak in understanding - *Romans 15:1-2*.
5. At the same time, I pray that those who are the focus of objections made by brethren weak in understanding will demonstrate great strength and forbearance of character and be patient with them until such time as they grow.

XIX. HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

A. Must be:

1. A man
2. Married
3. Lawfully

B. Both restrictive and positive:

1. Prohibits more than one wife,
2. Demands one wife.

C. Demonstrates:

1. That he can communicate with women,
2. That he can treat them with respect, recognizing their roles and value to the Lord.
3. That he can understand and empathize with those who are married.

D. Controversies:

1. Widowed man who remarries? If it is a lawful marriage, he is truly the husband of one wife.
2. Divorced man? While he may be lawfully remarried, his history demonstrates that he does not have the qualification of one who rules well his own house. The appointment of such a man as an elder would become a focal point of dissention.

XX. NOT A NOVICE (Not a new convert - NASB)

- A. Will draw heavily on the experience, wisdom and knowledge that years as a Christian will bring.
- B. The length of time is dependent upon the individual.
 1. Paul told Timothy and Titus to ordain elders in Churches in existence for just a few years.
- C. Controversies: What age?
 1. This qualification speaks of experience as a Christian, not of chronological age.
 2. Age is addressed in the name "elder."

XXI. APT TO TEACH (Able to teach - NASB)

- A. Must have:
 1. Comprehensive knowledge of God's will.
 2. The ability to impart that knowledge to others.
- B. Controversies:
 1. It is easy to be stricter than God in this qualification.
 2. Teaching abilities vary; one can teach publicly; others are skilled at "one on one" studies. Working together they will complement one another.
 3. He doesn't have to be an Apollos in the pulpit, just able to teach.
 4. This qualification does not refer to eloquence or speaking talents.

XXII. DESIRES THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP

- A. Wants to do the work, for it is work!
 1. Often men who love power or control are drawn to this office.
 2. The qualification process will sort out this kind; and if not, the difficulty of the work will press him out.
- B. A man who does not desire the office should not be imposed upon to lead the congregation. The church will be better off without a reluctant leader.
 1. However, what of the condition of a man who meets the other requirements, but is unwilling to serve?
 2. *Rom. 12:6-8; 1Cor. 12:28-31; Eph. 4:11-12; Matt. 25:14-30*
 3. Can one refuse the Lord with impunity?

XXIII. HAVING CHILDREN THAT BELIEVE; NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY

(Having faithful children, not accused of rebellion)

A. An elder must be a man who has demonstrated his ability to lead and teach.

B. "Believing children" is the qualification that gives Christians more difficulty than the remaining 22 qualifications.

1. Our practice and tradition is to accommodate the conscience of those who are weak in their understanding of difficult texts. Therefore, neither I nor anyone else here will force the issue at this time. However, two things will not change as a result of tolerating this extra restriction: 1) I will still preach it the way it is written, and will not change what is written for the conscience of anyone, including myself. 2) Simply because the church will not press the point, this will not change the fact that restricting children to a plurality is a scruple of conscience and not doctrine. It is not a sin to hold and practice a scruple of conscience, and it is right and good to accommodate those who do, which is what we will do in this matter. However, it is a sin to bind a scruple of conscience as a test of fellowship, or to teach it as if it were revealed doctrine. One who does so becomes a prospect for discipline and should be marked. (Rom. 14:1 – 15:7, 16:17-18; 1Cor. 8:4-13; Gal. 2:3-5)

2. "Believing or faithful" - obviously means that they are Christians.

3. "Not accused of riot, unruliness or rebellion" is self-evident

C. The question of the number of children arises: "'Children' is plural, so he must have more than one."

1. The Bible is self-consistent. You must give a reason from the text or context for interpreting the same word two different ways.

2. Let's assume that when a command specifies children that it only applies when one has more than one child.

3. *Gen. 21:7; Matt 22:24; Acts 2:38-39; 1Tim 5:4,10,16; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21*

b. We cannot have it both ways.

D. "It takes more than one child to qualify because he cannot get enough experience with only one child."

1. The object is to demonstrate his ability to guide a home, not to show how prolific he can be. If more than one child gives one experience, then why did God ask for only one wife?

a. If a man with two children is more qualified than a man with one, then a man with ten children is more qualified than a man with 2.

2. The Bible often uses the singular for the plural and vice versa.

a. *Gen. 19:29, 21:7, 46:7; Jer. 6:16*

3. The Bible often puts the plural for the singular.

a. *Gen. 1:20; Deut. 20:7*

Conclusion:

A. *Titus 1:5; Acts 14:21-23*

1. The time between Paul's first journey and his second was about three years, and so from the time when he first established those local congregations and the time when he told them to ordain elders was also three years. The implication of this approved example is that congregations should not continue on in perpetuity without ordaining elders. Let us take these commands seriously. By the authority of the word of the Lord, I admonish you to heed this command and to do this good work.

The Wife Of An Elder

- A. Can support and encourage him in this difficult work, thus enhancing his service to the congregation. Can by her example, set a model of behavior for other women
- B. Can damage his influence. Can dominate the congregation by trying to rule through him Can destroy the good name of other disciples with the access she has to sensitive information
- C. Being the wife of an elder or deacon carries with it no significance other than she is held to a higher standard than other women. She has no office in the church; in position, she has no more standing than any other member. Yet she will live the same fishbowl existence that is experienced by the wife of a preacher. She will not be thanked for the extra effort she will expend, and she will often be the object of hurtful things said about her husband's work.

AN ELDER'S WIFE MUST BE:

- A. GRAVE, REVERENT
 - 1. Prudent, dignified, of sound judgment; not giddy or foolish
 - 2. *1Tim. 2:9-10* - prudent in dress
- B. NOT SLANDERERS, NOT DOUBLE TONGUED
 - 1. No slander is ever pleasing to God.
 - 2. *James 3:5; 1Peter 3:10* - in control of her speech
 - 3. Gossip will destroy a church; it is audible malice and is always a sin
- C. SOBER, TEMPERATE
 - 1. Self-controlled, self-possessed, calm and even-tempered
 - 2. *Titus 2:3-4* - to the extent that they can credibly teach it to others
- D. FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS
 - 1. In how many areas of life and duty? ALL
 - 2. *Eph. 5:22-23,33; Titus 2:3-5* - In the home
 - 3. *1Tim. 2:12; Heb. 10:23-26* - In the church
 - 4. *Matt. 25:34-40* - In the community

DUTIES OF THE CHURCH TOWARD THE ELDERS

- A. Know the elders - *1Thes. 5:12*
- B. Esteem the elders highly in love - *1Thes. 5:13*
- C. Be submissive to the elders - *Heb. 13:17*
- D. Be at peace among yourselves - *1Thes. 5:13*
- E. Obey the elders - *Heb. 13:17*
- F. Rebuke not elders, but entreat as fathers - *1Tim. 5:1* - Ultimatums are sin
- G. Receive not an accusation against an elder except in the mouth of two or three witnesses - *1Tim. 5:19* - Listening to gossip about an elder is sin
- H. Remember and imitate the elders - *Heb. 13:7*
- I. Count the elders worthy of double honor - *1Tim. 5:17-18*
- J. Call the elders when in need - *James 5:14* - Not the preacher; call on elders when sick, fearful, or troubled by another Christian

Plans and Procedures for Appointing Elders and Deacons

Phase One: “Study To Show Yourselves Approved”

For the next two weeks, we will have a series of four sermons on the subject of elders: 1) The Need for Elders, 2) The Work of Elders, 3) The Authority of Elders, 4) The Qualifications of Elders. The first three lessons will be approximately 35 to 40 minutes, and the fourth will take as much time as necessary to examine this vital subject. Those who are unable to attend all of these services are encouraged to obtain a copy of the sermon tapes and listen to it. Outlines of all of the lessons are being provided, and all members are encouraged to obtain a copy and to study it at home.

Phase Two: “Look Out Among Yourselves”

For the next two weeks following the last sermon, members are asked to consider the qualifications of elders and to look within this congregation for men who meet the scriptural requirements of elders. Write the names of these men on paper along with a brief statement of why you believe these men are suited to this office. Sign this paper and submit it to the evangelist. To avoid secret selection and veto, no unsigned recommendations or objections will be considered.

Phase Three: “Let Each One Examine His Own Work”

The men who were named by the congregation and who meet the qualifications of elders will be asked if they desire the office of an elder, and if they believe they can fulfill all of the responsibilities of that work. They must consider whether or not they would serve as elders if asked.

Phase Four: “Recognize Those Who Labor Among You”

These names will be placed before the congregation for a brief period of time to allow all members to consider whether or not there is a Biblical objection to their appointment. If there is a scriptural reason why any of these men should not serve, those who have the objection will go with the evangelist to the man against whom they hold the objection and talk to him about it. Only if it is a valid, scriptural objection will he be asked to remove his name from consideration. Personal, secret, or anonymous objections will not be considered.

Phase Five: “Set In Order The Things That Are Lacking And Appoint Elders”

Those men whose names remain under consideration at this point will be ordained at a Sunday morning worship service, and will serve as elders of this local church, until such time as they are no longer capable of filling that office.

THE WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS OF SCRIPTURAL DEACONS

Introduction:

- A. Nothing degrading or undignified in serving as a deacon.
 1. Excellent training for the eldership.
 2. Simply a step in the maturation of a Christian.
 3. Charles Hodge - "A man too big to be a deacon is too small to be an elder."
 4. There are certain tasks which would take elders from their appointed duties. The office of deacon was created to answer that need.

I. WHAT IS A DEACON?

- A. Deacons are highly skilled servants in the work of the local church.
 1. diakonos - Literally "Through dust; To raise dust by hastening; to hasten after, pursue"
 2. "One who executes the commands of another; distinguished from a servant."
 3. A deacon is a servant in relation to his work; a slave is a servant in relation to a master
 4. Practically speaking - one that promotes the welfare and prosperity of the local church by carrying out tasks assigned by the elders.
 5. It has been falsely assumed in the church that the elders oversee the spiritual needs of the church and the deacons oversee the physical needs. Incorrect. Elders oversee all needs of the church, and deacons serve them in the work.
- B. They are officers of the local church, acting in subjection to the elders of that local church. The diakonate is a ministry, not a position.
 1. *1Tim. 3:13* - Those who discharge responsibilities well are to be esteemed by others.
 2. More is required of deacons than members.
 3. He is a steward of the gifts of benevolence.

II. WHAT DOES A DEACON DO?

- A. "Deacons deke." Few understand the question and cannot answer.
 1. First assigned to look after the poor and distribute the benevolence of the church among them fairly. *Acts 6:1-4*
 2. Considerable time was devoted to this task.
- B. Deacons were teachers.
 1. Stephen and Philip of Jerusalem - *Acts 6*
 2. Epaphroditus of *Philippians 2* was believed to be a deacon.
- C. Too often we think that all a deacon has to do is count the money and handle the physical work in the local church.
 1. In his capacity as a teacher, he can take some of the burden from the preacher by teaching new converts classes.
 2. He can teach wayward Christians about faithfulness.
 3. He can conduct Bible classes in the homes of shut-ins.
 4. Help with advertising Gospel meetings.
 5. Be alert to the physical and financial needs of widows and shut-ins.

III. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

- A. A man - *Acts 6:3*
- B. Known for his honesty
 1. Cannot have a disregard for civil law.
 2. Does what is moral in business. He is known to be fair in trade, forthcoming in his debts, not inordinately ambitious or acquisitive.
- C. Full of the Holy Ghost
 1. One is filled with the Holy Ghost today when he is filled with the word of God. A deacon must be a student of the Bible, having more than just a working knowledge.
- D. Wisdom
 1. He is going to have to make judgment calls in his duties.

2. Must not be naive, partial, or short-tempered. Able to hold his tongue in adversity and to wait patiently until a beneficial solution presents itself.
- E. Grave - Serious and dignified - *1Tim. 3:8-13*
1. Not a flippant, careless joker, nor a moody, pouting brooder. He is adult and serious, but not negative and sad.
- F. Not double-tongued
1. Not talking two ways to suit the company he is with. He must have the confidence of the elders, and the ability to be discreet.
 2. Does not speak softly to those over him and harshly to those under him.
- G. Not given to much wine
1. Deacons must guard their influence. He cares about what others think and expect; he does not live for himself alone. He surrenders his comfort and appetites for his service.
 2. The use of liquor is incompatible with the Christian character. How much more so with one who has increased responsibility.
- H. Not greedy of filthy lucre
1. Must not have an occupation that will harm others or exert bad influence. Needs to be known as generous and hospitable before he practices generosity on behalf of the church in the office of deacon.
 2. Must not have an occupation that will prevent him from fulfilling his duties as a deacon. He is not greedy or grasping with material goods.
- I. Not a holder of false doctrines
1. *1Tim. 3:9* - He is not a "yes" man, nor hobbyist, nor errorist. He is known for his personal study habits and willingness to communicate the truth with others.
- J. Not a novice
1. "Let them first be proved."
 2. New converts and Christians who are unlearned and unstudied in the scriptures are not suited responsibility, and are vulnerabilities and liabilities to the office.
- K. Blameless
1. Accusations of wrongdoing are not believed and cannot be proven. One does not become blameless; he is found to be blameless.
 2. Simple test of blamelessness - Do you trust him? Are you afraid of him? Are the members comfortable working with him?
- L. Husband of one wife
1. He is loyal and devoted to one woman and has no sexual interest in any other woman.
- M. Ruling children and own house well
1. Shows ability to care for the needs of the church by caring for the needs of his family
 2. A man's virtues, priorities, and weaknesses often find reflection in his children. Children uninterested in church may have learned that at home. Test: How does he direct matters in his home. He will likely follow the same course in the work of deacon.

Preventing Divorce Before Marriage

- A. The dating process is a time to select a mate for life.
 1. For life is the operative word here - *Rom. 7:2-3; Matt. 19:9.*
 2. There are no exceptions to God's rule. Absolutely essential to select someone that will work a lifetime with you to make the marriage last.
 3. Any marriage can work if both work at it. If you marry someone you can live with, not someone you can't live without.
- B. The nearly impossible task of being objective at a time of raging hormones, fear of the future, and impossible dreams of living happily ever after.
 1. There are tell tale signs of danger that must be seen during the dating process, but the young do not see them.
 2. "We can live on love." Love and nothing else will soon be nothing else.
 3. "A match made in heaven, no one has ever felt this way before. When we get married, then life will be perfect."
 4. And soon after the honeymoon is over, the dream comes crashing down and reality sets in.
- C. Discover that eyes were closed to the serious problems that mate had before the marriage.
 1. First, try to reform him; tremendous source of argument and conflict
 2. Second, attempt to live with it; problem grows while tolerance shrinks
 3. Third, get a divorce on the grounds of incompatibility and set self up for regrets and unhappiness for a lifetime.
 4. Fourth, go to the preacher and see if it is possible to fix the divorce after the fact so that you can remarry.
- D. How can this be avoided?
 1. By being careful in selecting a lifetime mate!
 2. I'm not down on marriage. Next to becoming child of God, marrying Coral was the best thing that ever happened in my life.
 3. I just want you to set yourself up for a joyful life both here and eternally

Look At A Short List Of Danger Signs:

(Adapted from a sermon by Bill Cavender)

I. UNBELIEVER

- A. Much debate over what the Bible teaches on this matter.
 1. "Good, then I can marry a non-member."
 2. Whatever the outcome of the debate, marrying an unbeliever is extremely unwise and the cause of many Christian going to hell.
 3. The few who are still faithful, and the rare person who converted his spouse are the exception, not the rule.
 4. Many gamble to be the exception.
 5. Three people very thirsty walking through a dry region, come to a table with three glasses of water and a sign that reads, "Two of these glasses have poison, two of you will die if you drink." Would you drink?
 6. Two out of three Christians who marry outside of the church fall away within five years and lose their souls.

7. We won't risk our lives for water in the desert, but we will gamble away our eternal soul for long eyelashes or big biceps.
- B. What would a couple have in common if they cannot discuss:
1. Worship, the church, Jesus Christ, Bible studies, eternity, rearing godly children, contribution, beliefs and values?
 2. Young men, time and gravity is going to make that beauty queen wrinkle and sag; and all of the cold cream in the world won't stop it.
 3. Young ladies, those muscles turn to pot belly on married food; and that sports car turns into an economy station wagon when the babies and bills start coming in.
 4. If that is what you marry for, what will hold the marriage together when those things are gone?
 5. "BEING HEIRS TOGETHER OF THE GRACE OF LIFE" - *1Peter 3:7*
 6. Marry someone who will help settle you in the faith, not undermine it

II. UNTRUSTWORTHY

- A. If they lie to you before marriage, it will get worse afterward.
1. There can be no true relationship based on falsehood.
 2. Constant fear over faithfulness to vows.
 3. Break it off before the "I do."

III. HOT TEMPERED

- A. If he hits you before the marriage, or cusses you, or throws a fit, it will get worse when problems arise in marriage. You will be beaten.
1. Spousal abuse is not scriptural grounds for divorce.
 2. You cannot reform a bully.
- B. Young men, if she is argumentative, high-tempered, bossy, or pouts to get her way, it will get worse after you get married.
1. The time to get a divorce is before you get married.

IV. SUBSTANCE ABUSER

- A. Drinking and drugs not only destroy the abuser, it ruins his family as well.
1. Prominent causes of divorce, wife beating, child abuse, infidelity, financial problems.
 2. Do not hope to reform him or her; less than 5% of abusers ever reform

V. UNCHASTE

- A. If your date or fiancée insists on premarital sex, that's a danger signal.
1. Chances are they will not be satisfied with you after the marriage.
 2. Don't believe the lie that it will only make them love you more; you are being used.
 3. When you do not wait, you commit fornication, deceive parents, lose your honor and self-respect, risk disease and pregnancy, and are never the same physically or emotionally again.
- B. If he won't wait, he can walk.

VI. MATERIALISTIC

- A. Spendthrifts and poor providers make lousy mates.
 - 1. Money and stuff will not make happiness, but godliness and contentment will - *1Tim. 6:6*.
 - 2. Many couples start out with too much. Go in debt for nearly everything.
 - 3. He gets laid off, she gets pregnant, and the house of cards comes tumbling down.
- B. If he or she can only focus on things and stuff, walk away.
 - 1. Materialism will lead to a divorce.

VII. DISRESPECTFUL

- A. If they show contempt for you, your family, or background, it is a danger sign.
 - 1. If he or she is continually breaking up with you and later making up, it is a danger sign.
 - 2. Faithful Christians deserve respect from their mates, male or female.
- B. If your date or fiancée doesn't respect you, it will only get worse after "I do."

Fundamentals For Families

Introduction:

- A. I have heard hundreds of jokes about divorce over the years, and some were rather hilarious.
 - 1. Gotten to the point where they are not funny anymore.
 - 2. Seen too many lives destroyed by divorce; too many people I care about ruin their chances for happiness in this life.
 - 3. Come to me asking, "What can I do now?"
 - a. Change what God has said on divorce and remarriage?
 - b. Deceive people about what is written?
- B. How does one fix a family before it fractures?
 - 1. Teach prevention before marriage
 - 2. Teach reconciliation before divorce

Part One: BEING REALISTIC BEFORE MARRIAGE

- A. Marriages are like snowflakes; there are no two marriages alike.
 - 1. You will make adjustments and agreements on roles; the stereotypical marriage only exists in theory and in fairytales.
- B. Marriages transition over time
 - 1. As you mature and experience life-changing events, you will change; you will not be the same person who said, "I do"
 - 2. What is important to you now may become unimportant later, and what seems unimportant now may become crucial later
- C. Marriages are cyclical
 - 1. Affection, physicality, nearness will rise and fall throughout marriage
 - 2. Accept the lows with the highs; both will change
- D. Marriages inevitably experience conflict
 - 1. Constructive argument is helpful and can be healthy
 - 2. Silence is as damaging as destructive argumentation
- E. Marriages only survive and thrive in a communication-rich environment

PREVENTING DIVORCE BY STRICT ADHERENCE TO GOD'S MARRIAGE LAW

- A. Marriage is a Divinely ordained institution - *Genesis 2:18-24*
 - 1. God made it and rules it just like the Church.
- B. Marriage is monogamous by design - *1Cor. 7:2; Matt. 19:4-6*
 - 1. There would be no venereal diseases, little AIDS and few broken homes if we all lived according to this plan.
- C. Marriage is procreative by nature - *Genesis 1:28*
 - 1. It is designed to satisfy the need in humans for intimate companionship.
 - 2. *Heb. 13:4; 1Cor. 7:3-5*
- D. Marriage is patriarchal in government - *1Cor. 11:3, 8-9.*
 - 1. We are all subject to another greater in authority than ourselves and are accountable for our conduct in that role.
- E. Marriage is religious in nature - *Eph. 5:21-32*
- F. Marriage is indissoluble in form

1. *1Cor. 7:39; Rom. 7:2-3; Matt. 19:9, 5:32; Luke 16:18*
2. God gives the rule, but just as in every other area of religion, man often changes it to suit himself.
3. Laws given by God governing marriage may at times be painful, but the pain comes not from obeying them, but rather from rebellion against His will. Sin hurts!

G. *Marriage Not Only Is A Commitment, It Requires Commitment*

1. Total commitment - the marriage will be maintained no matter what.
 - a. (Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Committed Marriage*, pg. 41) "I will be with you no matter what happens to us and between us. If you should become blind tomorrow, I will be there. When we argue and become angry, as we inevitably will, I will work to bring us together. When we seem totally at odds, and neither of us is having our needs fulfilled, I will persist in trying to understand and in trying to restore our relationship. When our marriage seems utterly sterile and going nowhere at all, I will believe that it will work, and I will do my part to make it work. And when all is wonderful, and we are happy, I will rejoice over our life together and continue to strive to keep our relationship growing and strong."
 - b. As in salvation, in marriage there is both a divine initiative and a human response.
 - c. *Phil. 4:11-13* - "ALL things"
 - d. We love not only when the other is lovable, but when they are not so lovable.
2. Exclusive commitment - Forsake all others and keep yourself to your spouse as long as you both live.
 - a. Redbook survey of 100,000 women - 47% of working wives have had an affair. Statistics even higher for men.
 - b. In this society, we must be strong and purpose not to sin.
 - c. Avoid relationships with anyone in which you will become closer to someone other than to your spouse, whether opposite sex or family, friends, etc. Letting third parties into the confidences of our marital life can begin to undermine the exclusiveness of the marriage.
3. Continuing commitment - not to die away or wax and wane as time passes and circumstances change.
 - a. Changing appearance, finances.
 - b. "I no longer love them." "We fell out of love."
 - c. Grow up! Change your feelings, not your marriage.
4. Growing commitment - Deepens and matures throughout life.
 - a. The Christian is expected by God to grow in all things throughout life - *Eph. 4:13*. Marriage is not an exception.

Part Two: HANDLING CONFLICT WITHIN THE FAMILY

Introduction:

- A. "But we are already married, and it seems like we fight all of the time. What do we do now?!"
 - 1. Fight nice
- B. Marriage is the building of two people into a relationship of one.
 - 1. Two people bring into the relationship differing backgrounds, attitudes, interests and seek to mold them into "one flesh"
 - 2. This process of adjustment is sometimes difficult.
 - a. Bible doesn't teach that when a husband and wife differ, he is to get his way; nor does it teach that he must always defer to his wife to prove his love.
 - b. "We'll compromise; let's do it my way!"
 - c. There is no "I gave my 50%, now she has to give hers."
 - d. Both must put in 100% in order to make it work; work is the key.
 - e. The fairy tale always ends when the honeymoon is over.
- C. Disagreements are inevitable within a marriage.
 - 1. The couple with a perfect marriage just get a divorce last week. No one warned them about upcoming disagreements.
 - 2. How we treat one another when disagreeing in marriage can determine our eternal destiny. *Peter 3:7*.
- D. Often a marriage is judged by the number of arguments.
 - 1. Linus telling Charlie Brown in a Peanuts cartoon: "I was just trying to talk to the little girl up the street... but I couldn't say a word... I just stood there all embarrassed and confused. I got so self-conscious, I didn't know what to do... so I hit her."
 - a. The ability and willingness to communicate with one's spouse is the answer to disagreements in marriage.
 - 2. We tend to think that a marriage with arguments is a bad one, but many marriages are happy with the disagreements ongoing.
 - 3. Arguments should not be viewed as tragedies, but as opportunities.
 - 4. Married people need to learn how to disagree without being destructive.
- E. Important to understand anger.
 - 1. We think it is a bad thing to be angry.
 - 2. Reality is that it is a natural part of growth:
 - a. When you have motion or growth, you will have friction.
 - 3. God often grew angry; Christ was moved by anger (*Mark 3:5*); God said there was a time to be angry (*Ecc. 3*)
 - a. And He told us how to deal with anger.
 - b. *Psalms 4:4* - "Be angry and do not sin."
 - c. *Eph. 4:26* - "Be angry and do not sin."
 - 4. The question is... What will we do with our anger?
 - 5. Let us use the scriptures to show us how to disagree with our mates in a productive way.

I. GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF - RULE #1

- A. Anger is natural, but just like all emotions, we control them, not they us.
 1. Being filled with anger is like intoxication.
 2. Better to reduce the emotional state before discussion.
 - a. *Proverbs 29:20, 17:27*
 3. Much can be accomplished if we take the time necessary to get in control of our anger before speaking
 - a. Go somewhere and pray to God first; tell Him about the situation.
 - b. It will invoke His help, it will calm you down and it will help you better focus on the real problem.
 4. If you argue when in a high state of anger, things are likely to get worse.
 5. If you calm down first, you may realize that it wasn't as bad as imagined and decide to drop it.

II. CONFRONT THE CORRECT CREATURE - RULE #2

- A. It is important to express our concerns to the person we are really angry with and not some innocent party.
 1. This is often done to avoid confrontation.
 - a. Angry with boss, come home and dump on wife and kids.
 - b. Afraid to be angry with the right person, feeds anger all out of proportion, and we dump it on someone we are not afraid of.
 - c. Cruel and allows a person to escape the real issue.
 - d. Terrible that the ones we take it out on are innocent and are in turn hurt and frustrated; pass it on...
 2. Home is not a dumping station for our frustrations.
- B. Have the courage to speak the truth in love to the right party.
 1. *Proverbs 3:30*

III. CONCENTRATE ON THE CORRECT CONFLICT - RULE #3

- A. Many arguments are fought over the wrong matters.
 1. Husband may criticize his wife's housekeeping, when it is the money he thinks was wasted at the mall.
 2. Wife criticizes husband for going hunting, when the real problem is that he hasn't taken her anywhere in a long time.
 3. Need to ask ourselves, "Is this really what is bothering me?"
- B. *Proverbs 15:7*
- C. People avoid the real issues because of the risk involved.
 1. Fear of embarrassment, rejection, being laughed at.
 2. Do not be afraid of expressing yourself to your mate.
 3. In a kind and understanding manner, tell your spouse what is on your mind; making certain it is the right thing.

IV. TEST YOUR TIMING - RULE #4

- A. Need to both agree that the time is right.
 1. There are some times when discussions should not be held:
 - a. In front of company or in public.

- b. When there is not sufficient time... before services, work, a dinner party, etc.
- c. Right when your spouse comes home from work.
 - 1) 80% of marital fights happen between 4-6 PM.
- 2. "What if he never wants to talk?"
 - a. Then you will have to initiate the discussion, but use good judgment in selecting the time and place.

B. *Proverbs 25:8*

V. PASS THE PAST - RULE #5

A. THAT IS A LOSER'S TACTIC!

- 1. There are some things never to be forgotten, but past forgiven sins aren't among them.
- 2. Once a disagreement has been resolved, it is to be buried never again to be resurrected.
- 3. When you bring up items that your spouse thought resolved, it breeds distrust into the relationship.
- 4. Usually an attempt to shift blame away from yourself.

B. *Proverbs 26:27*

- 1. *Eph. 5:25* - Would Christ do that to His Church?

VI. NO NASTY NAMES - RULE #6

A. There is no justification for hurling insults or profane names at anyone, let alone loved ones.

- 1. Thoughtless names, labels and gouges puncture deep and are often remembered for years.
 - a. Husbands - calling attention to her weight, hair, driving, housekeeping, cooking, in an argument will solve nothing and will add animosity.
 - b. Wives - calling him lazy, stupid, jerk or pig won't accomplish anything except to widen the gap between you.

B. Three reasons why personal attacks are so destructive in a marriage:

- 1. It throws one off of the subject.
- 2. Focuses attention on the person rather than the problem.
- 3. Damages the relationship by ruining mutual respect.

C. *Proverbs 21:23, 26:4*

D. Three suggestions I

- 1. Attack the problem, not the person; look for a solution rather than trying to affix blame to someone.
- 2. Lower your voice one octave and your decibel level by 50%.
- 3. Avoid "you" statements and replace them with "I" statements.
 - a. Instead of "you lazy bum", try "I feel you're not working as hard as you could."
 - b. Do not use the words "always" and "never" in an argument.
 - c. *Philippians 2:2-5*

VII. RETIRE RESOLVED - RULE #7

- A. Some save up grievances like green stamps; wait until later and cash them all in at once.
 - 1. Pressure cooker syndrome.
 - 2. This breaks the first five rules.
 - 3. Deal with one thing at a time, when it comes.
- B. One should not allow difficulties in a marriage to build to the point of an explosion.
 - 1. A couple who does not communicate, is not and will not be happy.
Face this FACT!!!
 - 2. If we are communicating as mates ought to, most disagreements will not occur and will not escalate into warfare.
- C. When one allows grievances to build up and then unloads on his spouse, several harmful things happen.
 - 1. The spouse is overwhelmed by all of this at once having has no idea it was being kept in store.
 - 2. One's mate discovers that true feelings were not being revealed earlier.
 - 3. Breeds a lack of trust and confidence in the marriage.
- D. *Proverbs 10:18, 15:23*

VIII. DON'T DOMINATE THE DISCUSSION - RULE #8

- A. "I've said all there is to say; end of discussion!"
 - 1. Three things wrong with that:
 - a. You don't have the right to speak and demand silence from your mate, man or woman.
 - b. Christians don't act that way.
 - c. Fairness demands that we carefully listen to the other.
- B. *Proverbs 18:17, 13*

Conclusion:

- A. Mature partners realize that there will be differences and that it is not wrong to disagree.
 - 1. Discuss these rules, study your Bible and most importantly, live what it says. Make your marriage work.
- B. Marriage run God's way can be a little bit of heaven on earth.
 - 1. Have a positive disposition toward your mate.
 - 2. Be sure that your solution isn't selfish, but is best for both of you.
 - 3. Take your share of the responsibility and blame.
 - 4. Don't damage your spouses self-image.
 - 5. Learn the art of peacemaking.
 - 6. Don't be demanding or give ultimatums.
 - 7. Forgive and forget.
 - 8. Don't manipulate or use unfair means to get your way; fight nice!
- C. *Peter 3:7*

Destroying Divorce Among Disciples

"Do you take her to be your lawful wedded wife, promising before God and these witnesses to be a faithful, loving and devoted husband? Do you vow to provide for her and protect her, to honor her and to love her? Do you promise to remain with her in sickness as well as in health, in adversity as well as in prosperity, for the worse as well as for the better? Do you vow that forsaking all others, you will keep yourself to her and to her only until death shall separate you? With this ring, I thee wed, and all of my earthly goods and love, I thee endow."

Introduction:

- A. Why talk about divorce in a series of lessons on the Family?
 - 1. Divorce destroys families.
 - 2. We want to destroy divorce among disciples.
- B. Statistically:
 - 1. 1899 - 1 in 17 marriages ended in divorce.
 - 2. 1999 - Nationally, 1 in 2 marriages end in divorce.
 - 3. In the church, 1 in 3 marriages end in divorce. This is unacceptable!

I. WHAT IS GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE?

- A. It is a divine institution - *Genesis 2:18-24*
 - 1. God made it and rules it just like the Church.
- B. It is monogamous by design - *1Cor. 7:2; Matt. 19:4-6*
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 - 2. God gives the rule, but just as in every other area of religion, man often changes it to suit himself.
 - 3. Laws given by God governing marriage may at times be painful, but the pain comes not from obeying them, but rather from rebellion against His will. Sin hurts!
- G. MARRIAGE NOT ONLY IS A COMMITMENT, IT REQUIRES COMMITMENT
 - 1. Total commitment - the marriage will be maintained no matter what.
 - a. (Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Committed Marriage*, pg. 41) "I will be with you no matter what happens to us and between us. If you should become blind tomorrow, I will be there. When we argue and become angry, as we inevitably will, I will work to bring us together. When we seem totally at odds, and neither of us is having our needs fulfilled, I will persist in trying to understand and in trying to restore our

relationship. When our marriage seems utterly sterile and going nowhere at all, I will believe that it will work, and I will do my part to make it work. And when all is wonderful, and we are happy, I will rejoice over our life together and continue to strive to keep our relationship growing and strong."

- b. As in salvation, in marriage there is both a divine initiative and a human response.
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 - d. We love not only when the other is lovable, but when they are not so lovable.
2. Exclusive commitment - Forsake all others and keep yourself to your spouse as long as you both live.
 - a. Redbook survey of 100,000 women - 47% of working wives have had an affair. Statistics even higher for men.
 - b. In this society, we must be strong and purpose not to sin.
 - c. Avoid relationships with anyone in which you will become closer to someone other than to your spouse, whether opposite sex or family, friends, etc. Letting third parties into the confidences of our marital life can begin to undermine the exclusiveness of the marriage.
 3. Continuing commitment - not to die away or wax and wane as time passes and circumstances change.
 - a. Changing appearance, finances.
 - b. "I no longer love them." "We fell out of love."
 - c. Grow up! Change your feelings, not your marriage.
 4. Growing commitment - Deepens and matures throughout life.
 - a. The Christian is expected by God to grow in all things throughout life - *Eph. 4:13*. Marriage is not an exception.

II. WHAT IS GOD'S RULE FOR MARRIAGE?

- A. "Let not man put asunder." From the beginning!
 1. God's original intention? *Gen. 2:24*
 2. What we believe about marriage is a reflection of what we believe about God. Can't keep promises.
 3. An institution older than ordained governments and the Church of Christ
 4. Abusing marriage by adultery was punishable by death - *Leviticus*
 5. God hated adulterous nations - *Jer. 5:7-9*
 6. Warned Israel that it was the reason he drove out Canaanites.
 - a. *Lev. 18:6-28*
 7. He hates divorce - *Mal. 2:13-16*
- B. During the time of Moses:
 1. Divorce law given for the first time since creation.
 2. Given only to Jews; Gentiles were never permitted to divorce. Gentiles still bound by God's original law.

3. Jewish men were allowed to divorce their wives for four reasons:
(Jewish women were never allowed to divorce.)
 - a. A woman bought as a slave - *Ex. 21:7-11*
 - b. A woman captured in battle - *Deut. 21:10-14*
 - c. A heathen woman, to whom he had not right to be married in the first place - *Ezra & Nehemiah*
 - d. A woman in whom is found uncleanness (spiritual or physical) - *Deut. 24:1-4.*
4. Notice these divorce laws were not given to accommodate a wandering divorce-happy man, but to protect the wife.
- C. God did not approved, nor designed it that way from the beginning.
 1. *Matt. 19:3-12* - Moses permitted you to divorce your wives.
 2. *Vs 11-12* - If you have to make yourself a eunuch literally in order to be able to keep this law, go get the knife!

III. WHAT IS GOD'S EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE?

- A. Marriage is for life; couples can only be separated honorably by death
 1. *Rom. 7:2-3* - In *Vs 3*, which one is her husband, the one she remarried or the original man?
 2. This certainly isn't the permissive law of Moses, is it?
 3. She is joined to another while she is bound to her husband, that's why she is an adulteress. She may have received a divorce from civil authorities, but she doesn't have one granted by God.
- B. Simply because a man other than the original husband has married the woman does not mean she is his wife in God's sight.
 1. Herod and Herodias - *Mark 6:17-18*
 2. Not lawful? How does it become lawful?
- C. The Samaritan woman was married to a man who was not her husband.
 1. *John 4:17-18* - "The one you have now is not your husband."
- D. The Corinthian brother had his father's wife, his step mother, while his father was still living; they had no right to be married.
 1. *1Cor. 5:1-2, 2Cor. 7:12* - This man was to be cast out, disciplined.
 2. That union was to be dissolved whether or not they:
 - a. Had relatives there who were influential. We aren't told, so it must not be important to God.
 - b. Had married before they became Christians. We aren't told, so it doesn't matter one way or another to God.
 - c. Had any children by that union. The man and woman were guilty & had to repent, God demanded it, whether there were children or not did not change what they had to do to be forgiven.
 - 1) What of couples who have no children? Consistent?
 - 2) What of children from the first marriage? Don't count?
- E. *1Cor. 7:2* - "Let each man have his OWN wife."
 1. You don't avoid fornication by having someone else's husband or wife; you commit it.
 2. *7:10-11* - The woman may not consider herself married anymore, but

- she still has a husband even though she has departed from him.
- F. Marriage can only be broken honorably by death; it is broken dishonorably by a spouse who fornicates; it is broken unscripturally for any other reason.
1. "But what about (insert any hypothetical situation)?"
 2. The marriage either conforms to God law, or the divorce must be according to God's exception. The Bales, Fuque, Lovelady, or Hailey positions are false doctrine that will send the adherent to perdition.

IV. CONTRASTING GOD'S PLAN WITH POST MODERN MARRIAGE VOWS

- A. "American families are in trouble -- trouble so deep and pervasive as to threaten the future of our nation." (Patrick Moynihan, D NY; White House Conference on Children, 1970).
1. The chairman of the Blytheville School Board asked the Sex Respect people why don't they teach abstinence in their churches.
 2. We have been... we have been teaching the truth for years, but the siren song of Satan that is being taught in the schools, in the news media, and in the entertainment industry is more attractive to children.
 3. I intend to expose the liberal message taught by our culture on the subject of marriage.
 - a. God will not tolerate what civil government endorses.
 - b. Broken homes are not only on the minds of many Americans today, broken homes are a testimony against their souls.
- B. What attitudes have led to the acceptance wholesale divorce in our society?

1. MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE

A. *Romans 7:2-3*

2. WE ARE FULFILLED BY OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL IN MARRIAGE

A. *Genesis 3; 1Peter 3:1-2,7; 1Tim. 2:15*

3. SPOUSES ARE TO INFLUENCE EACH OTHER FOR GOOD

A. *Ecc. 4:9-12*

4. ONE CANNOT BEGIN A MARRIAGE WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT IS ONLY TEMPORARY

A. *Matt. 19:3-10*

5. GOD'S MARRIAGE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES MUST PREVAIL

A. *Eph. 5:21-25,28-29*

6. WHO WILL WE PUT FIRST? SECOND?

A. *Eph. 5:25*

7. GOD SAID "TOGETHER"

A. *1Tim. 5:8*

8. ADULTERY IS A SIN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

A. *Heb. 13:4*

9. WHO IS NOT ACCOUNTABLE FOR PUTTING DOWN ANOTHER?

A. *Matt. 18:6; Rom. 14:10*

10. WHAT IS OUR FIRST COMMITMENT?

A. *Luke 14:26*

11. MARRIED PEOPLE DWELL TOGETHER

A. *Ruth 1:16-17; Gen. 2:24*

12. GOD'S WILL FOR OUR HOMES DOES NOT CHANGE

A. *Heb. 13:8*

Conclusion: (Addendum on arranged marriages)

A. In a world enamored with sin, we must maintain purity in our homes.

1. We must not give in to the temptation to fornicate.

2. We must never adopt the world's standards for marriage.

3. We must never believe that marriage is anything but a lifetime, permanent commitment.

4. Divorce must be destroyed among disciples.

B. "What God has joined together, let not man separate."

1. Teach your children well.

GODLY HUSBANDS

Introduction: 1Sam. 4:9 "Be strong and conduct yourselves like men..."

- A. What Jeremiah said of his day is also true of our's, "An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land" - Jer. 5:30
 - 1. Let me give you some astonishing and horrible news
 - a. There are over 1,000,000 divorces per year in America.
 - b. It has been said that only one out of six marriages today work in the sense of the two enjoying being together.
 - c. It has been documented that 70% of teenage marriages end in divorce within five years.
 - d. The eventual divorce rate of teenage marriages is 85%!
 - 2. God hates divorce - Mal. 2:16
- B. The main reason there are so many divorces in our world today is because husbands and wives do not know how or will not fulfill their God-given duties in the marriage relationship.
 - 1. Do you know what your duty to your spouse is, your God-given duty?

I. HUSBANDS MUST CLEAVE TO THEIR WIVES

- A. The institution of marriage first began in the garden of Eden - Gen. 2:18-24
- B. What does it mean to "cleave" to a wife?
 - 1. "Cleave" comes from the Hebrew word dawbak (dabaq) meaning "to impinge, cling or adhere; figuratively, to catch by pursuit; abide fast, cleave fast together, follow close or hard after, be joined together, keep fast, overtake, pursue hard, stick to, take" (Strongs 01692)
 - 2. Jesus quotes Moses (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5) and uses the Greek word kallaw which means to join together, to glue to cement together
 - 3. For a husband to "cleave" to his wife, he must strongly desire and work diligently that the bond be maintained.
 - a. Too many today go into their marriages with the attitude that if their marriage doesn't work out they can always get a divorce.
 - b. But this is contrary to God's plan (Matt. 5:32; Rom. 7:2).
 - c. Do not our marriage vows say, "Til death do us part"?
 - 4. The Bible teaches that every marriage can work and be beautiful - IF each partner in the marriage will hold true to and apply biblical principles to their marriages.
 - a. It has long been said that marriage is a two way street always under construction.
 - 5. Adam and Eve were literally one flesh for Eve was taken from the rib of Adam. In marriage, we are to be one flesh with our spouse. We can't become one flesh with our spouse simply by getting married, but by cleaving to our marriage partner.
 - a. Rom. 7:1-3
 - b. This is the first principle that must be incorporated in marriage, that is, a mind to stay together for life.

II. HUSBANDS MUST LOVE THEIR WIVES

A. Eph. 5:25, 28

B. One out of every three marriages among Christians are breaking down. Why?

1. One reason: husbands are failing to practice Ephesians 5:25
2. Most marriages start out with the husband and wife loving each other, but this is only an affectionate love, a love that comes through physical attraction.
 - a. This is not the type of love that makes marriages strong.
 - b. Matt. 5:43-48 defines this kind of love. There Jesus states that human love must be patterned after the characteristics of God's love, as Paul said in Eph. 5:25
 - c. It doesn't matter how another treats you, you always seek their highest good. This is especially true in marriage
 - d. Love is seen in action, and not mere words 1John 3:16-18
 - e. You can tell your wife all day long that you love her, but until you show her that you love her, your words will do little to strengthen your marriage.
 - f. Even if she treats you wrong, you treat her right - every time!

III. HUSBANDS MUST DWELL WITH THEIR WIVES ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE

A. 1Peter 3:7

1. All the instructions the Bible gives concerning how to make marriages work are vitally important, and should be heeded carefully. But this one seems to be very often overlooked.
2. The word "dwell" is a term translated from the Greek word sunoikeo, and is used to denote domestic association
3. To dwell with one's wife "according to knowledge" means that husbands are to know, to understand, to comprehend the nature, the duty, the longevity and honorableness of his wife and their marital relationship.
4. It is a very simple principle to realize that a person cannot do that which he does not know
 - a. If one does not know the true nature of marriage, he cannot fully appreciate it - Gen. 2:23-24
 - b. If one does not know his duties in marriage, he cannot fulfill his obligations - Eph. 5:25
 - c. If one does not understand the longevity of marriage, he may not seek to keep his marriage intact - Matt. 19:6
 - d. If one does not comprehend the honorableness of marriage, he will not treat it with honor - Heb. 13:4
5. Also, involved in the meaning of dwell with your wives according to knowledge is to know your wife.
 - a. Husbands must take the time and make the effort to know what their wives' likes and dislikes, what makes them happy and sad, and what makes them secure and insecure.
 - b. It has truthfully been said that the more we know God, the greater love for God we will have, and the greater allegiance and

obedience we will yield to Him.

- c. The same is true of our wives. The more we know our wives and our duties to them, the more we will love our wives and desire to serve and provide for them.

IV. HUSBANDS MUST HONOR THEIR WIVES AS THE WEAKER VESSEL

A. 1Peter 3:7

1. The instruction to give honor unto the woman was especially needed in Peter's day, for in the world outside of Christ, women were viewed with little respect and treated as property.
2. Treating wives with respect was a Christian principle that first century Christians were commanded to obey. The same holds true for us today
3. John 14:15; James 2:10

B. Husbands are to be sympathetic to the desires, and feelings of their wives.

1. Husbands have a higher duty than just providing for their wives' physical needs, they must respect, admire, and exalt their wives.
2. No rational person would want to hurt someone they honor.

C. Reason husbands must honor their wives is that they are the weaker vessel

1. This does not mean that women are inferior to men morally, intellectually, or with regard to their rights.
2. Nor is it talking primarily about something so trivial and variable as size and body strength
3. It does mean that in order to suit them for their role as nurturers of small children, they are emotionally more tender and vulnerable; therefore, they should be treated with admiring and compassionate care.
4. The husband who fails to do this jeopardizes his soul

V. HUSBANDS MUST RENDER PHYSICAL AFFECTION

A. 1Cor. 7:1-5

1. Some men cannot accomplish this for legitimate reasons: spiritual purposes (fasting and prayer) or ill health.
2. Other men fail in this for Divinely unacceptable reasons:
 - a. A lack of affection and love (shame on you)
 - 1) Men you are commanded to love your wives and all that implies, including physical affection
 - 2) God created physical desire in men and women not merely to aid in procreation, but to draw the couple closer in the relationship of being one flesh
 - b. To inflict hardship or punishment over a disagreement
 - 1) Shame on you for such shallow, petty thinking. You don't deserve a wife who desires your physical attention
 - 2) Getting even is a sin in the bedroom, too
 - c. To control, manipulate, or black mail your wife into something
 - 1) Shame on you for using love and physical affection as a means of getting your way
 - 2) It is still wrong, even if you think you are doing it for a

good purpose

d. To avoid having children

- 1) Shame on you. God said multiple times in His word that children are a blessing
- 2) It is an exhibition of selfishness when a man doesn't want children to divert any of his wife's attention away from him
- 3) God designed your wife to have children and to be fulfilled in the process - 1Tim. 2:15, 5:14
- 4) If your mate desires children, and you are selfishly refusing because you don't want to be bothered, then grow up!

Conclusion: Husbands: learn, love and live with your wives

- A. Make it a practice to give total attention when communicating.
- B. Do not interrupt or jump to conclusions about what the other is saying
- C. Acknowledge that you understand even though you may not agree.
- D. Repeat her feelings and thoughts back if you are uncertain what she means
- E. Don't make disagreement into disapproval
- F. Don't heap blame on the other; "you always" "you never"
- G. Never repeat to others what she shares with you in confidence.
- H. Silence is negative feedback
- I. Do not bring up past arguments or attack her family
- J. Give each other focused attention by turning off the TV or getting away from the children
- K. Share to her feelings without offering criticism or ridicule
- L. Park your ego; don't be afraid to show her you care
- M. Be completely honest; love demands it, God commands it.
- N. Apply BEST principle: Bless, Edify, Share, Touch

Godly Fathers

Introduction: Luke 15:20 "...But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

- A. There are some today who would like to make the Bible gender neutral. They would like to remove all the references to God as Father. God, in their edited version, would become our divine parent instead of our heavenly Father.
 - 1. It is not an accident that God has been revealed to us as Father. God wants to be known as Father.
 - 2. To think that God would deny the truth of who He is to accommodate the thinking of our culture is to accuse God of duplicity.
 - 3. To assign the reason God is known as Father to mistakes of the biblical writers is to deny the total inspiration of the Scriptures.
- B. God intentionally revealed Himself as Father because He is Father. Father reveals something of His nature, something He wants us to understand.
 - 1. We live in an age where fatherhood has been depreciated. The traditional understanding of the family is under constant attack.
 - 2. From the homosexuals and lesbians, who advocate same sex marriages, to the widespread acceptance of unwed motherhood as normal, the traditional family has taken some severe assaults.
 - 3. The radical feminists would have us believe that the real problem with society is men. To them the idea of a traditional family headed by a father is a setback for women and for society.
 - 4. Into this self-proclaimed wise culture, God as Father, through His word still speaks, declaring the vital importance of being a father and honoring fatherhood.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF FATHERS

A. The Disappearing Dad, Time magazine cover story on fatherhood in June 28, 1993 issue: "Well into the 18th century, childrearing manuals in America were generally addressed to fathers, not mothers. But as the industrialization began to separate home and work, fathers could not be in both places at once. Family life in the 19th century was defined by what historians call the feminization of the domestic sphere and the marginalization of the father as a parent."

- 1. "Studies of young criminals have found that more than 70% of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. Children from broken families are nearly twice as likely as those in two-parent families to drop out of high school."
 - 2. The number of children who live with their biological fathers has steadily dropped since 1960. In a survey only 34% said that they considered their own father to be a role model.
- B. Fathers have tremendous power over the lives of their children. I'm not talking about the physical power which they exert in the home, but about the emotional and psychological power that comes from the position of father.
- 1. Like it or not, we are shaped by our fathers more than we think.
 - 2. There is something within us that makes us want to please our father,

and we need to feel his approval of our lives.

3. Fathers provide certain necessary characteristics in the home without which children do not receive the balance and emotional strength for future years.

C. Parable of the Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32

1. Think how this father felt. He had brought this son into the world, nurtured him, taught him to work, shared his life with him, and now, the boy was ready to throw it all away for the sake of a good time.
2. How do fathers feel when children exhibit a careless disregard for what is right and good?
3. Homes need fathers, Christian fathers. Someone must make the hard choices and tough decisions that often require one to put aside his feelings in favor of a necessary good. Prov. 13:24 - "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."

II. BLUEPRINT FOR FATHERS

A. The Problem

1. A widespread loss of VISION for the future. For years our society was focused on preparing for the future. Instead, IMMEDIATE happiness has become the all-consuming goal for many adults. More and more dads put their individual preferences ahead of the needs of their children. They care more about about having a good time than they do the investment in the FUTURE that children represent.

2. A loss of PRIORITIES. Men are prone to finding their identity through WORK rather than FAMILY and so they tend to focus on things like work achievements, high salary, and job title. As a result, many no longer adhere to the philosophy that says that raising great kids is important. In his book, *Man in the Mirror*, Patrick Morley says that when his children were toddlers, he was always uptight about the new scratches which showed up daily on their coffee table. He writes, "This was a real point of contention with my wife, who could care less about such matters. My blood boiled when I spotted a new nick in the luster of the smooth-grained wood. Finally, Patsy couldn't take it anymore and said, 'You leave my children alone! I'll not have you ruining a million-dollar child over a \$300 table!'"

3. A loss of a sense of DUTY and COMMITMENT. Many fathers no longer feel a responsibility to SACRIFICE for their kids. A selfish young father pointed at his infant son and said, "There goes my chance for ever having a boat. As soon as I get the hospital bill paid, he'll need braces, and by the time I get those paid for, he'll want a car. When it's paid off, it'll be time to pay for college. By then I'll be too old to want a boat." Being a father requires sacrifices on our part. There are some things we have to do without in life because we have a greater obligation to provide for our children.

B. The Results

1. Fatherless children are more likely to commit crimes and engage in substance abuse.
2. On average fatherless children score lower on tests and have lower grade point averages.
3. Children of father-absent families are five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor.

4. Adolescents in mother-only families are more likely to be sexually active, and daughters are more likely to become single-parent mothers.
5. As many as 75% of teen suicides and 80% of psychiatric admissions come from broken homes, families where the father did not do his God-given job. - 2Cor. 6:18; Matt. 9:6

IV. A FATHER LOVES UNCONDITIONALLY

- A. Psalm 103; Rom. 5:8
- B. We love our children the moment they come into the world. Those little helpless babies have done nothing to earn our love—but we love them anyway, just because they're ours
- C. Too many times we only express our affection for our kids when they do something good like graduating from high school or getting a good grade on a test or something. This leads them to believe our love is conditional.

V. A FATHER GIVES SACRIFICIALLY

- A. John 3:16; James 1:17
- B. There are two primary things fathers must give children: resources and time. Most dads make sure the children's material needs are met.
 1. But what about the time? Eph. 6:4
 2. More than 40 percent of American adults have no weekly contact with children at all. Children were miked up to test parental interaction. The average amount of daily time each Dad spent with his kids was 37 seconds. Compare this to the 4 hours per day that kids spend watching TV plus the time they spend in school or listening to music or on the computer and we see who is really the father to our children.
- C. If we are to positively impact our children we must love them enough to find a way to give them our time.

VI. A FATHER REQUIRES

- A. A good father has expectations for His children. He doesn't do everything for his children. He requires a certain level of responsibility from his children.
- B. Does God give blessings to his children without expectation or condition?
- C. What happens when a father does not require good behavior of his children?
 1. Eli - 1Sam. 2:12, 28
 2. David - 1Kings 1:6

VII. A FATHER PREPARES HIS CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE

- A. To be the right kind of person: honest, productive, fair, and considerate
 1. Amber observing me get too much change. They need to see you do what you teach.
- B. A father prepares his children to develop healthy relationships: to cultivate the right kind of friends and how to be the right kind of friend.
 1. Do not be squeamish about monitoring and regulating their friendships. Everyone will lose if you do not.
- C. A father helps his children to prepare for his or her life work:
 1. Identify their gifts, skills, and interests so they can discover the work

that is best for them, and encourage them to choose honorable work.

2. Teach them how to work
 - a. Be a good employee (above and beyond) Col. 3:23 - "I work for ISG!" No, you work for the Lord.
 - b. Give them work and responsibility - Lam. 3:27
- D. Help them to grow and develop spiritually:
 1. You do not accomplish that by putting secular matters before spiritual
 - a. You cannot do that by immoral behavior at home
 - b. You cannot do that by reserving spiritual discussions to services
 - c. You cannot do that and allow filth in the home (TV, music, etc)
 - d. You cannot wait until your children are nearly grown to begin
 2. Do you have a natural enthusiasm for things such as prayer, Bible Study, church work and caring for the needs of others?
 3. Spiritual guidance cannot be delegated to others. Our children's Bible teachers are the best, but they aren't the ones entrusted with the task of making your children followers of Jesus. That's your job!
 - a. If Junior is in the parking lot bullying other children, if Sally Sue is dressing like a tramp at age 12, that reflects on you, Dad!

VIII. FATHERS ARE MEN OF TENDERNESS

- A. A building is more than just structural steel; it is unlivable until some refinements are imposed upon it.
 1. Likewise a man must be more than merely masculine.
 2. *2Tim. 2:22-25* - A man of strength only won't do this.
 3. *1Peter 3:7* - A man of strength only won't do this.
 - a. He is too busy honoring himself.
 4. *Luke 18:16* - "Permit the little children to come to Me."
 - a. How do children respond to us? Do they trust us when they are troubled and afraid?
 - b. Ever wonder why teens go to their peers for answers?
 5. *John 8:7* - compassion on the sinful woman.
 - a. No double standard here; no self-righteousness.
 6. *Gal. 5:22-23* - Humble?
 - a. Reason why men of strength only mock these things is that they can't do them.
 7. He is attentive. Treats women like ladies. Chivalrous.
 8. Refined, courteous, emotionally reserved
 9. Does cursing make one more masculine? Foul mouth, tough talk, aggressive behavior just shows that there is a poor little boy down inside acting out for attention.
 10. A real man of strength and tenderness is satisfied that God knows he is a man; he doesn't need to prove himself to anyone.

IX. FATHERS ARE MEN OF GOD

- A. No greater joy than to know that one's children walk in truth.
 1. *2John 1-4; 3John 1-4*

2. How?

- B. Abraham - *Gen. 18:17-19* - Directed his house by example
1. The true head of the house sets the standard of behavior.
 2. More than just laying down the law; it is first living the law yourself.
 3. Your examples teaches the children what you mean when you speak of honesty, hard work, obedience, love...
- C. Joshua - *Joshua 24:14-15* - Directed his house by vow
1. There is immense power in the influence of a man who stands for truth.
 2. Children sense this power and are secure, trusting it for guidance.
 3. Children are also quick to sense bombast and disingenuousness.
- D. Manoah - *Judges 13:8,12* - Directed his house by prayer for the right rule
1. Godly fathers do not consider themselves infallible; they pray for assistance from the most qualified Father in the universe.
 2. Manoah wanted to raise a servant of the Lord.
 3. What do mere men fathers want their sons to grow up to be?
- E. Jonadab - *Jer. 35:5-10* - Directed his house by respect for authority
1. Father said no, and that is enough for us.
 2. How many respect God's authority in this way?
 3. Fathers, do you live in such a fashion that your children are pleased to keep your instructions even when you are not around?
 4. What kind of changes in your life are necessary to bring this about?
- F. Prodigal fathers bring forth troubled children.
1. The hardest lesson you will ever teach your children will be that you will reap what you sow.
 - a. *Gal. 6:7-8; Psalm 78:4-7*
 - b. Children often take the parents mistakes to the next level.
 2. The influence you are now exerting in your home is shaping your children. Unfaithfulness in early life often has more power over children than repentance in later years.
 3. If you smoke, don't be surprised if your son takes up drugs.
 4. If you keep a six-pack in the 'fridge, don't be shocked if your daughter comes home drunk, not knowing what happened to her that night.
 5. If you watch dirty movies, don't be shocked if your child says, "Dad, I'm in trouble."
 6. When you violate hunting, traffic, or tax laws, expect the police to knock on your door one night with your son in cuffs.
 7. When you miss services freely, look forward to your children abandoning the church altogether.
 8. When you backbite the brethren, know that your children will someday refuse the gospel call.
 9. We will reap what we sow!

Conclusion:

- A. Dad was in a bad accident as a teen and did not finish school; I have acquired enough college hours over the years to close a master's degree
1. Dad was a warehouseman for Weirton Steel; I work in an office

2. Dad is a deacon; I am an elder
- B. And I was blessed to become these things because he did his job as a father.
1. Scarcely does a week go by without me going aside with him to seek his counsel on some matter.
 2. I am what I am primarily because of the influence of Paul B. Blake
 3. Fathers and grandfathers shape the generations coming after them.
May we be as successful with our children as they were with us.

Godly Wives

Introduction: Prov. 18:22 "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord."

A. 1Cor. 11:2-3 - We need homes where God's authority is supreme.

1. Respected by husband, wife, and children; all yield to what they are commanded within God's instruction book.
2. Then, and only then, will our homes become a better place to live.
3. God's authority structure: it is not about value; it is about making homes function effectively and efficiently.
4. The home fulfills multiple roles:
 - a. A framework for the lifetime union of a man and woman in marriage
 - b. The training ground for children who will become the future
 - c. The institution where children and neighbors will first hear of the will of God
5. In order for the home to successfully handle all of these vital tasks, it cannot be allowed to just be; it must follow God's plan, or fail

B. How do we view the home?

1. "Where the small are great and the great are small."
2. "Where our stomachs get three meals a day, and our hearts get 1000."
3. "Parents' kingdom and child's paradise."
4. "Where we get abundant blessings and the many complaints."
5. "Homes are the vestibules of heaven."
6. "Home is where we eat."
7. "It is where we go between midnight and daylight when everything else is closed."
8. Mother: "It is where I slave the hardest and am appreciated the least."
9. Father: "It is what I work two out of five days each week to pay for."
10. Christ: John 14:1-3 - "I go to prepare a place for you."
 - a. Can we not try to model our homes after that pattern?

C. What is mistaken about some of these definitions?

1. Home is not a place, but the persons and commitments that make it up.
2. Materialistic view of the home reflected in real estate.
3. Definitions of a house not a home.
4. May begin to indicate why the family is in trouble in this society.
5. Active anti family proponents are not the biggest danger.
6. Holding the nuclear family of secondary importance when compared to other interests of individual family members is the problem.

I. FAITHFULNESS DEFINES THE CHRISTIAN WIFE

A. It is essential that she begins with being a faithful Christian

1. One who is faithful in attendance - Heb. 10:25
2. One who is faithful in example - Phil. 3:17
3. One who is faithful in modesty - 1Tim. 2:9
4. One who seeks the kingdom of God first - Matt. 6:33

5. One who puts Christ into her life - Gal. 2:20
 6. One who serves the Lord, not merely in the home, but in the local church - Rom. 16:1-2; Acts 9:36
 7. One who is a faithful teacher - Titus 2:3-5
- B. Why must she be a faithful Christian? - 1Peter 3:1-2

II. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN WIFE?

- A. A faithful helper - Gen. 2:18; 1Cor. 11:9; Titus 2:3-5
- B. A faithful wife - Eph. 5:22-24
1. It says submission, because it means submission.
 - a. Nudge wife: "Listen to the preacher and stop playing with the baby. Go ahead preacher, take an extra ten minutes."
 2. Are you a head in the home, men, like Christ is in the Church?
 - a. "Here are the rules; where's my golf clubs?"
 - b. Hard to submit to such a man; do it anyway.
 3. We often emphasize that the man must be the kind of loving husband that would make it easy for a wife to be subject to him. Are you the kind of wife that makes it easy for a man to love you as he ought?
 - a. Far too many wives complain about their husbands. When did God give you permission to do that?
 - b. Far too many wives act as if their role is a burden and imposition. You impugn the wisdom of God when you act that way.
 - c. Far too many wives excuse themselves from subjection to their husbands. Do you believe you will escape God's judgment for this sin?
 4. Heb. 13:4; 1Cor. 7:1-5 - You draw closer by this physical relationship; the strong emotional relationship generated reinforces the bond of love, and helps one another to remain faithful in the face of temptation
- C. A faithful friend
1. Gen. 2:18 - Not good for the man to be alone; God did not give him three buddies; He gave him one wife, a lifetime companion
 2. The passing of one elderly mate often hastens the passing of the other
 3. The examples of Sarah and Abraham
 4. Ruth 1:16-17
- D. A faithful home provider - 1Tim. 5:14; Prov. 31:10-31

III. WHY HAS THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN WIFE FALLEN INTO DISFAVOR?

- A. Feminism: The fear of Patriarchy (Patriphobia?) Don't buy the Lie!!!
1. Feminism is essentially the view that patriarchy is evil or at least obsolete. Patriarchy is the old idea that dads are in charge. The father is the head of the family, and the family (dad, mom, and the children) is the essential unit of society.
 2. Every people and culture throughout the history of the World has been essentially patriarchal until now. Historically, when any society became matriarchal, it signaled its decline and heralded its eventual fall.
 3. However, feminism has taught us that most of the evils of society can

be traced back to this inequity, that it is sexist to hold that one half of the race has the right to lead the other half based on the biological distinction of a person's gender.

4. The Bible, on the other hand, is a thoroughly patriarchal book. Consider that Jesus is patriarchal. He chose 12 men as His Apostles; Jesus was not one to accommodate the fashions and hypocrisies of His day. He also revealed God as FATHER (never as mother) and Himself as the Father's SON (never as daughter).

B. The Fallacy of Feminism: Feminist is a form of egalitarianism.

1. Egalitarianism is the doctrine that genuine equality in society requires that no one class of people have a right to hold a position of authority over another. It is usually expressed in the language of rights. In feminism, this doctrine is applied to the traditions of making distinctions based on gender.
2. According to Secular Feminism, the differences between men and women are only biological (and therefore superficial). The traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity as proper ways of behaving for men and women are no longer "correct."
3. This denial or confusion of gender distinctions is called androgyny and means that it is no longer wrong or improper for a man to be effeminate or a woman to behave in a masculine manner. Everything is relative to what a man and woman want to do.
4. However, what has happened is that this destruction of gender distinctions and the repression of natural gender behaviors, particularly in children, results in gender-confusion dysfunction. As we used to say, people "don't know whether they are Arthur or Martha" anymore.
5. So, is patriarchy all as bad as we are being led to believe?

C. Complementarity - Men and women are equal in value before the Lord but different in roles under God and can live together functioning according to their differences without sacrificing their equality as souls.

1. Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18
2. Men and women are created equal in God's image; they are both living, eternal souls
3. Because we are created by God in His own image and loved by God equally means that we are of equal worth.
4. Gal. 3:28

D. Men and women are Different by Design: From the beginning of the creation of man as male and female, God dealt with them as man and woman. The differences are much deeper than biological sexual capacities for procreation. Their identity is in their respective genders as masculine and feminine.

1. The concept of the image of God in us is based on the fact that God is spirit and not a biological being, but He is always HE. Image and gender are distinct concepts. For instance, a daughter can be just like her father in looks and mannerisms, and yet be thoroughly feminine, and her father be thoroughly masculine. Her femininity is the mode by which she expresses his image. So it is with us and God.

2. It is God who created us and gave us worth and it is God who has determined in His creative design that men and women should function differently in their relations with each other. God has created us different so that we complement (complete) and supplement one another with our different capacities and naturally different gifts. You might say, for instance, that men provide stable framework and direction for the family, whereas women fill in the details of content in family living and loving.

Conclusion:

- A. Wives, how can you help your husband be the man God intends?
- B. How can you help boys become men (and not tyrants), or your girls to be faithful Christian women?
- C. Submit to your husband out of reverence for Christ - Eph. 5:33; Prov. 31:11-12
- D. Wives, teach your children respect for their fathers by the respect that you show him.

Godly Mothers

(Based on a sermon: I Know My Mother Loved Me by Kevin Cauley; Berryville church of Christ, AR)

Introduction: Psalm 22:10 "...From My mother's womb You have been My God."

- A. "I know my mother loved me because:
 1. She disciplined me when I did wrong
 2. She cared for me when I was sick
 3. She fed and clothed me even when I was rebellious
 4. She taught me about God's word
 5. She taught me the forgiveness of unconditional love: Mom and the blownout egg; Mom and Grandma and the chocolate covered strawberry, Grandma and Great Grandma Marrata
- B. 1Sam. 2:19 - Hannah is a great example of a good mother
 1. Samuel was so very small when he started his service to God that a ephod/vest covered him entirely.
 2. Every year, Hannah would make "a little robe" for him to wear.
- C. I know my mother loved me because:

I. SHE DISCIPLINED ME WHEN I DID WRONG

- A. Prov. 4:3, 6:20, 10:1; 13:24, 23:25, 29:15, 30:17, 31:1

II. SHE CARED FOR ME WHEN I WAS SICK

- A. Psalm 35:13-14, 131:2
- B. Adult men who never forgot the debt they owed to mothers for their love and wonderful influence
 1. Abraham Lincoln - "All that I can or be, I owe to you."
 2. James A. Garfield - "Mother, you have brought me here."
 3. Henry Ward Beecher - "The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom."
 4. Ralph Waldo Emerson - "Men are what their mothers make them."
 5. William Brown - "The sweetest sounds to mortals given, Are heard in mother, home and Heaven"
 6. Napoleon Bonaparte - "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother"
 7. George Washington - "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her"
 8. T. B. Larimore was sent home from grammar school as one who could not be taught; mother taught him; he became one of the great preachers of the Restoration Movement
- C. "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world."
 1. "Like father, like son" is actually an adaptation of an ancient saying that speaks of the influence of mothers...
 2. "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: Like mother, like daughter!" (Ez. 16:44).

III. SHE FED AND CLOTHED ME WHEN I WAS REBELLIOUS

- A. A love that must be learned - Titus 2:3-5
- B. Such is the love of God. It is a deliberate, conscious choice
 - 1. Matt. 5:44-48; Rom. 5:7-8
- C. She works hard to do this - Prov. 31:15-21, 25-28

IV. SHE TAUGHT ME GOD'S WORD ALL OF MY LIFE

- A. 2Tim. 1:3-5; Psalm 22:10
- B. Strickland Gillilan
 - “You may have tangible wealth untold;
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold;
Richer than I you can never be
I had a mother who read to me”

Conclusion:

- A. I know my mother loved me because she did the things the Bible said would show her love for me.

Godly Children

Introduction: 2Tim. 3:15 "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"

A. Conventional wisdom states: "If it's working so well, why does your child continue to push you to the edge?' Spanking your kids may work to suppress his or her bad behavior temporarily, but it isn't a learning type of discipline. The message they get from being spanked is 'I'm a bad kid,' which doesn't help your child figure out what he or she did wrong — or how to keep from doing it again!" (Dr. Phil... Phillip McGraw).

B. "Cons to Spanking":

1. "Long-term consequences of spanking can include increased aggressiveness, antisocial behavior, and delinquency.
2. Failure to learn right from wrong, subsequent criminal behavior, mental illness, and child or spouse abuse as adults, also possible
3. When parents model aggressive behaviors by spanking, they reinforce the idea that physical aggression is the way to get what you want.
4. Children who were spanked feel less attached to their parents and less trusting of them. The more the child was spanked, the less close the parent/child relationship."

C. "If we are ever to turn toward a kindlier society and a safer world, a revulsion against the physical punishment of children would be a good place to start." (Dr. Benjamin Spock)

D. Conventional wisdom comes and goes with fashions and cultures.

1. Spartans and abandoning weak or disabled children
2. Greek society and placing boys under the care of pedophilic tutors
3. Cybeleans and mothers raising boys apart from fathers
4. They are gone, but the Bible is still here.
5. Sweden banned spanking in 1979. The United States is well on the way to a similar solution. Nearly all states have imposed restrictions and bans at some level.
6. And when children in history class a few hundred years from now are reading about the former United States of America, this country and its misguided morally liberal culture will only be a boring fact they have to memorize for the test, but God's word will still be around.
7. Do you believe in God? Do you believe He made you? If you believe He is wise enough to create and sustain all things, you must believe He knows what is best for you and your children.

E. Get the facts straight!

1. "Not one of the 17 causally relevant studies found predominantly detrimental outcomes if they did anything to rule out parents who used physical punishment too severely." (p. 209, Child Outcomes of Nonabusive and Customary Physical Punishment by Parents: An Updated Literature Review in Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review 2000, 3(4):199-221)

2. Anti corporal punishment statisticians do not distinguish between parents who spank their children and parents who abuse their children. They begin with the assumption that spanking is by definition child abuse. This unwarranted assumption

skews the stats, as they include parents who inflict physical damage (burns, broken bones, lacerations), sexual abuse, punishment with frequency and severity, verbal abuse and abuse by neglect. When parents who spank are compared apart from these, the incidence of juvenile delinquency, emotional disorders, and adult functional disorders among their children is lower than that of the children of non-spanking parents, and considerably lower than the national norm.

3. "In published evaluations of Sweden's 1979 spanking ban, Dr. Durrant's data sources indicate an increase in physical child abuse (4.1% of Swedish parents compared to 1.9% of American parents) and of criminal assaults by juvenile delinquents since the ban (519% increase by minors under the age of 15). Although these increases cannot be proven to have been caused by the spanking ban, the increases cannot be easily explained away" (IBID)

4. Dr. Diana Baumrind: "Methodologically strong studies have not established that normative physical punishment is a causal risk factor for the detrimental child outcomes with which it may be associated; a blanket injunction against disciplinary spanking is not warranted by causally relevant scientific evidence." (University of California, Berkeley) address at the 109th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association meeting, August 24, 2001.

5. Den A. Trumbull, M.D. and S. DuBose Ravenel, M.D. (both practicing board-certified pediatricians) responded to various objections to the use of corporal punishment and offer guidelines for disciplinary spanking. They point out that many articles in this area are "merely opinion-driven editorials, reviews or commentaries, devoid of new empirical findings."

6. "If spanking conveys the message to the child that violence is permissible to resolve conflicts, the same could be said of other forms of discipline. Thus, putting a child in time-out would convey the message that it is permissible to restrict the liberty of a person who displeases one. Likewise, fines would convey the idea that it is ok to take something away from another person when one was unhappy with them, etc. There is a difference between a responsible adult authority legitimately punishing wrongdoing and individuals indiscriminately beating up those who frustrate them. Children are capable of understanding this difference in context." (David Benatar, Corporal Punishment. Social Theory & Practice, Summer 1998, Vol. 24 Issue 2, p.237)

F. Old formula for children who misbehave in worship, re-stated by Gary Ogden... "After trying briefly to get things under control (emphasis on briefly), then here is what you do:

1. Take them out.
2. Wear them out.
3. Bring them right back in.

"Well, you say, suppose that does not work? Then the next thing you do is:

1. Take them out.
2. Wear them out.
3. Bring them right back in.

"Repeat as often as necessary."

I. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS

A. The value of obedience

1. It is well-pleasing to the Lord, since it is what He did - Luke 2:51-52
 - a. If it was proper for the Son of God to be subject to human parents, then it is eminently proper for you to be subject to your own parents.
 2. It confers an important promise - Eph. 6:1-3
 - a. God knew children needed a system of reward and punishment in order to learn right from wrong. Reasoning is not enough.
- B. The seriousness of rebellion
1. God viewed lack of obedience in the Old Testament on par with witchcraft and idolatry - 1Sam 15:22-23
 - a. The punishment in some cases for rebellious children was death Deut. 21:18-21
 2. Therefore, rebelliousness is not to be taken lightly by parents
 - a. It is not just a stage they go through; some never leave it

II. INSPIRED WISDOM IN THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- A. Proper discipline is an expression of genuine love - Prov. 13:24
- B. Proper discipline has proper objectives
 1. To remove foolishness from the child - Prov. 22:15
 2. To save the soul of the child - Prov. 23:13-14
 3. To impart wisdom and to avoid shame - Prov. 29:15
- C. Proper discipline has its rewards - Prov. 29:17
 1. A child who will love you and live in such a way as to bring you delight and peace of mind for their future well being
- D. Proper application of corporal punishment - Prov. 19:18
 1. To be applied before the situation gets out of hand, while there is hope for improvement
 2. To be applied under controlled circumstances; do not put it off until you strike in anger
 3. Corporal punishment should never be an expression of parental frustration; rather, a controlled method to discourage bad behavior
- E. Proper understanding of a familiar verse - Prov. 22:6
 1. This occasionally leads to the common interpretation in which a child's future depends entirely on his training, especially in spiritual matters
 - a. I.e., if the child is brought up right by godly parents, the child must turn out all right
 - b. So if a child is not a faithful Christian, it must always be due to a failure of the parents
 - c. This view suggests "environmental predestination" or "behavioral determinism" (shades of B. F. Skinner in Walden II)
 2. Flaws with this reasoning:
 - a. Does not account for influence of the world around him
 - b. Does not acknowledge the child's free will
 - c. Incorrectly credits parents whose children do well
 - d. Does not explain why children of bad parents sometimes do well
 - e. Indicts God who often loses His children to the world

III. THE DUTY OF FATHERS

- A. Fathers are charged both negatively and positively - Eph. 6:4
 - 1. Don't provoke children to wrath (i.e., discipline without love)
 - 2. Do bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (i.e., discipline tempered with love)
- B. In the world, people usually fall into two wrong extremes of child raising:
 - 1. Discipline without love (physical child abuse)
 - 2. Love without discipline (spiritual child abuse)
 - 3. And both of them are sins
- C. But when fathers properly administer both love and discipline, they show how God raises His own children in His family - Heb. 12:5-11

Conclusion:

- A. We want to leave a legacy in this world. Children raised in the Lord are the greatest legacy we could possibly leave behind.
 - 1. Gen. 18:17-19
- B. Are you going to trust the shifting, changing fashions of contemporary philosophy in raising children?
 - 1. Or are you going to trust God who has given you the children?
 - 2. Psalm 127:3-5

Opting For Orderly Offspring

Introduction:

- A. It was just yesterday when I held my firstborn child in my hands. She turned 26 this past spring.
 - 1. They grow up so fast, and we only get one opportunity to raise them.
 - 2. Wouldn't it be best to do it right, to avoid regret in later life?
- B. The number one and two concerns in this country are not the economy and the Kosovo conflict, the top concerns are not political scandal and Y2K, they are moral decay and juvenile crime.
 - 1. Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AR, Littleton, CO... children killing children
 - 2. Why do you have a fence around the property? Why do preachers lock themselves in their offices at the church building? Why do we lock the doors when we are at home in the middle of the day?
 - 3. For fear of criminals without conscience under the age of 21.
 - 4. We have exceeded the 50% mark; more than half of all violent crimes are committed by persons 21 and under.
- C. What contributes to the formation of under age criminals?

I. FACTORS IN THE HOME THAT CREATE JUVENILE CONVICTS

- A. The home is non-nuclear.
 - 1. Divorce, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, spousal abandonment.
 - 2. *Mal. 2:15*
- B. Family relationships are tense & full of conflict, or oppressive & over-protective
- C. The parents are often in trouble with authorities, employers, the church, police
- D. The absence of a father's presence and authority
- E. Siblings that defy authority
- F. Tolerance and even endorsement of a child's defiance of authority.
 - 1. Punishment in school
 - 2. Correction in Bible class
- G. Mismanagement of family crises
 - 1. Loss of a job, prolonged illness, death, divorce
- H. Inconsistent discipline
 - 1. Oscillating between tolerance of bad behavior to physical abuse
- I. Lack of love and physical affection
 - 1. Those children will go somewhere else for acceptance and affection
 - 2. Stroking an animal while children starve for attention
- J. Lack of a structured code of morals
 - 1. Children taken to worship regularly and who have parents who live by moral principles are the least likely of all to engage in crime.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILE CRIMINALS

- A. Morally blind; do not distinguish between right and wrong; without conscience
- B. Cannot connect consequences with actions
 - 1. Believe that others are responsible for their failures
 - 2. Believe that the successes of others are due to cheating, power, or preferential treatment.

- 3. Allows them to take what belongs to others as if they have the right.
Survival of the fittest
- C. Do not respect or even like themselves
 - 1. Therefore, do not like or respect others
 - 2. Enjoys self-destructive behavior; jaded senses
 - 3. Enjoys hurting others and destroying the property of others
- D. Impulsive; acts without thinking
- E. Loves danger for the sake of the momentary high of the thrill
- F. Resents all authority
- G. Juvenile criminals are made, not born.

III. HOW CAN WE PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING TO OUR OWN CHILDREN?

(How to raise godly children; Opting for Orderly Offspring)

1. *Proverbs 22:6, 29:15; Ecc. 12:1-2*
 - a. Begin regular spiritual training in the first year of life.
 - 1) Don't think that they can't absorb it.
 - 2) Continue throughout all of their developing years.
2. *Matthew 6:33*
 - a. Demonstrate to them that at all times that God is the most important Being in your life.
 - 1) Children learn chiefly by observation at first.
 - 2) Foolish to think that our words will carry more weight with them than our actions.
3. *2Tim. 3:14-15*
 - a. Let their earliest memories be of daily Bible studies.
 - b. Look what it did for Timothy
 - c. *Acts 5:42* - When they learn that early Christians spent time daily with the word, and you do not, what will they think - *Heb. 3:13*.
4. *Psalms 119:11,16*
 - a. Give them their own Bible before they can read.
 - b. Have them care for it at home and bring it to worship.
 - 1) Help them to understand that it is an important book
 - 2) There is none greater among the writings of men.
 - c. Begin teaching them memory verses at preschool, earlier if possible.
 - 1) Lifetime habits
 - 2) Parents are negligent who wait until their children are in school before being faithful - *Deut. 6:6-7*
5. *Eph. 6:18* - "Praying always"
 - a. Teach them how to pray, at mealtimes and bedtimes.
 - b. Help them to repeat them and teach them what each phrase means.
 - c. Teach them to talk with God, not pray by rote.
6. *Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16*
 - a. Teach them to take joy from singing hymns
 - b. If it has that kind of effect on brethren, what will it do to impressionable children?

- c. Turn of that Country and Divorce and the Rock-n-roll dope music and sing some gospel songs at home and in the car

7. *Eph. 6:4*

- a. Be the chief spiritual teacher for your children.
 - 1) Don't wait for, expect, or trust another to do the job for you.
- b. Produce young people with your respect for God's word, not what ole' Brother So-n-So used to say.
 - 1) Has a tendency to make these children into leaders rather than blind followers

8. *Rev. 21:8, 27; Prov. 6:15-17*

- a. Teach them that lying is among the worst things they could do.
- b. Teach them about the fire, and punish them firmly at the seat of the problem if they do lie.
 - 1) Keeps their lives open before you and saves you from heartache and hidden sin in the teenage years.
- c. Don't tempt them to lie by setting them up for it.

9. *1Tim. 2:9*

- a. Start early teaching the principles of modesty.
 - 1) It isn't cute at any age
- b. Start while they are young, and the battle against halter tops, swimsuits, revealing shorts, and other immodest apparel will be easier.

10. *Matt. 12:36-37*

- a. Keep their speech pure.
 - 1) Start with your own.
 - 2) Don't allow them to use euphemisms.
 - 3) Most folks know that mild drugs lead to the harder, but the same people often think that mild language doesn't lead to harsher?

11. *1Cor. 15:33; 1Peter 2:11*

- a. Help to keep their minds pure by monitoring their reading and viewing materials
 - 1) screen the movies, censor the television, prohibit pornography
- b. Observe who they befriend; if they run with moral trash, they will become morally trashy
- c. Warn them about the trash Satan peddles and show your disgust for it
- d. Must think I'm the meanest dad in shoe leather
 - 1) I had a friend in AR who said that to me 8 years ago; his daughter has run off to live with a married man 12 years older than she is, his son did time in the Little Rock Juvenile Detention for car theft, and he and his wife are divorced.
 - 2) I am endeavoring to use God's plan to avoid that in my home

12. *Eph. 5:3-5; 2Tim. 2:22*

- a. Be adult enough to talk with them about the subject of sex and morality.
- b. Remember, if they don't learn the truth from you, who knows what they will learn from another on the street.
- c. Sexuality is a part of our design; teach children how to properly use and control it.

- d. *Titus 2:3-5, 6-7*
 - e. God given functions are Good in their own place; teach your children what they need to know.
13. *Romans 13:13-14*
- a. Teach them to reserve themselves for their future mate.
 - b. Teach them to consider one who would take away their virginity, man or woman, as one of the greatest thieves living.
 - c. Chastity is not old-fashioned, it's a sign of quality.
14. *Gen. 18:19*
- a. Set up guidelines for dating and other activities with the opposite sex.
 - 1) No dancing or other unwholesome activities, parking, unattended in a house.
 - 2) They are in a time of transition in which they are experiencing emotions and desire they never had before. They will need help in overcoming temptation.
 - 3) Establish a curfew
 - b. Never be so foolish as to assume your minor son or daughter is old, wise, or strong enough to no longer need supervision.
15. *Matt. 6:33; Ecc. 4:9-12*
- a. Teach your children to consider only the morally upright as marriageable material.
 - 1) Krystal and Bruce
 - b. So vital for future happiness & contentment; cannot emphasize enough
16. *1Peter 5:5*
- a. Teach your children to have warm relationships with older folk and to show them respect.
 - 1) Three-fold benefit:
 - a) They will learn how to act when they are older.
 - b) Keeps older folk from loneliness and bitterness.
 - c) Eliminates the alienation between the separate ages, keeping open lines of communication & learning
17. *1Thes. 4:11-12; 2Thes. 3:10*
- a. Teach responsibility, the virtue of work, and taking the initiative
 - b. They will become responsible adults who are assets to the community, rather than a financial burden.
 - c. *Lam. 3:27* - "It is good for one to bear the yoke in his youth."
18. *John 9:4* - "I must work the works..."
- a. Teach them to take advantage of opportunities to advance the Lord's work. Teach them to visit the sick, attend meetings, invite friends to worship, to prepare their Bible lessons
 - b. Never to get too busy secularly that service to God comes second
19. *Acts 8:4*
- a. Teach them to plan to be a part of the work of some congregation
 - b. Train for preaching, teaching, eldership, song leading, et al
 - 1) Encourage them to start young.
 - 2) Survey of how many men wanted to be elders at Wellsburg

20. *1Thes. 4:13-17; Phil. 1:21* - Christians want to go home.
- a. Provide a home that they are happy to go to; that other than the Church, there is no place on earth better.
 - b. It will teach them family closeness and desire to reunite in heaven.
 - c. It will give them an appetizer for heaven.

Conclusion:

- A. You only get one chance to raise that child up for the Lord
 1. Do it the Lord's way, and you will have nothing of which to be ashamed
 2. *Prov. 22:6* - "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Keeping the Faith in a Religiously Mixed Marriage

Introduction: 1Cor. 7:16 "For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?"

- A. "Something has got to go, either my marriage or my faith. I can't stand the constant conflict. I feel so low all of the time: at home where I am put down for trying to do right, and at church because I am forced to be a loner."
 - 1. She said that four months before abandoning the Lord and His church.
- B. I am not going to preach on the merits of marrying a faithful Christian, nor on the burdens that come to those who do not.
 - 1. This lesson is for those who are already in a religiously mixed marriage.
 - 2. Your marriage vows to non-Christians are just as binding as if they were made to devout children of God. Your responsibilities to your mate are in no wise diminished because they are not Christians.
 - 3. Nor may you leave your marriage simply because your mate has yet to obey the gospel. There is only one scriptural cause for divorce, and a religiously mixed marriage is not scriptural grounds.
 - a. Matt. 19:9; 1Cor. 7:10-16
- C. Therefore, how can one avoid despair and discouragement, and prosper in the faith?
 - 1. First, maintain right relationship with God.
 - 2. Second, maintain right relationship with your mate.
 - 3. Third, look for means and opportunities to serve God alone.
 - 4. Fourth, live a faithful example that will provide you with opportunities to teach and save your mate.

I. MAINTAIN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- A. Strengthen your resolve to remain with the Lord regardless...
 - 1. All of us need all the support and encouragement we can possibly receive to be able to attain the heavenly home. We certainly do not need someone consciously or unconsciously opposing our efforts.
 - a. Heb. 10:23-25, 3:12-14; 1Cor. 7:35
 - 2. The people who think they are especially strong and immune to this influence are the one who are most vulnerable to it
 - a. 1Cor. 15:33
 - b. What chosen relationship has greater influence upon our lives than that with our spouse?
 - 3. You are under eternal obligation to put God first; your obligation to your mate is limited to this life only.
 - a. Matt. 22:34-40; Luke 14:26
- B. Prepare yourself for the threat of being abandoned or divorced.
 - 1. Even though you may be perfectly innocent, you may be forced into a position that demands you to live alone and celibate for the remainder of your life. A non-Christian lives by the world's standard for marriage, divorce, and remarriage, not God's.
 - a. Matt. 5:32; 1Cor. 7:10-11

2. Many have been destroyed by Satan because the desires of the flesh had such hold on them they would not live celibate to save their souls.
- C. Determine that you will meet your Divine obligation of raising children in Christ
1. Marrying a non-Christian may provide you with little or no help with the proper upbringing of children. There is a big difference in bringing up children and bringing up children in the nurture of the Lord
 - a. Eph. 6:4; 2Tim. 1:5, 3:15
 - b. It is difficult enough to bring children up properly, when both parents are zealous in serving the Lord, but when one parent has little interest in the spiritual, it's extremely difficult.
 2. Always set the right example, as you will be the only one doing it.
 - a. Titus 2:7-8
 - b. Your unbelieving mate may tragically be a bad example for your offspring - 1Cor. 15:33; 2Cor. 7:1
 - c. Your unbelieving mate may cause your children to be taught a false religion - Matt. 15:13-14
- D. You must daily, fervently fight the temptation to compromise the faith in order to maintain peace with a non-Christian mate.
1. B Street Church of Christ, Miami, OK - 1957-77

Christian to Non Christian	Christian to Christian
76 marriages	64 marriages
57 left faith	5 left faith
25 divorces	2 divorces
19 faithful	59 faithful
 2. Bridge Street Church of Christ, Wynne, AR - 1962-1981

Christian to Non Christian	Christian to Christian
76 marriages	28 marriages
61 left faith	4 left faith
23 divorces	4 divorces
15 faithful	24 faithful

II. MAINTAIN THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MATE

A. Communicate

1. Do not treat this difference between you as if it does not exist
 - a. Prov. 25:11, 18:21, 12:18, 15:23
2. Regardless of what is said or never said, the implication is there: "If you are part of the faith, we agree and are in fellowship and bound for the same eternal destination. If we are not part of the same faith, we do not agree and we do not share that which is most fundamental to our life view. The difference is there and will generate suspicion and jealousy if not addressed.

B. Listen

1. Do not do all of the talking; listening carefully to your mate will let them know you care, and may give you the clues you need to give the answer that moves them to obedience.
 - a. Prov. 18:2

2. Do not be afraid of what you might hear - 1John 4:18
 3. Eph. 4:31-32 applies to your marriage, too.
- C. Maintain your God assigned role
1. Questions:
 - a. "Do I have to submit to him if he is not a Christian?"
 - b. "How far must submission go?"
 - c. "As a Christian man, do I have a right to require submission of my non-Christian wife?"
 2. Who is God's marriage law for?
 - a. God instituted marriage before the church, before the Law of Moses, before the patriarchs - Gen. 2:18-24, 3:16-19
 - b. His law in marriage is for Christian and non-Christian alike.
 - c. Non Christians will answer to God in judgment for not keeping it whether they thought themselves subject to it or not.
 3. So, what does God require of Christian men and women in their relationships with their non-Christian mates?
 - a. Eph. 5:21-33
 - b. Submission without sin - Acts 4:19
 - c. Leadership without dictatorship - 1Peter 3:7

III. LOOK FOR MEANS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE GOD ALONE

- A. How would you serve God if you were single? Widowed? How would you expect your unmarried children or widowed parents to serve God?
1. They would do so alone. They would assemble, sing, commune, give, pray, study, visit the sick, teach the gospel to others, live moral examples, work, love, help, worship alone
 2. And so must you. Remember, marrying an unbeliever was your choice. You must now choose to face the barriers that come with it.
 3. It is not more than you can handle - 1Cor. 10:13

VI. LIVE A FAITHFUL EXAMPLE THAT WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH AND SAVE YOUR MATE

- A. What are the difficulties faced by the non-Christian spouse who is married to a devout Christian?
1. Isolation
 - a. Left at home while the other goes to church
 - b. Taking the kids to church when I have things planned for them on the weekend
 - c. His Christian friends treat me like an outsider
 2. Feeling betrayed
 - a. I didn't know it was going to interfere with our lives this much
 - b. She is more dedicated to the church than to me
 3. Fear
 - a. My spouse is moving forward or away from me
 - b. I am losing her

4. Aversion
 - a. I do not believe in this silly waste of time
 - b. I do not want my children involved in this superstitious trivia
 - c. My money would be better spent on other charities
 5. Prejudice
 - a. My family was another denomination and I think my wife's church is a group of fanatics
 - b. My family/friends would think me foolish for going to that church
 6. Resentment
 - a. Her unspoken goodness shows disapproval of my life
 - b. Everything has to be his way
 - c. The time and money my mate gives to that church
- B. As a Christian mate, what are you going to do about this?
1. If you compromise, you both lose.
 2. If you ignore it, you both lose.
 3. If you give up, you both lose.
- C. The only chance you have for a successful marriage is to do what Peter said.
1. 1Peter 3:1-6

Conclusion:

In no way do I wish to discourage Christians who are already married to non-Christians. Interestingly, some very fine people are the unbelieving companions of Christians. And, some of the strongest Christians among us today were influenced to come to the Lord by Christian mates while they were still unbelievers.

Christians married to non-Christians can still share love, maintain godly duties, and produce lasting good from their union. But God's people must be certain not permit love for their mate, Christian or non-Christian, to cause them to drift away from God's will. It has happened, can happen, and will continue to happen if one does not learn from the principles in the Bible. Good people are led astray by love for unbelieving mates. The constant, gradual wear on some Christians is more than they can bear. They slowly come to compromise God's will on morality and doctrine to the point where they cease to resemble the godly, sincere Christians they once were.

If you are not married, permit me to encourage you to marry a faithful Christian. Keep in mind that not all professed Christians are faithful children of God (Matt. 7:21), so please use caution. If you cannot find a faithful Christian to marry, I encourage you to ask God for His help to patiently look for opportunities to find one.

If you still decide to marry a non-Christian, may I encourage you to at least marry someone who will support you in your faith and who will remain true to you as a mate? Without this, you may be influenced to sin or error, or have your marriage end prematurely. Granted, this happens even among Christians, but the chances of it occurring are much greater in the religiously mixed marriage.

Above all, be patient in selecting a mate. Why rush into a relationship that will influence you more than any other for the rest of your life? Pray for understanding. Look to the scriptures for wisdom. And be the kind of mate you want to marry. You cannot find a godly mate or a mate who will support you in your choice to live godly when you are not living in a way that attracts God-fearing people.

NAOMI & RUTH: GOD'S NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY

Text: Ruth 1:1-18

Introduction:

- A. Leadership is not limited to government officials, elders, educators, and employers.
 - 1. Leaders and heroes are found among parents, grandparents, older Christians, big brothers and sisters, etc.
 - 2. They are leaders for the simple reason that someone else is following.
 - 3. Leadership involves responsibility.
 - a. Impossible to abdicate without harmful influence.
 - 4. Leadership results in both persons going in the same direction and arriving at the same destination.
 - 5. Since one is a follower, the other must therefore be the leader.
 - a. Even if de facto, he is accountable for his leadership.
 - b. James 3:1
- B. Ruth 1:18 - "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."
 - 1. Sometimes a family is not structured in the traditional manner.
 - a. Through no fault of their own.
 - b. One parent families through death or lawful divorce.
 - c. Children taken in by relatives, older siblings raising younger, etc.
 - d. No sin or stigma is attached, but it is necessary to follow God's family rules.

I. NAOMI FELT INADEQUATE TO LEAD THE FAMILY

- A. Vs 8 - "Go back to your mother's house."
 - 1. Vs 11-13 - Physical inadequacy.
 - 2. Vs 19-21 - Emotional inadequacy.
- B. None of this removed responsibility from Naomi.
 - 1. If God did not think we were physically up to the tasks before us, would He have given us stewardship of our abilities?
 - 2. We may not feel able to handle the pressure, but I know of no one who can be entirely objective about himself. Those who follow us have confidence in us.
 - 3. Can't just chuck it; make the best of it; lead your follower to heaven; strengthen your hands for this work.

II. RUTH HAD CONFIDENCE IN NAOMI

- A. All that Naomi would do, Ruth would do.
 - 1. Her trust was based on something --- trustworthiness.
 - 2. Ruth was not afraid to trust Naomi; but Naomi was afraid of being trusted.
 - 3. Ruth 1:16-17
 - a. Not afraid to go where she leads.
 - b. Not afraid to live as she would live.
 - c. Not afraid to follow her lead in religion.
- B. What if Naomi had been wrong?
 - 1. Matt. 15:14; 1John 4:1-3
 - 2. Ruth would have paid for her carelessness if her trust had been misplaced; and Naomi would have paid for betraying it.
- C. Ruth's determination to follow Naomi was not something that could not easily be laid aside or passed on to another.

1. Ruth 1:17-18; 3:1-5 - Good fellowship.
- D. As a result of Naomi's leadership, Ruth the Moabitess became a part of the lineage of David and an ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth.
 1. Ruth 4:16-17; Matt. 1:1-17

III. RUTH'S TRUST WAS NOT MISPLACED IN NAOMI

- A. Her reputation remained virtuous.
 1. Foreign women developed bad reputations in strange lands; but Ruth was known for her virtue.
 2. Ruth 2:11-12
 3. Ruth followed Naomi's lead in protocols and proper behavior in potentially damaging situations and came out for the best.
 4. Ruth 3:8-13
 5. She trusted and did not question or presume to do it her way.
- B. She trusted Naomi with the customs and law.
 1. Ruth 2:18-23; 3:18; 4:1-8; Deut. 25:7-9
- C. Naomi was praised for her leadership.
 1. Ruth 4:14-17

IV. WHY DIDN'T I USE A GREAT MAN TO TEACH ON LEADING A FAMILY?

- A. That anyone can find himself/herself in a position of leadership unsought.
- B. That one does not have to be great in man's eyes in order to lead.
- C. The "Great" do not always make the best leaders.
 1. Job 32:7-9

V. HOW TO PREPARE TO BE THE LEADER OF A NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY

- A. Set the right example - Matt. 5:13-16
- B. Set your heart on serving God - Joshua 24:14-15
- C. Trust God that you will succeed - 1Cor. 10:13
- D. Pray - Phil. 4:6-7

Conclusion:

- A. Consider your own leadership over the ones following you.
 1. You are being looked to for an example. Set a worthy one.
 2. Take responsibility for your failures ("that's his fault for following").
 - a. Ever wonder why children turn off to some adults?
 - b. The adult acted selfishly or callously, abdicating his leadership.
 3. Be humble enough to point out when praised that you are simply following another – Jesus Christ.
- B. Matt. 5:13-16
- C. When circumstances beyond your control change your family structure, you can still have a happy, healthy home and lead a fulfilling life together.
- D. John and Lynne Hager forgiving the boy who driving the car that took their daughter's life; an echo of God forgiving us for sending Jesus to the cross.

“What Do the Scriptures Say About Living Single?”

Introduction:

- A. Lessons are often presented on the subject of Home and Family
 - 1. Considering problems of marriage and difficulties in parenting, the responsibilities of spouses, parents, and children
 - 2. In many cases, little is said concerning those who are single
 - 3. Perhaps because the "nuclear" family is assumed to be the norm
- B. There is a large segment of each congregation who live unmarried.
- C. These beloved disciples and the lives that they lead are addressed in the word of God.
 - 1. They have a vital role in the health and work of the local church.
 - 2. They are spoken of with respect by the scriptures.
 - 3. They must be treated with affection and regard by the disciples.

I. QUESTIONS ABOUT LIVING SINGLE

- A. Why might one be single?
 - 1. Some may be single by circumstance
 - a. Women who have yet to be asked to marry
 - b. Men who have not yet found a woman to accept their proposal
 - c. Those who are divorced, perhaps through no fault of their own
 - d. Those who are widowed, suffering the untimely loss of a spouse
 - e. Those too young to marry
 - f. Those who cannot marry due to illness
 - 2. Some may be single by choice
 - a. Perhaps they prefer the single life on its own merits
 - b. Perhaps they have chosen to remain single for other reasons
 - 1) Jesus said some would be single for the sake of the kingdom - Matt. 19:11-12
 - 2) Paul considered his singleness a gift from God - 1Cor. 7:7-8
 - 3) Some may simply have no interest in physical relations reserved for and required in marriage
 - 3. Sometimes, circumstances make being single the best choice
 - a. As in times of persecution - 1Cor. 7:25-28
 - b. Or in times of war, disaster, famine
 - 4. With so many possible reasons, we should be careful not to assume why one may be single.
- B. Are there benefits to being single?
 - 1. Freedom from care in times of distress or persecution - 1Cor. 7:26-28, 32
 - a. In such times, it is a blessing not to have to worry about protecting and providing for a spouse and children
 - 2. Freedom to serve the Lord
 - a. Paul describes in 1Cor. 7:32-35
 - b. There are opportunities to serve the Lord that may not be

- available to one with familial responsibilities
- c. Mission work; benevolent ministry
- C. Are there disadvantages to being single?
1. Increased Temptation
 - a. Physical desires can be strong
 - 1) If so, then one should not be single by choice
 - 2) Marriage is for those who don't have the gift of singleness
1Cor. 7:8-9
 - b. If single by circumstance, one needs to be extra careful
 - 1) They may not have the help of close supervision by other family members
 - 2) Opportunities to sin increase when no one is looking
 - 3) 1Cor. 10:13
 2. Risk of Loneliness
 - a. Not to be confused with solitude, which many single people enjoy
 - b. Loneliness can lead to depression, which can render one ineffective in the service of God
 3. Potential for Self-centeredness
 - a. Living alone, it is easy to become set in one's own ways
 - b. One may soon forget how to accommodate others
- D. In spite of what zealous and misguided brethren may teach, there is no command for one to marry. While it is God's design, He will not judge and punish those who remain single.
1. The single life is not worse than married life, only different. It comes with its own unique challenges, of which all Christians (married or single) should be aware.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SINGLE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

- A. To those who are single:
1. Take advantage of being single
 - a. Use the freedom to increase your service to God - 1Cor. 7:32-35
 - b. Don't be selfish with the extra time you may have
 - c. Don't resent others who may not do as much as you because of family obligations
 2. Watch out for the dangers of being single
 - a. Temptations - make an effort to develop a close relationship with the Lord
 - b. Loneliness - accept invitations to be with others, initiate opportunities to be with others
 - c. Self-centeredness - offer yourself in service to others; be flexible
 3. Remember that you are in the family of God
 - a. You have many mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children; develop and maintain these relationships - Mark 10:29-30
- B. To those who are not single:
1. Be accepting of those are single by choice
 - a. If they have the gift of singleness, don't consider them strange

- b. Thank God for His diversity of gifts to His people
- c. Use the singles for increased service to God
- 2. Be understanding toward those who are single by circumstance
 - a. The challenges they face are due to no choice of their own
 - b. The temptations they face in living the single life are hard
- 3. Be sensitive toward all who are single, whether by choice or circumstance
 - a. They need to be part of our family in Christ
 - b. They need friendship and involvement in our activities

Conclusion:

- A. No matter what our station in life, God can give us the strength and wisdom to lead productive and joyful lives.
- B. If you are single, and your service to Christ has been hindered by misconceptions, either your own or those of others, put them aside and join together in our work in this place for the Lord.

The Origin and Preservation of Books of the Bible

I. "It is not possible for us to fix with exact precision the circumstances of the Bible's origin. We cannot go to a specific time and place and say that here the Bible had its birth. As through hundreds of years ancient literary works took shape in many forms, so also from century to century the many books of the Bible were coming into being separately and under varying conditions. ... But the Bible is more than an ordinary collection: it is a treasure-house of sacred books which has grown through the centuries until it has attained its present stature. And it is the firm belief of Christians that the Bible is honored today because in the past it grew under the favorable and directing influence of Him who is the author of all things." (*How We Got the Bible, Lightfoot, Sweet Co., 1962, pg. 9*)

II. For many years God communicated orally with the Patriarchs such as Adam, Noah, and Abraham. There came a time, however, in God's purpose when He wished for divine revelation to be recorded in written form.

A. Moses, who lived about 1500 BC, is the first person mentioned in the Bible as writing anything. His writings included the memorial to Amalek (Ex. 17:14), the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:27-28), and the song found in Deut. 32:1-43 (Deut. 31:22). The Bible supports the conclusion that Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible, termed the Pentateuch (Josh. 8:31, Judge. 3:4, Mal. 4:4, Luke 24:44, John 7:19).

B. Other inspired writers added to this record of divine revelations and historical events (Josh. 24:25-26, 1Sam. 10:25, Ecc. 1:1, Jer. 36:1-2).

C. In this gradual way, the Old Testament scriptures finally came to be assembled in an accepted collection about the time of Ezra (400 BC).

D. Josephus, writing in the first century, said that no book was added to the Hebrew scriptures after the time of Malachi.

E. Peter makes it clear that the Old Testament prophecies were not the work of mere man (2Peter 1:20-21). All of the books which we accept as part of the Old Testament pass the scholarly tests for genuineness, authenticity, and canonicity. No books are left out which O.T. scholars believe should be included. No books are included which scholars believe should be tossed out.

F. The New Testament collection was also assembled in a gradual way over a shorter period of time (50-100 AD). These books were letters or records written by inspired men and addressed to different churches and individuals.

G. From the first, these letters and records were distinctively authoritative, and thus they were received with respect and read in the public assemblies wherever Christians worshipped (1Thes. 5:27, Col. 4:16).

H. The canon of New Testament scriptures was well-established by the 4th century AD

III. Our Bible today is divided into two major sections, the Old and New Testaments. The Greek word which translators have rendered as "testament" may be better understood as a contract, will, or covenant. This concept of two covenants is solidly supported by scripture (2Cor. 3:7-11; Heb. 9:15). Christians understand that the New Covenant has replaced the Old (Gal. 5:3-4).

A. There are a total of 66 books in our Bibles. The Old Testament contains 39, and the

New Testament has 27. About 40 people were engaged in writing the Bible. Moses was the first and John the last. About 1500 years were consumed in writing the Bible.

B. There are three dispensations recognized in the Bible:

1. The Patriarchal--from Adam to Moses
2. The Jewish or Mosaic--from Moses to the death of Christ
3. The Christian--from Pentecost to the end of the world

C. The Old Testament may be subdivided into four sections:

1. The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
2. Books of History (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
3. Books of Poetry (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
4. Books of Prophecy (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hoses, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).

D. The New Testament may also be subdivided into four sections:

1. The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
2. History (Acts)
3. Books of Doctrine (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 9 John, and Jude)
4. Book of Prophecy (Revelation).

E. The Bible was divided into chapters by Hugo in 1240. The Old Testament was divided into verses by Mordecai Nathan in 1445. The New Testament was divided into verses by Robert Steven in 1551. (*Much of the above information in the above points is taken from Nicholas Pocket Bible Encyclopedia, C.R. Nichol and J.W. Denton, A.C.U. Press, 1949.*)

IV. The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

A. Most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, a language written from right to left. Aramaic is a kindred language to Hebrew which became the language of the common man in Palestine after the time of the exile. Aramaic passages include Ezra 4:8-6:18 and Dan. 2:4 ("O king"); 7:28.

B. The books of the New Testament were written in Greek, which was the universal language of the first century. Few Aramaic expressions remain, such as Matt. 27:46 ("Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?") Aramaic was probably the language spoken by our Lord.

V. Ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament are neither as old as the manuscripts for the New Testament nor as plentiful. Manuscripts of the New Testament date back to the fourth century and earlier, but the earliest Hebrew manuscripts are the Cairo Codex (895 A.D.) and the Leningrad Codex of the Prophets (916 A.D.)

A. Oldest manuscript of the entire Old Testament is the Leningrad Codex of 1008 A.D.

B. Another important early manuscript of the Old Testament is the British Museum Codex of the Pentateuch.

VI. Why would there be fewer ancient manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, and why would these manuscripts be later in comparison with the New Testament manuscripts?

A. The Jewish scribes looked upon their copies of the Scriptures with a reverential respect bordering on the superstitious. This motivated them to give a ceremonial burying of any copy which had become old and worn.

B. While this ancient custom was designed to prevent the improper use of Holy Scripture, lest it fall into the wrong hands, it also lengthened the time between the original Old Testament autographs and the earliest copies of the text.

VII. All of the earliest copies of the Old Testament are handwritten, and the various circles of Jewish scribes who participated in this copying were extraordinarily careful in their work.

A. The most important group of these Jewish scholars was the Massoretes, who formed about 500 A.D. and labored for 4 or 5 centuries.

B. The Massoretes were skillful and persistent in their textual work. To ensure accuracy and eliminate scribal slips they numbered verses, words, and letters of each book. They also calculated the middle verse, the middle word, and the middle letter of each book. (The middle verse of the Pentateuch is Lev. 8:7, while the middle verse of the Hebrew Bible is Jeremiah 6:7). In addition, they counted the number of times each letter was used in each book. With these safeguards, they could accurately check one another's work by counting letters, words, and verses. Earlier Jewish scribes were just as meticulous in their transcription.

C. How accurate is our Old Testament? In 1998 the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered near the Dead Sea by an Arab boy looking for a lost goat. These 350 fragmentary rolls, preserved in jars, date from as early as 100 B.C. and contain parts of nearly all the Old Testament books. These scrolls, which are a thousand years earlier than our previous Hebrew manuscripts, prove the extraordinary accuracy of the Hebrew text.

The New Testament Books

I. The New Testament letters were written in the latter half of the first century on papyrus sheets. Because papyrus is a fragile writing material, the original letters perished within a fairly short period of time. How do we know, then, that we have accurate copies of the original manuscripts?

A. Because these original letters written in Greek were received by the early Christians as authoritative messages directed from heaven. Many copies were made.

B. There are two major types of New Testament manuscripts: uncials and cursives. Uncials, written in all capital letters, are the earliest and most important type. Cursives, written in a smaller, running-hand style, did not debut until the ninth century. Altogether, there are about 500 uncials and 4,700 cursives. Most of these are not complete copies of the New Testament because a handwritten copy of the entire text on paper of the day would be very bulky.

C. Uncial writing would appear very strange to us today because there are no spaces separating words, nor are there marks or punctuation. Paul's letter to the Romans (translated into English) would appear something like this in the uncial style:

PAULASER VANTOFJESUSCHRISTCA LLEDTOBE

ANAPOSTLESEPA RATEDUNTO THEGOSPELOFG
ODWHICHHEPROMIS EDAFORETHRO UGHTHEP

(Note that spaces were used to keep columns straight)

D. About 70 of these uncial documents, written on papyrus, have been discovered in the last 75 years. These are some of the earliest uncials, dating from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. About thirty fragments of pottery, with portions of the New Testament copied on them, were found at the same time. Our other 200 uncials, copied on vellum, date from the 4th to 9th centuries.

E. The oldest vellum uncials are the Vatican, the Sinaitic, and the the Alexandrian manuscripts, which date from 300-450 A.D. These are complete, or nearly complete, copies of the New Testament and are the oldest Bibles in the world. All three of these are in codex (book) form and all have become known to scholars since the King James translation of the Bible.

F. Though there is a far greater number of the cursives, their later dates render them less important than the uncials. They do, however, add to our scholarship, and they are quite interesting in appearance. Many have elaborate ornamentation, complete with multi-colored drawings and rich stampings.

G. We also have many volumes of letters written by early Christians. These writers copied portions of scripture from New Testaments which are much older than any we possess today. These valuable documents tell us much about ancient Bibles used by the early church. Some of these fragments date from the end of the first century.

II. The original autographs of the New Testament letters perished long ago, but there are over 5,000 ancient copies (both uncials and cursives) of these letters. Some of these copies are fragmentary, while others are nearly complete. In addition, the voluminous writings of early Christians contain frequent quotations of scripture. Much of this correspondence is especially valuable because it dates from the end of the first century to shortly thereafter.

A. Obviously, any time copies are made of original letters, mistakes can be made. While the original authors of the New Testament were inspired in their writing, copyists are not. Unintentional errors may be committed. Similar words may be confused (as in the English "affect" and "effect"). Words are left out, or a word is accidentally repeated. Sometimes explanatory remarks which were written in the margin by one scribe are accidentally copied into the body of the text by the next scribe. Occasionally a scribe may insert a new word or thought into a text because he believes he has detected a previous mistake or omission, when in reality there was no mistake to begin with.

B. Consider one, brief example. In the King James translation Acts 8:37 reads, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The Greek text the King James translators examined had these words written in them. In the intervening centuries archeologists have uncovered other, older manuscripts which suggest that v.37 may have been added by a scribe who wanted to "help out" the text with an explanatory addition. The American Standard and New American Standard translations add marginal notes in the place of v.37 which explain that some manuscripts and authorities include this verse.

III. The question arises: How important are these textual variations? Can we have confidence in our New Testament translations?

A. The answer is a resounding YES! First, we need to realize that there are more copies of the New Testament than any other book from the ancient world. While there are variations among these manuscripts, the large number of copies provides the means of checking these variations.

B. If we were to put ten intelligent men and women in a large room filled with 5,000 copies of the New Testament, some of which contained variations, and gave them all the time and resources they needed, would they be able to produce an accurate, reliable copy? Of course they would!

C. Almost all of the variations are of trivial, inconsequential matters which do not affect the text. For example, should we add or delete an "a", "and", or "the"? Which form of the same Greek word should we use? Westcott and Hort put it this way: "The proportion of words virtually accepted on all hands as raised above doubt is very great, not less ... than seven eighths of the whole. The amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation ... can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text." The bottom line is that textual critics agree on the genuineness and reliability of the New Testament.

IV. With all these different sources, how well attested is the Bible? Do we have an adequate amount of these sources to know if we now have the original words of the apostles and prophets of the first century?

A. First consider some other writings of ancient history and their witnesses...

1. The History of Thucydides (400 B.C.) – 8 manuscripts
2. Tacitus, a Roman Historian (A.D. 100) – 2 manuscripts
3. Gallic Wars – 10 manuscripts
4. Homer's "Iliad" – 643 manuscripts

B. How does the New Testament compare to these other books of antiquity.

1. There are 5,200+ Greek manuscripts of the New Testament available today
2. Over 2,200 Lectionaries (Books used in worship that cite the Bible).
3. Ancient Versions – 9,000 manuscripts (largely due to the advance of the Roman religion that spread the Latin Vulgate throughout Europe).
4. Church "Fathers" – ca. 36,000 citations – scholars say that all but four verses of the entire New Testament text could be reconstructed from the citations of the early Church Fathers alone!
5. The New Testament by far is the best attested book of antiquity - (Mt. 24:35)

The Making of Ancient Books

I. The early history of writing and origins of ancient books and the history of the Bible

A. Early Writing

1. The Bible is a very old book, but there are many older books. Discoveries in recent times show that writing was a well-established art in many countries long before the beginnings of the Hebrew nation in the land of Palestine. The earliest known examples of writing carry into the ancient land of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Because of the abundance of clay tablets, writing was widespread in Mesopotamia at least by 3000 BC.

We know also that Egyptian texts reach farther back and survived in hieroglyphs on monuments, temples, and tombs.

2. The best example of an early alphabetic script are the so-called Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions. Consisting of a small group of rock-carved graffiti and dating back to about 1500 BC, these inscriptions are located only about fifty miles from the traditional site of Mount Sinai. At least five different systems of writing are known to have existed in the general area of Syria-Palestine when Moses lived. All this means it can no longer be assumed that it was impossible for Moses to have written the books ascribed to him.

B. Writing Materials

1. Stone. In almost every region the earliest material on which writing has been found is stone. In Babylonia and elsewhere, legal and religious laws were inscribed and erected for public display. Hammurabi (c. 1750 BC), one of the well-known Babylonian kings, set up his stele (an upright stone monument) in order that any oppressed person might read his 250 laws and be granted justice.

a. Gezer Calendar is a kind of poem having to do with various agricultural activities during the months of the year. Scratched on a small piece of white limestone are twenty words of an early Hebrew alphabetic script, dating (c. 925 BC).

b. The Siloam Inscription (700 BC) was written when Hezekiah had a tunnel constructed to convey water into Jerusalem (2 Kings 20:20; 2Chron. 32:30). The inscription tells of the completion of the S-shaped tunnel dug from opposite ends.

c. The Moabite Stone was found east of the Dead Sea. Containing 34 lines of "Canaanite" script, written in the ninth century BC, it was erected by King Mesha of Moab to commemorate his revolt against Israel (2 Kings 3:4-27). It is the only inscription outside of Palestine proper that mentions the Divine Name (YHWH) of Israel's God.

d. Moabite Stone (930 BC) - "And I took from there the altar-hearths of Yahweh, and I dragged them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built Jabaz and dwelt in it while he fought with me and Chemosh drove him out from before me. And I took from Moab two hundred men, all its chiefs, and I led them against Jahaz and took it to add unto Dibon."

1. The earliest writing material mentioned in the Old Testament is stone, and on it was written the Ten Commandments. "And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18; cf. 34:1, 28; Deut. 10:1-5).

2. Ink on plaster. Moses had said to the Israelites, "So it shall be on the day when you shall cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones, and coat them with lime and write on them all the words of this law..." (Deut 27:2-3). An Aramaic text (700 BC) from the plaster of a temple wall in the Jordan valley says, "This is the record of Balaam, son of Beor..." (Num. 22-24). Inscription appears like a column of scroll.

3. Clay. The most common writing material in Mesopotamia was clay. The moist clay was made into tablets, then written upon and baked in an oven or allowed to dry in the sun. This is the kind of material referred to in Ezekiel 4:1 when the prophet is commanded to sketch a plan of Jerusalem on a brick. Clay tablets were so durable that a half million or more of them have survived.

4. Clay tablets were written upon in cuneiform (wedge-shaped letters). Tablets were made in all shapes and sizes and were used for all types of literary purposes. Historical

texts, often in the shape of a barrel, were placed in the cornerstones of buildings, and clay nails were stuck in the walls, inscribed in the king's name in whose time the building was erected. Tablets were kept in special archive rooms, stored on shelves or in baskets or boxes of clay jars (Jer. 32:14).

a.. At Tell-El-Armana, in central Egypt, a native woman found several hundred tablets inscribed in cuneiform. The tablets (from 1350 BC) were official correspondence between the pharaohs of Egypt and rulers in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and other places.

b. The chronicles of a number of kings mentioned in the Old Testament have been preserved on clay tablets:

- Sargon II (721 BC)
- Sennacherib details siege of Hezekiah in Jerusalem.
- Ashurbanipal (Osnapper in the Old Testament - Ezra 4:10) boasts that he had learned "the entire art of writing on clay tablets."
- Nebuchadrezzar II (Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:28-30) tells of his vast building.
- Belshazzar, mentioned in Daniel, left clay cylinders of prayers and tablets on various subjects.

5. Wood and wax. The OT makes specific reference to writing on wooden rods and sticks (Num. 17:2-3; Ezek. 37:16-17). In Greek and Roman times a whitened board was used for public notices, and this was called an "album." At the death of Jesus, the inscription on the cross was probably written on a whitewashed board.

6. Wooden tablets often had an inlay of wax, which could be written upon or erased as occasion demanded. They could be used singly or fastened together and turned like pages of a book. The Romans called a tablet bound together a codex (plural codices), the term that was later employed for a book with many sheets. Isaiah 30:8 and Habakkuk 2:2 may refer to these wooden writing boards.

The Origin and Preservation of the Books of the Bible Part Two

I. By A.D. 100, God had given all the information to man that He was going to give (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; 2Peter 1:3).

A. Immediately upon completion of these writings, copies were necessary (Col. 4:16; 1Thes. 5:27).

B. The only means of duplication until the fifteenth century was by manual handwriting. (A.D. 1454 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press)

C. It is by these handwritten copies, handed down through the centuries, that we have the text of the Bible today.

D. The "autographs" (the very documents that were penned by the inspired authors, Paul, Peter, John, Matthew, Luke, etc.) have not been preserved for us today. We have copies of the autographs.

II. The autographs were written in the "Koine" Greek language; the universal language of the Roman world in the first century. The earliest copies of these autographs are, therefore, in this original language. While Greek copies are the primary source of the Bible, there are other sources worthy of consideration...

A. Ancient Versions – There was not only a need for copies of the Scriptures in the Greek language, but in various other languages as well. (E.g. Syriac, Coptic, Latin, etc.) The ancient versions serve as a valuable witness to the New Testament text.

B. Church "Fathers" – Several writings by early Christians have survived the centuries. In personal letters and correspondences these Christians often quoted New Testament passages. These quotations are also an important contribution to our biblical text.

C. Ostraca – Pieces of pottery used by the poor on which to write the Scriptures.

III. Originally, the only means of copying the Scriptures in the early church was by manual handwriting. By this means we have the many manuscripts of the Bible.

A. Remember two very important dates: These events brought a desire to have the Scriptures translated into the many extant languages. Until this time the Scriptures (at least in Europe) were primarily in Latin, which was not the common language of anyone.

1. 1454 – Printing press invented – This ushered in a new era of duplication. All dates in Bible History should be viewed in relation to this date. Interestingly, the very first production from the printing press was The Bible (Jerome's Latin Vulgate) in 1456. [This brought a desire to compile a single Greek text]

2. 1517 – Protestant Reformation begins – On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany challenging Eck to debate the errors of Catholicism, thus ushering in a new era in the history of Christendom.

VI. With the invention of the printing press in A.D. 1454, men decided to compile a single Greek New Testament.

A. Since mass quantities of identical copies of the New Testament could be easily produced, it became necessary to have a single Greek text.

B. One could either (1) choose a single manuscript from the more than 5,000 extant manuscripts and make that the standard text, or (2) compare all of the available

manuscript evidence and compile a single text. The latter option would surely be more accurate!

Possible Sources of Discrepancies in Transmission of Text of the New Testament

I. Unintentional Changes

1. Errors arising from faulty eyesight

- a. Scribes with astigmatism
 - b. The free use of abbreviations
 - c. When two lines happened to end with the same word or words, a line or passage may be skipped.
 - d. Wrong word division – The earliest Greek copies were written in scriptio continua which were manuscripts that did not contain spaces to divide words. In later centuries however, manuscripts were written in minuscule form (similar to our lower case form), which did contain word divisions. While copying from an early manuscript, a scribe would sometimes fail to divide words properly.
 - 1) For example, GODISNOWHERE could be divided: "God is now here" or "God is no where." ISAWABUNDANCEONTHETABLE could be divided "I saw abundance on the table" or "I saw a bun dance on the table"
 - 2) 1Cor. 16:22 – maranaqa- could be rendered...
 - maran_aqa - "Our Lord has come"
 - mara_naqa - same, or "will come"
 - marana_qa - "O Lord come!"
 - e. If two lines on the same page had a similar ending, the scribe could inadvertently skip from the first "ending" to the second "ending" that had the same letters (Mt. 25:34-46 contains many of the same words).
 - 1) Omission of words
 - 2) Repetition of words (probably Rom. 8:1)
- #### 2. Errors arising from faulty hearing
- a. errors arising from words that have the same pronunciation (their, there, they're). (Rom. 5:1; Luke 16:25)
 - b. itacsim: the substitution of one vowel or diphthong for another
 - c. We can identify with this even in the English language. Has anyone ever mistaken "deer" with "dear" or "hart" with "heart"?
- #### 3. Errors of the mind
- a. substitution of synonymns
 - b. variations in the sequence of words
 - c. transposition of letters (Mark 14:65).
 - d. the assimilation of the wording of one passage to the slightly different wording in a parallel passage, which may have been better known to the scribe. This accounts for many of the alterations in the Synoptic gospels. (Matt. 19:17; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18.)
- #### 4. Errors of Judgment
- a. Scribes were often sleepy or dull-thinking even though well-meaning.
 - b. Glosses: words or notes standing in the margins of older copies were occasionally incorporated into the text of the new manuscript. (John 5:4; Rom. 8:1; 1John 5:7-8).
- #### 5. Remember, these copies, versions, citations, etc. were (until A.D. 1450) hand written

manuscripts and were therefore subject to human mistakes. Imagine sitting down to copy the entire Bible (or N.T. for that matter) without leaving out a word or possibly duplicating a certain word! Therefore, many different variations are found in the vast array of materials we have. These are sometimes called "Textual Variants." This is why we see "Marginal Notes" in our Bibles today.

II. Intentional Changes (Though made by scribes in good faith, they proved dangerous. Scribes occasionally made changes thinking they were correcting an earlier error.)

A. Changes Involving Spelling and Grammar

1. Harmonistic corruptions

- a. John 19:20 was introduced into Luke 23:38: "It was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek."
- b. The shorter form of the "Lord's Prayer" in Luke 9:2-4 was made to agree with Matt. 6:9-13. The words of Paul in Acts 9:5-6 were made to conform to Acts 26:14,15.
- c. Heb. 12:20 some add the words of Exodus 19:13.
- d. Luke 11:2-4 was changed to harmonize with Matt. 6:9-13.
- e. Matt. 19:17 was changed to agree with the form of Jesus' words as found in Mark 10:18.

2. Addition of Natural Complements and Similar Adjuncts

- a. "unto repentance" found in Luke 5:32 was added to Matt. 9:13. "Scribes" added to the chief priests in Matt. 16:3. Pharisees added to scribes in Matt. 27:41.
- b. Col. 1:23 - Paul is a minister. Later mss added "preacher and apostle"
- c. In Gal. 6:17 "Jesus" becomes "Lord Jesus," "Lord Jesus Christ," and "our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Clearing Up Historical and Geographical Difficulties

- a. In Mark 1:2 the composite quotation from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 is introduced by the formula, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet." Later scribes replaced this with the general statement "by the prophets," thinking they mended the error.
- b. Some scribes attempted to harmonize John 19:14 (about the sixth hour crucifixion) with Mark 15:25 (third hour crucifixion). John uses Roman time (20:19), while Mark is using Jewish
- c. "After three days" of Mark 8:31 changed to "on the third day" by scribes

4. Conflation of Readings

- a. What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Many scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing.
- b. Acts 20:28 "church of God" and "church of our Lord" became "the church of the Lord and God."

5. Alterations Made Because of Doctrinal Considerations

- a. Marcion left out all references to the Jewish background of Jesus.
- b. Changes in Luke 2:33, 41,43,48 from "his father" or "his parent" to Joseph so as to support the virgin birth.
- c. Luke 2:33 – to "preserve" the virgin birth of Christ, scribes changed "His father and mother" to "Joseph and His mother."
- d. Mark 9:29 – the addition of "fasting" to "prayer." "Fasting" is also added to Acts 10:30 and 1Cor. 7:5.

6. Addition of Extra Details. Copyist errors were adopted by later copyists
7. While there have been some errors which have crept into the 5,480 MSS of the NT, we should not be overly concerned. The significant point is that all uncials and most miniscules have transmitted the NT text with conscientious exactness. All manuscripts of all types completely agree on more than 80 percent of the New Testament text.
- a. By comparative examinations of the manuscripts beginning with the oldest, copyist errors have been reduced to less than one half of one percent.
 - b. No copyist error exists on any significant matter of doctrine

The Canon of Scriptures

I. Much of our discussion up to this point has centered around the transmission of the Bible text. We've examined how and under what conditions the text has come down to us and why we can have confidence in the exact words of the text. Another important question is this: Since many religious books were written during the period of the Old and New Testaments, how was the canon of Scriptures established? How do we know which religious books rightfully belong to the Bible and which should be excluded from it? Good evidence exists that by the time of Jesus the canon of the Old Testament had been fixed. Time after time Jesus and the apostles quote from a body of writings known as "Scripture" Obviously some writings in existence were regarded as Scripture and others were not. Some writings belonged in the canon of Scriptures and others were apocryphal.

A. What were the inspired Old Testament writings according to Jesus? See Lk. 24:44. Here Jesus identifies the Old Covenant as the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms, which is harmonious with our text .

B. Lk. 11:51 also supports our canon of scriptures because here Jesus lists the first Old Testament martyr (Abel) and the last Old Testament martyr (Zechariah). Keep in mind that the Jewish order of the Old Testament differs from ours, and that the death of Zechariah (II Chron. 24:20-21) comes at the end of the Hebrew Bible.

C. The point is this: The Old Testament which Jesus recognized was a collection of writings reaching from Genesis to Chronicles, with all the other books in between,- a collection which embraces the same books found in our Old Testament today.

D. Josephus, a well-known Jewish writer of the first century also supports our Old Testament canon. He writes, "We have not 10,000 among us, disagreeing with and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books which contain the records of all time, and are justly believed to be divine." The Jews categorized their books differently than we do. For example, the 12 minor prophets were considered as one book, and their 22 books were equal to our 39.

II. When the first-century church was first established, there was no thought of a New Testament. Its new teachings were based on the authority of Christ as personally mediated through the apostles. Jesus clearly explained that the apostles' doctrine carried the weight of divine authority (John 14:26, John 16:13, Matt.28:19-20).

A. As Inspired men wrote divine regulations which were directed to the First Century churches and individuals, their work was preserved, copied, and spread among the churches. Collections of these writings were made at different times and in different

places, with each book in the collection being judged on its own merits.

B. In this way, the canon of New Testament scriptures was confirmed gradually. (See Gal. 1:8-9 and Jude 3). In 367 A.D. Athanasius of Alexandria published a list of 27 New Testament books which are accepted today because they meet the tests of scholarship, authority, and authenticity.

III. Today there is very little discussion among scholars about what books rightfully belong in the Bible. The 66 books which are counted as Holy Scripture have earned their place in our texts. The Old Testament canon was well-defined by the time of Jesus. The 27 New Testament books are there because their authority and authenticity were apparent to the early church.

IV. It is interesting to note that the Catholic and Protestant Bibles contain the same 27 New Testament books, but their Old Testament collections differ. For example, Catholic Old Testaments include the books of Tobit, Judith, Eel and the Dragon, and the First and Second book of Maccabees.

A. How do we know that these books are apocryphal? What marks them as spurious and counterfeit?

1. First, these books were never included in the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament. There is no evidence that any of these books were ever accepted by any of the Jewish community.

2. Jesus and the apostles never refer to any of the events or characters in these books. The New Testament writers quote from practically all of the Old Testament books, but they never quote from the apocrypha as "Scripture."

3. Early Jewish writers such as Josephus and Philo never accepted these books as Scripture.

4. These books do not have the intrinsic qualities of scripture. They contain obvious historical, chronological, and geographical errors. For example, in the apocryphal book of Judith, Nebuchadnezzar is said to rule over the Assyrian empire from the city of Ninevah when he was actually the King of the Babylonians in Babylon. Additionally, these books contradict one another and canonical scripture.

B. The New Testament apocrypha include various gospels, epistles, and Apocalypses. They are even easier to dismiss than the Old Testament apocrypha because they are such blatant counterfeits.

1. Scholars have established that many of these books were written under the assumed names of the apostles and others during the second century or later.

2. Most are filled with fanciful and fictitious tales. For example, the Apocryphal Gospels often deal with the early life of Jesus and portray him as a temperamental child. Here he causes the death of one of his playmates and there he gives life to a dried fish.

C. The Apocrypha are rejected for good reason. They are not "lost books" of the Bible.

V. To conclude this part of our study, refer back to Mark 13:91, 1Peter1:24-25, 1Thes.2:13, and 2Tim. 3:18-17. The more scholarly evidence we gather and examine, the more we see the hand of God at work in preserving His word.

A. It has been estimated by several Biblical scholars (Bruce Metzger and Sir David Dalrymple among them) that the whole New Testament can be reconstructed from

references from the Early Church Fathers in the second and third centuries.

B. While the books that now comprise the New Testament were in widespread use from the first century, it actually took quite a while to turn them into an official "canon". The first attempt at creating an official list of books for inclusion in the New Testament was by a gnostic shipowner named Marcion (c. 85 - c. 160 A.D.). As a gnostic, Marcion believed that there were two Gods in the universe - the God depicted in the Old Testament, and the God represented by Jesus in the New Testament. To accommodate these (and other) gnostic beliefs, Marcion created a list of books that he considered authoritative, based on his theological views. These included a condensed version of the Gospel of Luke (lacking the Nativity and Resurrection scenes), and 10 of Paul's letters. While the gnostic theology of Marcion was roundly condemned by the Early Church Fathers, his list was the first known attempt at defining a New Testament canon, and it prodded the Early Church Fathers to give greater consideration to those books that should be considered authoritative.

C. One of the first known attempts by the Early Church Fathers to define a canon (and to refute the list postulated by Marcion) was in a fragmentary list (85 lines) dated to c. 200 A.D., named (after its 18th century discoverer, Lodovico Muratori) the Muratori Canon. The Muratori Canon is remarkably similar to our modern day New Testament, lacking only Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, and III John.

1. Eusebius (c. 260 - c. 340 A.D.) and his Ecclesiastical History -- Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, at the request of Emperor Constantine, wrote a church history around the time of the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). In the preface, he identifies that this is the first Church history ever attempted:

a. "It is my purpose to write an account of the successions of the holy apostles, as well as of the times which have elapsed from the days of our Savior to our own; and to relate the many important events which are said to have occurred in the history of the Church; and to mention those who have governed and presided over the Church in the most prominent parishes, and those who in each generation have proclaimed the divine word either orally or in writing...This work seems to me of especial importance because I know of no ecclesiastical writer who has devoted himself to this subject; and I hope that it will appear most useful to those who are fond of historical research." (Eusebius, Book 1, Chapter 1)

b. In the course of his 400 page work, Eusebius grants the reader several glimpses as to which writings of the New Testament are "accepted", "disputed", and "rejected" at the time of the Council of Nicea. (Note that Eusebius lists the Revelation of John under both the "accepted" and "rejected" columns!)

c. Eusebius also includes a final category, reserved for the writings of heretics - "absurd and impious". It is important to note that Eusebius goes to great pains to draw a distinction between "rejected" books that "although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers" (Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Revelation of Peter), and heretical books in the "absurd and impious" category (Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, etc.)

2. Athanasius (c. 296-373 A.D.) -- Athanasius served as the Bishop of Alexandria for 45 years. In 367 A.D. "the thirty-ninth Letter of Holy Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, on the Paschal festival" was written. It contains the New Testament canon as we know it today, in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches:

a. "...it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that any one who has fallen into error may condemn those who have led him astray; and that he who has continued steadfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance."

b. "Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John." ("Festal Letter 39")

c. "These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these." (Athanasius, "Festal Letter 39")

d. Athanasius goes on to describe several other books which, while not canonical, should be read by those "who wish for instruction in the word of godliness". These books include parts of the Old Testament Apocrypha, the second century Didache ("The Teaching of the Apostles"), and the Shephard of Hermas: "...that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd..." (Athanasius, "Festal Letter 39")

3. The Councils of Hippo and Carthage -- The list of the canonical books of the New Testament, published by Athanasius in 367 A.D., was officially adopted by three later councils, including the Council of Hippo in 393 A.D., and the Councils of Carthage in 397 A.D. and 419 A.D.

English Translations of the Bible

I. The first men who translated the Bible into the common language of the English speaking people did so at great risk.

A. John Wycliffe (1320-1584) was an Oxford educated-individual who recognized and repudiated the lavish expenditures of the Roman church. He believed that the surest way to defeat Rome was to place the Bible in the hands of the common man in a language that he could understand. His New Testament work was completed in 1380, and his translation of the entire Bible appeared in 1384. Wycliffe's version, translated from the Latin, marked the first serious defeat for the Roman church's control over the people of England. He did not live to see the final fruits of his translation, however, because two years after its completion, he died of a stroke. In 1428, in accordance with a decree of the council of Constance in 1415, his body was exhumed and burned, and his ashes were thrown into the River Swift. Here's a sample of Wycliffe's translation: "Our Fadir that art in heunes, halewid be thi name. Thi Kingdom comme to, be Thi wille

done as in heuen so in erthe. Gyve to us this dai oure breed oeur other substance; and forgyve to us our dettis as we forgyven to oure dettouris. ...(Matt. 6:9ff).

B. William Tyndale (1484-1536) is often called the true father of English translations. Following his education at Oxford and Cambridge, his life's ambition was to give the English people a translation of the Bible based not on Latin but upon the original Greek and Hebrew. He once said to one of his opponents, "It God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scripture than thou doest." The Roman Church hierarchy in England was so hostile toward him that he had to flee to Hamburg, Germany, to complete his work. Tyndale completed his translation of Erasmus's Greek New Testament in 1525. The printing press was now in use, so copies of Tyndale's translation were printed abroad and smuggled back into England. Though church officials sought to buy up and burn all available copies, their effort was in vain. The common man now had access to the Bible in his own language. Not only that, but this version was not a translation from a translation, like Wycliffe's, but a translation from the original Greek. Ultimately, Tyndale was betrayed by men whom he thought were his friends and he was imprisoned in 1554. In 1556, after spending months in prison, he was strangled and burned at the stake, crying, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" He was never able to complete his work on the Old Testament.

C. Tyndale's version has had far-reaching effects. It has been the standard for all English translations which have followed. It has greatly influenced the character, form, and style of the King James Version which is presently in use today. His work and its influence serve to emphasize the words of Jesus in Mark 13:31. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away."

II. With the aid of the printing press, and with Tyndale's work as a foundation, other English translations quickly followed.

A. Miles Coverdale Bible (1535-36). While Tyndale was in prison awaiting judgment and death, the Miles Coverdale Bible was circulated in England without official hindrance. The King of England's attitude was changing towards English translations. Coverdale was neither a Greek nor Hebrew scholar, but he was a very capable editor who gathered the very best materials available at the time. His Old Testament work was based on the Zurich Bible, Luther's German translation, the Latin Vulgate, and Tyndale's work on the Pentateuch. His New Testament translation was founded upon Tyndale's version and Luther's German translation. This was the first complete printed Bible in the English language, and it was immensely popular. Isn't it ironic, that less than a year after Tyndale's martyrdom, the entire Bible was distributed, in the English language, without royal opposition?

B. John Rogers--Matthews Bible (1537). John Rogers, a graduate of Oxford in 1525, was a friend of both Tyndale and Coverdale. In fact, Tyndale turned over his unpublished translation of Joshua to II Chronicles. to Rogers, who then revised and completed the work. His version, published under the pseudonym Thomas Matthew, was granted permission by the King to be bought and read in England. Henry VIII, who apparently made no effort to save Tyndale's life, had now granted royal authorization to two Bibles, Coverdale's and Roger's, in English.

C. The Great Bible (1539). This was really a revision of Matthew's Bible and the Tyndale New Testament. It was completed under the direction of Oliver Cromwell. The name

"Great Bible" came from its size: When opened it measured 18" by 14". When the Great Bible was placed in the churches throughout England, the preachers began to complain that the people were not listening to them. At the services the people would crowd around the Bible, read and discuss it, while the preacher was trying to deliver his sermon!

D. The Geneva Bible (1560). When Mary Tudor came to the throne of England in 1553, England again fell into the hands and power of Roman Catholicism. John Rogers and hundreds of others were burned at the stake. Because of this persecution, many Bible scholars fled to Geneva, which was friendly to their cause. The Geneva Bible was a very successful revision of the the Great Bible printed to the size of a hand Bible today. Its compactness and superior translation made it the most popular Bible among English-speaking Protestants for many years. It is often called the breeches Bible because of its wording in Gen. 3:7:" Adam and Eve "sewed figge tree leeves together, and made themselves breeches."

E. The Bishop's Bible (1568). The popularity of the Geneva Bible did not please high church officials. So they authorized this new revision of the Great Bible to compete with it. The Bishop's Bible was not widely accepted.

F. The Douay Version (1609-10). This Catholic Bible is a translated from the Latin.

G. The King James Translation (1611). In January of 1604 King James I summoned a conference to consider complaints lodged by the Puritans against the high church of England. At this gathering Dr. John Reynolds of Oxford raised the possibility of a new translation. The King apparently welcomed this suggestion and was soon working out the necessary arrangements. The actual work was completed by 47 scholars (though 54 were originally appointed) at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster. The completed translation was published in 1611, and for the next 50 years or so it gained ground on the popular Geneva version. Eventually it became the Bible of the people, and for the next two centuries it maintained a supremacy so great that many regarded it as the final word in English translations.

1. The King James Bible has with good reason been termed, "the noblest monument of English prose" (RSV preface). Above all its rivals, the King James Version has had the greatest impact in shaping the English language. It is a literary masterpiece. But, lest anyone wishes to revere it because it was "good enough for St. Paul," we must remember that the King James Bible of today is not the King James of 1611. It has undergone three revisions, incorporating more than 100,000 changes! Further, there are over 300 words in the King James that no longer mean what they meant in 1611. If one wishes to use a Bible that follows the same Greek and Hebrew texts as the King James, use the New King James Version. The KJV was translated from the original languages by committee. Unexcelled in literary quality, although now archaic. Does not reflect the best text base on recent scholarship (some editions give explanatory notes on the text). Translated in 1611 by 47 scholars using the Byzantine family of manuscripts, Textus Receptus. Its Elizabethan style Old English is difficult for modern readers, especially youth. This is still a good translation for those who can deal with the language.

H. The English Revised Version (1881). Eventually scholars recognized a need for a new translation which would update the language of the King James. Also, scholars now had a greater knowledge and understanding of ancient languages, and many Hebrew and Greek manuscripts had been discovered in the intervening years. Two

committees of 27 members each (one committee for the Old Testament and one for the New Testament) were formed, and work began. The New Testament committee met in sessions on 407 days over a period of eleven years and their completed work was published on May 17, 1881. The Old Testament group met on 792 days over a period of fifteen years. The entire Bible, known as the English Revised Version, was published on May 19, 1885. Its reception was unprecedented. Over 2,000,000 copies were sold in London alone.

I. The American Standard Version (1901). The American Standard Version (ASV) is in substance the English Revised Version with changes made to reflect American idioms, spellings, and word order. The American committee, which had worked with the English Revision committee, also re-paragraphed the text and added a cross references. It is fair to say that this translation embodied the best biblical scholars of Great Britain and America at the time.

J. The Revised Standard Version (1946-1952). The New Testament of this translation was published in 1946 and the Old Testament in 1952. Originally the RSV started out as a revision of the ASV, but the International Council of Religious Education doing the work quickly decided to begin an entirely new translation. The RSV is among the first Bibles to be translated by a sizable group of scholars who believed the doctrine that God inspired the thoughts of the original writers but not their actual words (See 1Cor. 2:13).

K. The New American Standard Version (1971). One of the most recent translations made by scholars who still believed in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Considered by many to be among the most technically accurate, readable translations. The Lockman Foundation which produced it sought to update, clarify, and revise the ASV. Instead of the paragraphs used in the ASV, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) prints each verse as a separate unit.

L. The Living Bible (1974). This version is primarily the work of one man, Kenneth N. Taylor. He set out to paraphrase the ASV in words that his children could understand. It is not a translation in the true sense of the word. The current Bible entitled The Book is essentially the Living Bible.

M. Today's English Version (1976). Primarily the work of Mr. Robert G. Bratcher, this version was originally intended to meet the needs of people whose primary language was not English. It uses very up-to-date language and often includes modern pop art illustrations. It is often referred to as The Good News Bible. Accuracy is sacrificed for readability in this translation, and it often departs radically from the precise meaning of the Hebrew and Greek texts.

N. New International Version (1978). The New York Bible Society sponsored this translation. Its use of modern English makes it very easy to read. The NIV by most accounts is now the most widely purchased version, but it is not the most accurate. Like many of the more modern translations, it is primarily the work of those who have attempted to determine the meaning of the text and then present that meaning in modern English rather than seeking a basic translation of the original words and phrases. As a result, the translators' theology has crept into the NIV and has marred what would otherwise be an excellent work.

O. New King James Version (1982). Thomas Nelson Bible Publishers and the International Trust for Bible Studies co-sponsored this update of the King James

Version. The publishers assembled 130 scholars to work on the project with the objective of making the KJV more accurate and readable and yet maintaining the grace and beauty of the original language. Today the NKJV remains in the top 5 best selling Bible in the US. This is a revision of the King James version, updated to modern English with minor translation corrections and retention of traditional phraseology. This is a very good version. Though his name is never found in printed copies of this version (at his insistence), Batsell Barrett Baxter was heavily involved as the general editor of the NKJV.

P. Today's English Version (TEV) or Good News Bible (GNB) From the original. NT by one man, approved by committee. It is aimed particularly at those for whom English is a second language and those with little formal education. Achieves its goal and is very readable, good format. Translates dynamics well but not dependable for deeper study if used by itself. Can sometimes be offensive.

Q. New English Bible (NEB) From the original by interdenominational British committee. Exciting literary style, very readable but with distinct British flavor and idiom. Excellent for non-churched. Departures from the original text and too much liberty in certain renderings make it undependable as a study Bible.

R. J.B. Phillips Translation (Phillips) From the original but definitely a paraphrase by J.B. Phillips, a competent Greek scholar. More than any other, makes the Bible "live" for educated or literary people, although in British expression. Does not read like a translation.

S. Living Bible (LB) LB is a paraphrase done by one man, Kenneth Taylor, by paraphrasing the American Revised Version. It is not a translation as such, but is built on an existing version. Definitely not to be relied on for interpretations or study. It is very easy to read. Kenneth Taylor provides his own warning about the use of paraphrases in the preface. This is not a genuine translation, but is a type of phrase-by-phrase commentary that was originally intended to help the author's own children understand the scriptures. It is useful for inspiration and commentary, but for serious Bible study it should only be used in conjunction with a legitimate translation.

T. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) A revision of the Revised Standard Version, it is generally literal and very accurate. The NRSV follows the same principle of translation as the RSV, though has now become more "gender-inclusive" in its approach. At times this is very helpful; at other times, it is misleading.

U. God's Word Translation (GW) Published in 1995 by the God's Word to the Nations Bible Society as a "closest natural equivalent" translation. Its layout is eye-appealing and helpful for outlining. It uses gender-neutral language. Avoids the use of theological terms, which are difficult to understand. Perhaps the best use of the dynamic equivalent format.

V. New Century Version (NCV) - The NCV is designed to be easy to read. It includes glossaries explaining specific Biblical terminology. The NCV is linked strongly to the International Children's Version and was translated by members of the church of Christ. Other versions done by this same group include the Version for the Deaf and the Easy-to-Read Version.

W. Contemporary English Version (CEV) The CEV is designed to be easily readable and understandable by modern readers. The language is contemporary English and it follows the dynamic equivalence method. This version was designed to be read aloud

to listeners and appeals more to the ear than to the eye.

X. The Message (M) The Message is a paraphrase done by Eugene Peterson. Unlike Kenneth Taylor of the Living Bible, Eugene Peterson knows Biblical languages and translated from them rather than working from another English version. This version is still very free and often misses the meaning of the text.

Y. The English Standard Version (ESV) The ESV was completed in 2001. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the legacy of versions such as Tyndale, King James, and the Revised Standard. The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise words of the original text and the personal style of each Biblical writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. The ESV uses as its textual base the Masoretic text found in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia and the 4th edition of the UBS Greek text. Footnotes include textual variants and difficulties.

Evaluating the Versions

I. Anyone who seeks to fairly evaluate versions should take the time to read the preface or introduction to that version. It is only just that those who labored to bring about a translation or paraphrase have a right to explain what they did and why.

A. Versions should be judged in part by what they hope to achieve. The CEV, for instance, was written for the ear, as a version to be read aloud in the assembly. The Message, on the other hand, as a paraphrase should be considered more as a commentary. Dynamic equivalent translations begin with a different philosophy of translation than do literal translations. This will account for the change in much of its wording.

B. The best versions try to achieve two things: accuracy and readability. They want to render faithfully the message of the original writings in a language that the reader can easily understand. This is not an easy task. Sometimes accuracy robs the translation of readability, and sometimes readability robs the translation of accuracy.

II. Four Methods of Translation

A. Highly Literal - Often these versions, while highly literal, fail to deal with the various shades of meanings within a word. They also fail to deal adequately with idioms, pun, plays on words, structures, acrostics, and alliteration. Because the source language (Greek or Hebrew) is unlike English, they may appear awkward, strain the English language to the breaking point, and be difficult to read. In some cases they make understanding almost impossible.

B. Modified Literal—Formal Equivalence - This type of translation is best suited for scholarly work and serious study. It takes into account the form and meaning of the words. It uses more than one word if a word has different shades of meaning or if the receptor language requires it. These versions are often difficult to read for the young, because they are more interested in literally translating than in ease of understanding.

C. Idiomatic—Dynamic Equivalent - This type of translation demands that the original languages be understood by the reader in the receptor languages. It strives for understandability, sometimes at the sacrifice of accuracy. It has a tendency to interpret

rather than to translate. Dynamic Equivalent translations strive to give not only the information of the text but also its ideas and impact. It strives to respect both languages and to make whatever adjustments are necessary to say in the receptor language what has been said in the original. It asks what is the point, the meaning of the text. Occasionally to reach its goals, forms must be changed in the receptor language, which provides a free expression.

D. Unduly Free—Paraphrase - These loose versions often give information not in the text. They substitute meanings and do not respect the form in the original. A paraphrase is not actually a translation; it is an interpretation. It is the meaning an author assigns to his understanding of the Bible.

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE: (Lesson One, An Introduction to Bible Evidences)

(Adapted from lessons by Mark Copeland)

- A. *1Peter 3:15* - all Christians are commanded to be ready to make a defense for the reason of their hope in Christ.
1. Defense is from apologia, which means "a speech in defense of what one has done, or of truth which one believes."
 2. Peter uses the word in the context of an informal inquiry by a friend.
 - a. What of someone asking "Why do you believe the Bible?"
 - b. Are you ready to give reasons why you accept the Bible as the inspired word of God?
- B. In this series of lessons on How We Got the Bible, we will examine some of the evidence that exists for placing one's faith in Holy Writ.
1. To strengthen our faith in the Word.
 2. To help prepare an answer for our faith - *1Peter 3:15*.
- C. The Christian faith is an intelligent, rational faith
1. God expects us to use our minds - *Matt. 22:36-38; John 8:32*
 - A. My heart cannot rejoice in what my mind rejects.
 - B. A weak faith may be the result of the heart trying to believe something the mind cannot accept.
 - C. "We cannot pander to a man's intellectual arrogance, but we must cater to his intellectual integrity" (Paul Little).
- D. Can we offer 100% proof?
1. No, that's what faith is for.
 2. Yet, you make 100% commitments with less than 100% proof.
 - A. Flying on an airplane. You do not have 100% assurance that you will arrive, but you are convinced by the statistical evidence that you will, so you get on board. At that point, you are 100% committed whether or not you are 100% convinced.
 3. So the question becomes: is there enough evidence to warrant a 100% commitment to the will of God?
 - a. Enough evidence exists for the authenticity of the Bible to make unbelief appear irrational.
- E. Why do some remain unconvinced?
1. Too often we place all of the responsibility on the unbeliever, when it is possible that we have mishandled the defense of the truth.
 2. G. K. Chesterton wrote that my opponent may get the best of me in an argument because I mishandled the truth, but that does not change the essential nature of truth.
 3. However, the opponent remains unconvinced. Therefore, I must learn to handle the truth with great facility.
- F. Too often, we offer up as evidence things that do not constitute proof.
1. We are trying to convince our questioner - *1Peter 3:15*.
 2. "I feel" is not valid proof.
 - a. Song: "You ask me how I know he lives; He lives within my heart"
 - b. Feelings are subjective; they depend on experience and emotional makeup.
 - c. Feelings are malleable - they can be adjusted by circumstances
 - d. Feelings are ephemeral - they can change without notice or apparent reason
 3. Other forms of invalid reasoning:

- a. Burden of proof fallacy - "Prove He doesn't exist."
 - b. Reasoning from consequences - If God hasn't spoken, then how can we know what is right?"
- G. If it is your goal to give an answer to those who ask regarding the faith in you, then be prepared to give a convincing answer.
- 1. In this series, we will examine proofs that will stand reviews by science, literature, history, and logic.
 - 2. "I already believe the Bible." How will that convince your questioner?
 - 3. That's your job! - *1Peter 3:15*
- H. We will look at all manner of proofs.
- 1. Internal - in the text
 - 2. External - historical, archaeological, logical

How We Got the Bible: When (Lesson Two, Evidence For Early Existence Of The New Testament)

Introduction:

- A. The New Testament presents itself as a historical record of events that occurred during the First Century A.D.
- B. How reliable is it? How do we determine the reliability of any ancient document that professes to record events of history?
- C. To establish the reliability of ANY historical document, one of the first questions to be raised is: "How soon after the events took place were they recorded?"
- D. Applied to the New Testament, this involves trying to determine what evidence there is for THE EARLY EXISTENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

I. EVIDENCE FOR EARLY EXISTENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CRUCIAL

- A. If some event is recorded long after it occurred:
 - 1. It is not likely to have been written by "eyewitnesses"
 - 2. It is not likely to have been written when "other eyewitnesses" were around to confirm or dispute its accuracy
 - 3. Its credibility would be weakened; example, which would be a more credible source for information about an event that occurred during The Civil War
 - a. A present day writer depending totally upon second-hand sources?
 - b. Or diaries and letters written by eyewitnesses of the event?
- B. During the last century, some scholars asserted that the Gospels and the book of Acts did not exist before 130 A.D.
 - 1. This would mean the Gospels and Acts were not written by eyewitnesses
 - 2. Rather, it was written by frauds who represented themselves as eyewitnesses
 - a. For the author of Acts claims to have been present during some of the events described in that book - "we" in *Acts 16:11-12*
 - b. The author of the Second Peter claims to have been an eyewitness of the Transfiguration - *2Peter 1:16-18*
 - c. Written by eyewitnesses and others who lived during those times, or a book written by liars in a effort to deceive. These are the only choices
This is why it is important to establish the early existence of the N.T.

II. EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY EXISTENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Internal Evidence

- 1. The Ending Of The Book Of Acts
 - a. Acts ends abruptly with Paul in prison, awaiting trial - *Acts 28:30-31*
 - b. About 62-63 A.D., meaning that ACTS and LUKE were written within thirty years of ministry and death of Jesus
- 2. No Mention Of The Destruction Of Jerusalem In 70 A.D.
 - a. Matthew, Mark and Luke record Jesus' prophecy that the temple and city would be destroyed within that generation - *Mark 13:1-4, 14,30; Luke 21:5-9,20-24,32*
 - b. History records that in 70 A.D. Jerusalem with its temple was destroyed, exactly as Jesus foretold
 - c. Yet not a single book of the New Testament refers to this event as having happened
 - 1) Would be very unlikely if they had been written after 70 A.D.
 - 2) That event helps to verify Jesus' claim to be the Son of God,

and it is hard to imagine that any writer after 70 A.D. would not make mention to the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy

- d. This has prompted some scholars to conclude that ALL of the books of the New Testament were written prior to 70 A.D.

B. Papyri Fragments

1. CHESTER BEATTY BIBLICAL PAPYRI (dated 200-250 A.D.)
 - a. Made public in 1931
 - b. Contains the Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles, and Revelation
2. PAYPRUS BODMER II (dated 200 A.D.)
 - a. Discovery announced in 1956
 - b. Contains 14 chapters of John, and portions of the last seven chapters
3. EARLY CHRISTIAN PAPYRI (dated 150 A.D.)
 - a. Made public in 1935
 - b. Written by someone who had the 4 gospels and knew them well
4. JOHN RYLANDS MSS (dated 130 A.D.)
 - a. This is oldest fragment of the NT
 - b. "Because of its early date and location (EGYPT), some distance from the traditional place of composition (ASIA MINOR), this portion of the gospel of John tends to confirm the traditional date of the composition of the gospel." (General Introduction To The Bible, Geisler & Nix)

C. Patristic Writings

1. EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS (dated 120 A.D.)
 - a. A personal acquaintance of John, the apostle
 - b. He quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 1 John
2. LETTERS OF IGNATIUS (dated 115 A.D.)
 - a. Written to several churches in Asia Minor
 - b. He quotes from Matthew, John, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus
3. EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS (dated 95 A.D.)
 - a. This letter was written to encourage the church to respect the elders
 - b. He quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter
 - c. One cannot quote from a book that has yet to be written.

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS EVIDENCE

- A. The New Testament was in existence and well known by the end of the first century A.D.

1. As stated by Nelson Glueck, former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and renowned Jewish archaeologist: "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written between the forties and eighties of the First Century A.D."
2. "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after 80 A.D." - W. F. Albright, biblical archaeologist

- B. Thus the New Testament passes the "acid test" for the authenticity of any document of antiquity

1. It was written in the same generation in which the events took place
2. It was circulated among the very people about whom these documents spoke while they were still alive to deny them

3. The fact that the first generation preserved the New Testament for posterity shows their regard for the genuineness of its contents

Conclusion:

- A. But this is only the first test any historical document must pass
- B. So what if it was written early
 1. How do we know that what we read today is an accurate representation of the original manuscripts actually penned by the authors?
 2. How can we be sure that in the passing of time the content of the original did not become corrupted through mistakes in copying?

How We Got the Bible: Where (Lesson Three, Archaeological Support For The New Testament)

Introduction:

- A. The New Testament was written in the same generation in which the events took place. It was circulated among the very people about whom these documents spoke, while they were still alive to confirm or deny it
- B. Were the authors accurate in their description of the events that took place?
- C. This is where the science of archaeology can be very helpful in determining the historical reliability of the New Testament:
 - 1. If the archaeologists prove that the New Testament is filled with errors concerning people, places, and events, then the New Testament could not be trusted as an accurate record of the life of Jesus and the early church.
- D. Not too long ago, some discounted the Biblical record because it frequently referred to things not mentioned by any source outside the Bible
- E. But discoveries by archaeologists in recent years have vindicated the New Testament and silenced the skeptics
 - 1. German liberal school of higher textual criticism assumes mistakes in the Bible when it mentions that which has yet to be found by archaeology.
 - 2. Likewise with Biblical Archaeological Review

I. A CENSUS, AND QUIRINIUS GOVERNOR AT JESUS' BIRTH? *Luke 2:1-3*

- A. It was once argued that Luke was in error.
 - 1. In other words, that there was no such census
 - 2. Also, that Quirinius was not governor of Syria at that time
 - 3. And that people did not have to return to their ancestral home
- B. But archaeological discoveries have proven otherwise.
 - 1. We now know that the Romans had a regular enrollment of taxpayers, and held censuses every 14 years (begun by Augustus Caesar)
 - 2. An inscription found in Antioch tells of Quirinius being governor of Syria around 7 B.C. (evidently he was governor twice)
 - 3. A papyrus found in Egypt says concerning the conducting of a census: "Because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their home should at once prepare to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment."

II. LYSANIAS? - *Luke 3:1*

- A. The only Lysanias known to ancient historians
 - 1. Was one who was killed in 36 B.C.
 - 2. This caused some to question Luke's reliability
- B. However, an inscription was found near Damascus that speaks of "Freedman of Lysanias the tetrarch" and is dated between 14 and 29 A.D.

III. "THE PAVEMENT" (GABBATHA)? - *John 19:13*

- A. For centuries there was no record of the court called "the pavement" or "gabbatha"
 - 1. This caused many to say "It's a myth" and, "See, it (the Bible) is not historical"
- B. But William F. Albright in "the archaeology of Palestine" shows otherwise.
 - 1. This court was the court of the Tower of Antonia and was destroyed in 66-70

A.D. during the siege of Jerusalem. It was left buried when the city was rebuilt in the time of Hadrian, and was not discovered until recently.

IV. ICONIUM A CITY OF PHYRIGIA? - Acts 14:6

- A. Archaeologists at first believed Luke's implication to be wrong.
 1. That Lystra and Derbe were in Lycaonia and Iconium was not
 2. They based their belief on the writings of Romans such as Cicero, who indicated that Iconium was in Lycaonia
 3. Thus, archaeologists said the book of Acts was unreliable
- B. But In 1910, Sir William Ramsay Found A Monument Which showed that Iconium was a Phrygian city

V. "POLITARCHS"? - Acts 17:6

- A. Concerning the term "rulers of the city" (Greek "politarchs")
 1. Since the term is not found in the classical literature of the Greeks, it was assumed that Luke was wrong to refer to such an office
- B. However, some 19 inscriptions have now been found that make use of this title, and five of these are in reference to Thessalonica

Conclusion:

- A. Just how accurate is the New Testament in its historical description? "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference." -- Nelson Glueck (noted Jewish archaeologist)
- B. Of special interest is the testimony of Sir William Ramsay
 1. Concerning his background:
 - a. He was trained in a German historical school of the mid-19th century
 - b. He was taught that Acts was a product of the mid-2nd century
 - c. He was firmly convinced of this and started out his career in archaeology to prove it
 2. However, he was compelled to a complete reversal of his beliefs due to the overwhelming evidence uncovered in his research
 3. His conclusion: "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense, in short, this author should be placed along with the greatest of historians."

How We Got the Bible: Who (Lesson Three, Part Two, Manuscript Attestation For The N. T.)

Introduction:

- A. What have we established thus far in this series of lessons?
 - 1. That the New Testament was written during the generation in which the events occurred
 - 2. That its reliability as a historical document continues to be confirmed by the field of archaeology
- B. Another question remains in order to establish beyond a reasonable doubt the historical reliability of the New Testament: "What assurance is there, that what we have today in the form of the New Testament, is that which was penned by its original authors?"
- C. Since we don't have the original manuscripts penned by the authors, how do we know that there hasn't been significant changes or errors made in the process of copying over the years, or that there hasn't been collusion among those who possessed the early copies of the originals?

I. THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST

- A. This test is applied to all ancient historical documents.
 - 1. Such as:
 - a. Julius Caesar's "Gallic War"
 - b. "Histories" of Tacitus
 - c. "Annals" of Tacitus
 - d. The New Testament
 - 2. In an effort to establish the likelihood that what copies we have:
 - a. Are faithful representatives of the originals
 - b. And have come to us free of changes, errors, or collusion
- B. Questions raised in this test
 - 1. "How many copies of the document in question are available?"
 - a. In order to compare them with one another, the more, the better
 - 2. "Where were the copies found?"
 - a. If they all came from one place, collusion is possible, but if they are from places far removed by time and location, collusion is unlikely
 - 3. "What length of time passed between the original and the earliest copies?"
 - a. If the earliest copies we have were written hundreds of years after the original, a lot of changes could have been made and we would not know it
 - b. But a short interval of time would increase our assurance in the reliability of the copies
 - 4. "What variances exist between the copies?"
 - a. If the copies of a document are filled with significant differences, then it would not be possible to know what the original author wrote!
 - b. But if the variances are few and minor, then the process of copying over the years has been faithful to the original

II. THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. How Many Copies Of New Testament Manuscripts Are Available?
 - 1. Over 4,000 Greek manuscripts; 13,000 copies of portions of the New Testament in Greek

2. Compare this with other ancient historical writings:
 - a. Caesar's "Gallic Wars" - only 10 Greek manuscripts
 - b. "Annals" of Tacitus - 2
 - c. Livy - 20; Plato - 7; Sophocles - 100
- B. Where were these copies found?
 1. Various places: Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy
 2. Such varied locations would make collusion very difficult
- C. What length of time passed between the original and the earliest copies?
 1. Several papyri fragments have been dated to within 50-100 years
 2. We have several nearly complete New Testament Greek Manuscripts which were copied within 300-400 years, for example:
 - a. Codex Sinaiticus, found near Mt. Sinai
 - b. Codex Alexandrinus, found near Alexandria in Egypt
 - c. Codex Vaticanus, located at the Vatican in Rome
 3. But compare this with manuscripts of various classical histories:
 - a. "Histories of Thucydides" - earliest copy is 1300 years removed from the original
 - b. "Histories of Herodotus" - earliest copy is 1350 years removed from the original
 - c. Caesar's "Gallic War" - 950 years
 - d. Roman History of Livy - 350 years (earliest copy is only a fragment)
 - e. "Histories" of Tacitus - 750 years
 - f. "Annals" of Tacitus - 950 years (and there are only two manuscripts)
- D. What variances exist between the copies of the New Testament?
 1. It is true that there are some variations between the many thousands of manuscripts available
 - a. But the vast majority are very minor (spelling, differences in phraseology, etc.; modern translations often note the differences in footnotes)
 - b. Only 1/2 of one percent is in question (compared to 5% for the Iliad)
 2. Even then, it can be stated: "No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading. It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: especially is this the case with the New Testament." - SIR FREDERICK KENYON (authority in the field of New Testament textual criticism)

Conclusion:

- A. In regard to the "Bibliographical Test" in attesting the manuscript evidence for the New Testament, it not only passes with flying colors, it does better than any other historical document come down to us from antiquity!
- B. "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt." - F. F. BRUCE
- C. Josh McDowell makes some interesting comments:
 "After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scriptures, I came to the conclusion that they are historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then he must discard almost all literature of antiquity. One problem I constantly face is the desire on the part of many to apply one standard or test to secular literature and other to the Bible. One needs to apply the same test, whether the literature under investigation is secular or

religious. Having done this, I believe one can hold the Scriptures in his hand and say, 'The Bible is trustworthy, and historically reliable.'"

- D. Why then would anyone question the New Testament record concerning Jesus?
1. It is because reference is made to miracles, such as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead

How We Got the Bible: (Lesson Four, What If They Lied?)

Introduction:

- A. The following facts are in evidence:
1. Jesus actually lived
 2. The New Testament is a reliable historical document
 - a. It was circulated soon after the events took place
 - b. Archaeology confirms the New Testament record
 - c. What we have today is what was written by the original authors
- B. But concerning the miracles of Jesus and His resurrection?
1. Archaeology cannot confirm or deny the truthfulness of such things
 2. What if the New Testament writers lied?
- C. These are the only alternatives: That the New Testament is either the truth or is a carefully orchestrated lie

I. THERE ARE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES

- A. The writers of the New Testament leave us no other alternative
1. Either Jesus rose from the dead, or Paul and other eyewitnesses are false witnesses - *1Cor. 15:14-15*
 2. Peter states that either the transfiguration and other events occurred as described by the eyewitnesses, or they are cunningly devised fables - *2Peter 1:16-18*
- B. We cannot say they might have been sincerely deceived
1. Especially in reference to the resurrection of Jesus
 - a. They claim they ate and drank with Him afterwards - *Acts 10:39-41*
 - b. They claim they saw and touched Him - *1John 1:1-4*
 2. *1Cor. 15:4-8*

II. THE IMPLICATIONS IF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS NOT TRUE

- A. The New Testament is a carefully orchestrated lie
1. Consider the great accuracy they used in describing events, places, and people - *Luke 2:1-5*
 2. If the record of miracles and the resurrection is false, then they very carefully intertwined fact and fiction
 - a. Is it reasonable to believe that?
- B. The authors suffered extreme hardship for what they knew was a lie
1. Many people will lie if they can get something out of it, such as money, power
 2. But what did the apostles get out of it? - *1Cor. 4:9-13*
 3. What did Paul get for holding to his testimony? - *2Cor. 11:24-29*
 4. How do we know they really suffered this hardship?
 - a. The fact that the letters of the New Testament were even saved
 - b. For example, consider the letters 1 & 2 Corinthians
 - 1) These letters are filled with rebuke of the Corinthians
 - 2) The Corinthians would have every reason not to save these

letters that exposed their faults

- 3) The Corinthians had first hand knowledge as to whether the apostle Paul really suffered the hardship
 - 4) If they knew the accounts of such hardship to be false, they would have quickly destroyed these letters written by a liar who embarrassingly wrote about their problems
- C. The authors who were martyred knew they were dying for a lie
1. History and tradition record that:
 - a. JAMES was stoned to death
 - b. PAUL was beheaded
 - c. PETER was crucified
 2. If the New Testament is a lie, they went to their deaths KNOWING they were dying for a lie
 - a. Is it rational to believe that?
- D. In suffering and dying for a lie, they went against everything Jesus and they taught
1. *Matt. 5:37; Eph. 4:25; 1Peter 2:1*
 2. Does it make sense to believe that?
- E. In fact, the book with the world's highest standard and loftiest goals was composed by liars, frauds, and deceivers
1. What book presents a higher standard of love and morality than the N. T.?
 2. For example, Jesus' Sermon On The Mount (*Matt. 5-7*) and Paul's Discourse On Love (*1Cor. 13*)
 3. is this rational?

Conclusion:

- A. This is what you MUST believe if you do not believe the New Testament when it speaks of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ:
1. It is a carefully orchestrated lie
 2. The authors suffered extreme hardship for what they KNEW was a lie
 3. Those authors who were martyred KNEW they were dying for a lie
 4. In suffering and dying for a lie, they went against everything Jesus and they themselves taught
 5. And somehow, these liars, frauds, and deceivers came up with a book containing the world's highest standard morality and loftiest goals

**How We Got the Bible:
(Lesson Five, Providence in Preservation and Translation)**

I. CONTINUITY

- A. A book that was written:
1. Over a long period of time. About 1600 years; 40 generations
 2. By approximately 40 authors from every walk of life
 - a. Moses, political leader trained in the universities of Egypt
 - b. Peter, fisherman
 - c. Amos, herdsman
 - d. Joshua, military general
 - e. Nehemiah, cup bearer to the king of Persia
 - f. Daniel, prime minister in the courts of Babylon
 - g. Luke, physician
 - h. Solomon, philosopher king
 - i. Matthew, tax collector
 - j. Paul, rabbinically trained assassin and tentmaker.
 3. In different places
 - a. Moses in the wilderness
 - b. Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - c. Daniel on a hillside, and in a palace
 - d. Paul inside prison walls
 - e. Luke while traveling
 - f. John in exile on the isle of Patmos
 - g. Others in the rigors of a military campaign
 4. At different times
 - a. David in time of war
 - b. Solomon in time of peace
 5. During different moods
 - a. Some writing from the heights of joy (Song of Solomon)
 - b. Others from the depths of sorrow and despair (Jeremiah)
 6. On three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe
 7. In three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
 8. With subject matter involving hundreds of controversial topics, such as:
 - a. The origin of man and the universe
 - b. The nature of God
 - c. The nature of man, sin, and man's redemption
- B. Yet there is harmony and continuity
1. For example:
 - a. The Paradise Lost of the book of Genesis becomes the Paradise Regained of Revelation.
 - b. "Whereas the gate to the Tree of Life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation." (Geisler and Nix)
 2. Compare the continuity of the Bible with any other writings of men
 - a. Imagine what you would have if you took just ten authors:
 - 1) From one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language
 - 2) Speaking on just one controversial subject
 - b. You would have a conglomeration of conflicting ideas, not harmony.
- C. The Point?
1. If a book can be written using 40 different authors writing over 1600 years can write in perfect harmony with one another, then such a book can be

preserved for 2000 years and be translated into language understandable by contemporary men.

2. In other words, the writing of this book is a greater miracle than the preservation thereof. The writing of the Bible is a matter of Divine inspiration, a miracle; the preservation and translation of the Bible is a matter of Divine providence, an expression of God's order. But then, we should not be surprised, for God always creates by miracle and sustains by law.

II. TRANSLATION AND CIRCULATION

A. THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE is not a new thing.

1. One of the first major books ever translated
 - a. Septuagint version of the OT; quoted by Christ and apostles
 - b. Translated into Greek in 250 B.C.
2. Between 1950-1960, 3000 Bible translators were at work: "By the end of 1993, the whole Bible had been translated into 337 languages; 2,062 languages have translations of at least one book of the Bible." (Guinness Book of World Records, 1998)

B. The circulation of the Bible

1. As of 1804 - 409 million copies
2. As of 1932 - one and a third billion copies: "The world's best-selling and most widely distributed book is the Bible, with an estimated 2.5 billion copies sold, 1815-1975." (Guinness Book of World Records)

C. The Point?

1. No other book has ever achieved this universal circulation. This speaks to the many texts that state that the word of God will go to the ends of the earth.
2. God has seen to it that the Word has been preached to all the world.
3. *Acts 8:26-29; 10:9-16, 28-29,33, 16:9-10; Rom 15:19-21; Col 1:23*
4. In spite of current efforts to suppress public mention of the word of God, and in spite of contemporary wisdom that insists the Bible is but an outdated book of cultural myths, it remains the best seller of all books of all time.
5. I don't believe that is a coincidence. Implication? A book with such universal distribution for so long a period of time will undergo no perceptible change over time and translation. Again the hand of Providence.

III. SURVIVAL

A. Its survival through time

1. Though written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years by hand, did not change in style, content, or context.
2. Compared with other ancient writings, the manuscript evidence of the Bible is greater than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined!
3. More than enough copies of manuscripts exist to ensure that we are reading the words of the original authors.

B. Its survival through attempts to destroy it

1. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and otherwise outlaw it
 - a. From the days of Roman emperors
 - b. To the present Communist-dominated countries
2. Two illustrations of its survival through persecution:
 - a. In 303 A.D., the Roman emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping, and to destroy their scriptures. Only 25 years later the Roman emperor Constantine called for 50 copies of the Bible to be prepared at the expense of the government.

b. Voltaire, French atheist who died in 1778, predicted that Christianity would be swept from existence and pass into history within 100 years of his time. 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used his own printing press and house to produce stacks of Bibles!

3. How true is the statement - *1Peter 1:24-25*

C. Its survival through criticism

1. "Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assaults make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer on the pyramids of Egypt." (H. L. Hastings)

2. "No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? And yet, the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions." (Bernard Ramm)

D. The Point?

1. Critics can make or break a book, play, or movie in one brief byline in the newspaper. In the book burnings of communist China and Nazi Germany, volumes of remarkable works and forgotten lore were destroyed and their wonder lost forever. Time has swept from existence all but a few plays and philosophical essays by the classical Greeks who were the founders of our western civilization. But neither time, nor enemies, nor critics have made the slightest difference in the penning, printing, publication, and preservation of the Bible.

2. Why is this book unique? No other book has been protected by the Providential hand of God. He wants you to know His will, and He is going to let nothing keep His word from getting into the hands of anyone who wants it.

IV. INFLUENCE

A. Upon the literature of the world

1. "If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library" (The Greatest English Classic)

2. No one can truly be called "educated" who is ignorant of the Bible, for they would be ignorant of that which has influenced so many great writers

B. Upon the world itself

1. Our judicial system is based upon many of the principles found in the Bible

2. Our standards of morality owe much to the Judeo-Christian ethic

3. Even within the ancient characters of the Chinese language, are references to the Genesis story of Adam and Eve, the garden, and the Flood

4. The history of the world for the past 2000 years has been shaped for the most part by the use and/or misuse of the Judeo-Christian scriptures.

C. The Point?

1. Name another book that has had one tenth as much influence on the development of the world in all of time.

2. Again the hand of Providence.

3. If we see God's role in delivering the Bible to the 21st century, then we will better understand and trust the process of delivery

How We Got the Bible: (Lessons Six and Seven, Canon and Versions)

Introduction:

A. What have we learned?

B. Lesson One:

1. We are required to give an answer for our faith.
2. What constitutes evidence, and how much proof is necessary.
3. Enough proofs exist to make faith in the Bible more rational than disbelief.

C. Lesson Two:

1. The NT was written in the first century.
2. "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after 80 A.D." - W. F. Albright, Biblical archaeologist
3. It was circulated among the very people about whom these documents spoke while they were still alive to deny them
4. The fact that the first generation preserved the New Testament for posterity shows their regard for the genuineness of its contents

D. Lesson Three:

1. The authors were accurate in their depiction of the events.
2. "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference." (NELSON GLUECK, Jewish archaeologist)
3. What we have today in the form of the New Testament, is that which was penned by its original authors.
4. "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt." - F. F. BRUCE

E. Lesson Four:

1. This is what one must believe if he does not believe the N.T. when it speaks of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ:
 - a. It is a carefully orchestrated lie
 - b. The authors suffered hardship for what they knew was a lie
 - c. Those authors who were martyred knew they were dying for a lie
 - d. In suffering and dying for a lie, they went against everything Jesus and they themselves taught
 - e. And that these liars, frauds, and deceivers came up with a book containing the world's highest standard of morality
2. It is not rational to believe that the authors of the NT perpetrated a myth or fraud in the name of their faith.

F. Lesson Five:

1. Due to the continuity of context, circulation, translation, survival, and influence factors, the hand of God is evident in the Bible we now use.

G. What are we left with?

1. The New Testament was written in the first century, by the men who claimed to have written it. Their depiction of the events that can be verified historically is perfect. Their writings have not changed significantly over the years. And it requires intellectual dishonesty to dismiss their work as mythology.
2. Two questions remain:
 - a. Can we know that the books we have now are the ones God wants us to have?

- b. Can we trust the American translation of the original texts?
3. If I can answer those two questions in the affirmative, then I have one question for you: Why don't you believe it?

I. THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

- A. Canon (English) from Kanon (Greek) from qaneh (Hebrew) meaning reed or cane used as a measuring rod.
 1. In order for a book to meet the measure of the canon of scripture, it must be proven that it is inspired.
 - a. *2Tim. 3:16; Rom. 15:4; 2Peter 1:19-21*
 2. It had to have been written during the age of inspiration.
 - a. Prophesied periods without inspiration - *1Sam. 3:1; Amos 8:11-12; Lam. 2:9; Micah 3:6*
 - b. Prophesied end of inspiration - *Zech. 12-13; 1Cor. 13:8-13*
 3. It must not contradict any other book of scripture.
 - a. *Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22; Gal. 1:6-9; 1John 4:1-3*
 4. It must be approved by inspired persons.
 - a. *Luke 24:44; 1Cor. 14:37*
 - b. Quoted by Jesus and apostles and called holy scriptures
- B. What about the apocryphal books and patristic writings?
 1. 15 books of the apocrypha (9 approved by Catholicism) were written between 250 and 100 BC.

1 & 2 Esdras	Tobit
Judith	Additions to the Book of Esther
Wisdom of Solomon	Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach)
Baruch	The Letter of Jeremiah
Susanna	Prayer of Azariah & the Song of 3 Young Men
Bel and the Dragon	Prayer of Manasseh
	1 & 2 Book of Maccabees
 2. They do not pass the test of holy writ.
 - a. Never included in the Hebrew nor Septuagint scriptures
 - b. Never recognized by Jesus or any apostle
 - c. Never accepted by the Jews or Christians until April 8, 1546 in the 4th Council of Trent of the Roman Catholic Church
 - d. Do not exhibit the intrinsic quality of inspired text
 - e. Contain historical errors
 - f. Contain myths and legends for teaching purposes
 - g. Contradicts canonical scripture
 - h. The apocrypha (secret or concealed) books have been shrouded with uncertainty since their writing.
 - i. Rejected by all early scholars (Josephus, Tertullian, Jerome, Origen, Philo, Clement, et al)
 3. Likewise with patristic writings ("apostolic fathers")
 - a. See *Ante-Nicean Fathers, vol. 8, table of contents*
 - b. They did not acknowledge their own writings as inspired.
 - c. Neither does any respected scholar who has read them.
 4. These are obviously dissimilar to canonical scripture.
- C. How do we know the books we have are authorized?
 1. They were circulated & read as authoritative from the time they were written
 2. *2Peter 3:15* - Paul got his information as a gift
 - a. *Vs 16* - Peter and others read his epistles

- b. Altering those epistles is self-destructive
 - c. "Rest of the scriptures" implies a recognized body of authorized writing
- 3. *1Cor. 14:37* - His letter to Corinth was authoritative
- 4. *Luke 1:1-4* - Luke, who had perfect knowledge, was writing so that others could have the same.
 - a. He acknowledges that others were doing the same
- 5. Paul quotes *Matt. 10:10* & *Luke 10:7* in *1Tim. 5:18*, and calls it scripture.
- 6. *Col. 4:16* - Paul ordered them to read his epistle in other churches
- D. They were circulated and read after the first century.
 - 1. Copies of NT books in a compilation were found as early as the second century AD; copies of the OT books in a compilation were found as early as 250 BC in the Septuagint.
 - 2. Tatian, pupil of Justin Martyr, made a harmony of the four gospel accounts, Revelation, Acts, 6 epistles of Paul, Hebrews and 1John in 165 AD.
 - 3. In 397, the council of Carthage finally acknowledged that these 27 books and no other should be read as holy scripture in assemblies.
 - 4. The fledgling Catholic church was a bit behind the times. Disciples had been reading and circulating these books for 327 years.
 - 5. *Read How We Got the Bible, Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 87.*
 - 6. *Read The Development of the New Testament, Arthur M. Ogden, p. 97*

II. THE WORK OF THE TRANSLATORS

A. Display and review charts of translation

- 1. The Bible has been in the hands of Christians since it was written.
- 2. By the year 500, it had been translated into a number of languages.
- 3. In 600, the Catholic church decreed Latin the only language for it.
- 4. 400 years later, it was translated into Anglo-Saxon (Old English)

B. What about my Bible?

- 1. "I want to read the scriptures in the good Old English that Peter, Paul, James and John wrote it in.
- 2. *See chart on Lord's prayer translations*
- 3. The King James Bible:
 - a. *See Story of the Text, Robert Turner, p. 5*
 - b. What you hold as the KJV has been revised dozens of times.
 - c. Has texts not in original manuscripts -*Luke 17:36; John 5:4; 1John 5:7*
 - d. Transliterated baptizo instead of translating it immerse.
 - e. Translated Passover as Easter in *Acts 12:4*

C. How can I trust it to be faithful to what the Lord wanted?

- 1. Three methods of translation:
 - a. Formal Equivalence - word for word, revising sentence structure for readability; conservative, preserves original structure
 - 1) Large number of scholars
 - 2) Large number of reliable manuscripts
 - 3) Large number of reviews and revisions
 - 4) Agenda is purity of scholarship
 - b. Dynamic Equivalence - Thought for thought, revising wording to meet contemporary thought processes; subjective
 - 1) Limited number of scholars
 - 2) Manuscripts seldom used; previous translations relied on
 - 3) Limited review due to publication pressure
 - 4) Agenda: well intentioned manipulation of values & beliefs

- c. Paraphrase - Principle for principle, highly subjective paraphrasing to meet popular religio-political agendas
 - 1) Usually only one or just a few scholars
 - 2) Variant manuscripts used to support agenda
 - 3) Little or no review
 - 4) Agenda: religious change
- 2. The King James Bible is an example of Formal Equivalence
 - a. Many scholars, many manuscripts, many years of review, pure text was the only agenda
 - b. ASV, NKJV, NASB likewise
- D. Which one can I trust? Most accurate?
 - 1. American Standard Version is the hands down most accurate.
 - a. Sentence structure is not smooth like the KJV
 - 2. New King James Version is a close second
 - a. Eliminated the remaining mistakes in the KJV
 - b. Is accurate and readable in contemporary American.
 - 3. King James Version is a close third
 - a. Most popular of formal equivalence translations because it has that old time majestic religious flavor.
 - 4. The New American Standard is a distant fourth.
 - a. While accurate, it holds forth a number of examples of dynamic equivalence (phrase for phrase) translation
- E. All others cannot be relied on to faithfully reproduce the scriptures.
 - 1. The Revised Standard Version was translated by nine men, eight of whom publicly declared their liberal biases against the scriptures.
 - 2. New International Version is a dynamic equivalence translation.
 - a. Premillennialist and Calvinist
 - b. Untrustworthy and denominational
 - 3. Remember that all headings, footnotes, cross references, chapter and verse divisions, helps, and comments are uninspired additions

Conclusion:

A. Read Lightfoot, p. 67

1. Read Turner, p. 12

(Chart on various translations)

(koine Greek)

Πατερ ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις
αγιασθητω το ονομα σου

(10th century Anglo Saxon)

Uren Fader dhic art in hoefnas

Sic gehalyed dhin noma

(1611 King James Bible)

Our Fadir that art in heuenes

Halewid be thi name

(1901 American Standard Version)

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name

(Chart on translation dates)

500 BC: Completion of Hebrew Manuscripts comprising 39 Books of O.T.

200 BC: Completion of Septuagint Greek Manuscripts of 39 OT books

70 AD: Completion of Greek Manuscripts comprising 27 Books of N.T.

390 AD: Jerome's Latin Vulgate Manuscripts Produced.

600 AD: Latin was the Only Language Allowed for Scripture.

995 AD: Anglo-Saxon Translations of The New Testament Produced.

1384 AD: Wycliffe is the First Person to Produce a (Hand-Written)manuscript copy of the Bible in English.

1455 AD: Gutenberg Invents the Printing Press. The First Book Ever Printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.

1522 AD: Martin Luther's German New Testament.

1526 AD: William Tyndale's New Testament; The First New Testament to be Printed in the English Language.

1535 AD: Myles Coverdale Bible; The First Complete Bible to be printed in the English Language.

1537 AD: Matthews Bible; The Second Complete Bible to be Printed in English. Done by John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers.

1539 AD: The "Great Bible" Printed; The First English Language Bible to be Authorized for Public Use.

1560 AD: The Geneva Bible Printed; The First English Language Bible to Add Numbered Verses to Each Chapter.

1568 AD: The Bishops Bible Printed.

1609 AD: The Douay Old Testament is added to the Rheimes New Testament (of 1582) Making the First Complete English Catholic Bible; Translated from the Latin Vulgate (75 Books).

1611 AD: The King James Bible Printed.

1613, 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769 AD: KJV revised

1782 AD: Robert Aitken's Bible; 1st English Bible to be Printed in America

1885 AD: The "Revised Version" Bible; The First Major English Revision of the Bible.

1901 AD: The "American Standard Version"; The First Major American Revision of the Bible.

1971 AD: "New American Standard Bible" (NASB) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Word for Word English Translation"

1973 AD: "New International Version" (NIV) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Phrase for Phrase English Translation"

1982 AD: "New King James Version" (NKJV) is Published as a "Modern English Version Maintaining the Original Style of the KJV"

The author gratefully acknowledges the following sources:

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The Development of the New Testament by Arthur Ogden

The Text of the New Testament by Bruce M. Metzger

The Story of the Text by Robert Turner

The Translation of the Bible Into English by Kathleen Campbell

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Introduction to Christian Evidences by Ferrell Jenkins

Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell

How We Got the Bible: Conclusion

Introduction:

A. What have we learned?

B. Lesson One:

1. We are required to give an answer for our faith.
2. What constitutes evidence, and how much proof is necessary.
3. Enough proofs exist to make faith in the Bible rational, and disbelief in the Bible to be an exercise in intentional ignorance.

C. Lesson Two:

1. The NT was written in the first century.
2. "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after 80 A.D." - W. F. Albright, Biblical archaeologist
3. It was circulated among the very people about whom these documents spoke while they were still alive to deny them
4. The fact that the first generation preserved the New Testament for posterity shows their regard for the genuineness of its contents

D. Lesson Three:

1. The authors were accurate in their depiction of the events.
2. "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference." (NELSON GLUECK, Jewish archaeologist)
3. What we have today in the form of the New Testament, is that which was penned by its original authors.
4. "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt." - F. F. BRUCE

E. Lesson Four:

1. This is what one must believe if he does not believe the N.T. when it speaks of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ:
 - a. It is a carefully orchestrated lie
 - b. The authors suffered hardship for what they knew was a lie
 - c. Those authors who were martyred knew they were dying for a lie
 - d. In suffering and dying for a lie, they went against everything Jesus and they themselves taught
 - e. And that these liars, frauds, and deceivers came up with a book containing the world's highest standard of morality
2. It is not rational to believe that the authors of the NT perpetrated a myth or fraud in the name of their faith.

F. Lesson Five:

1. Due to the continuity of context, circulation, translation, survival, and influence factors, the hand of God is evident in the Bible we now use.

G. What are we left with?

1. The New Testament was written in the first century, by the men who claimed to have written it. Their depiction of the events that can be verified historically is perfect. Their writings have not changed significantly over the years. And it requires intellectual dishonesty to dismiss their work as mythology.
2. Two questions remain:
 - a. Can we know that the books we have now are the ones God wants us to have?
 - b. Can we trust the American translation of the original texts?
3. If I can answer those two questions in the affirmative, then I have one question for you: Why don't you believe it?

I. THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

A. Canon (English) from Kanon (Greek) from qaneh (Hebrew) meaning reed or cane used as a measuring rod.

1. In order for a book to meet the measure of the canon of scripture, it must be proven that it is inspired.
 - a. *2Tim. 3:16; Rom. 15:4; 2Peter 1:19-21*
 - b. It had to have been written during the age of inspiration.
 - 1) Prophesied periods without inspiration - *1Sam. 3:1; Amos 8:11-12; Lam. 2:9; Micah 3:6*
 - 2) Prophesied end of inspiration - *Zech. 12-13; 1Cor. 13:8-13*
2. It must not contradict any other book of scripture.
 - a. *Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22; Gal. 1:6-9; 1John 4:1-3*
3. It must be approved by inspired persons.
 - a. *Luke 24:44; 1Cor. 14:37*
 - b. Quoted by Jesus and apostles and called holy scriptures

B. What about the apocryphal books and patristic writings?

1. 15 books of the apocrypha (9 approved by Catholicism) were written between 250 and 100 BC.
 - 1 & 2 Esdras
 - Tobit
 - Judith
 - Additions to the Book of Esther
 - Wisdom of Solomon
 - Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach)
 - Baruch
 - The Letter of Jeremiah
 - Prayer of Azariah & the Song of 3 Young Men
 - Susanna
 - Bel and the Dragon
 - Prayer of Manasseh
 - 1 & 2 Book of Maccabees
2. They do not pass the test of holy writ.
 - a. Never included in the Hebrew nor Septuagint scriptures

- b. Never recognized by Jesus or any apostle
 - c. Never accepted by the Jews or Christians until April 8, 1546 in the 4th Council of Trent of the Roman Catholic Church
 - d. Do not exhibit the intrinsic quality of inspired text
 - e. Contain historical errors
 - f. Contain myths and legends for teaching purposes
 - g. Contradicts canonical scripture
 - h. The apocrypha (secret or concealed) books have been shrouded with uncertainty since their writing.
 - i. Rejected by all early scholars (Josephus, Tertullian, Jerome, Origen, Philo, Clement, et al)
3. Likewise with patristic writings ("apostolic fathers")
- a. See Ante-Nicean Fathers, vol. 8
 - b. They did not acknowledge their own writings as inspired.
 - c. Neither does anyone who has read them.
4. These are obviously dissimilar to canonical scripture.
- C. How do we know the books we have are authorized?
1. They were circulated and read as authoritative from the time they were written.
 2. *2Peter 3:15* - Paul got his information as a gift
 - a. *Vs 16* - Peter and others read his epistles
 - b. Altering those epistles is self-destructive
 - c. "Rest of the scriptures" implies a recognized body of authorized writing
 3. *1Cor. 14:37* - His letter to Corinth was authoritative
 4. *Luke 1:1-4* - Luke, who had perfect knowledge, was writing so that others could have the same.
 - a. He acknowledges that others were doing the same
 5. Paul quotes *Matt. 10:10* & *Luke 10:7* in *1Tim. 5:18*, & calls it scripture.
 6. *Col. 4:16* - Paul ordered them to read his epistle in other churches
- D. They were circulated and read after the first century.
1. Copies of NT books in a compilation were found as early as the second century AD; copies of the OT books in a compilation were found as early as 250 BC in the Septuagint.
 2. Tatian, pupil of Justin Martyr, made a harmony of the four gospel accounts, Revelation, Acts, 6 epistles of Paul, Hebrews and 1John in 165 AD.
 3. In 397, the council of Carthage finally acknowledged that these 27 books and no other should be read as holy scripture in assemblies.
 4. The fledgling Catholic church was a bit behind the times. Disciples had been reading and circulating these books for 327 years.
 5. *Read How We Got the Bible, Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 87.*
 6. *Read The Development of the New Testament, Arthur M. Ogden, p. 97*

II. THE WORK OF THE TRANSLATORS

A. Display and review charts of translation

1. The Bible has been in the hands of Christians since it was written.
2. By the year 500, it had been translated into a number of languages.
3. In 600, the Catholic church decreed Latin the only language for it.
4. 400 years later, it was translated into Anglo-Saxon (Old English)

B. What about my Bible?

1. "I want to read the scriptures in the good Old English that Peter, Paul, James and John wrote it in.
2. *See chart on Lord's prayer translations*
3. The King James Bible:
 - a. *See Story of the Text, Robert Turner, p. 5*
 - b. What you hold as the KJV has been revised dozens of times.
 - c. Has texts not in original manuscripts - *Luke 17:36; John 5:4; 1John 5:7*
 - d. Transliterated baptizo instead of translating it immerse.
 - e. Translated Passover as Easter in *Acts 12:4*

C. How can I trust it to be faithful to what the Lord wanted?

1. Three methods of translation:
 - a. Formal Equivalence - word for word, revising sentence structure for readability; conservative, preserves original structure
 - 1) Large number of scholars
 - 2) Large number of reliable manuscripts
 - 3) Large number of reviews and revisions
 - 4) Agenda is purity of scholarship
 - b. Dynamic Equivalence - Thought for thought, revising wording to meet contemporary thought processes; subjective
 - 1) Limited number of scholars
 - 2) Manuscripts seldom used; previous translations relied on
 - 3) Limited review due to publication pressure
 - 4) Agenda: well intentioned manipulation of values & beliefs
 - c. Paraphrase - Principle for principle, highly subjective paraphrasing to meet popular religio-political agendas
 - 1) Usually only one or just a few scholars
 - 2) Variant manuscripts used to support agenda
 - 3) Little or no review
 - 4) Agenda: religious change
2. The King James Bible is an example of Formal Equivalence
 - a. Many scholars, many manuscripts, many years of review, pure text was the only agenda
 - b. ASV, NKJV, NASB likewise

D. Which one can I trust? Most accurate?

1. American Standard Version is the hands down most accurate.
 - a. Sentence structure is not smooth like the KJV
2. New King James Version is a close second
 - a. Eliminated the remaining mistakes in the KJV
 - b. Is accurate and readable in contemporary American.
3. King James Version is a close third

- a. Most popular of formal equivalence translations because it has that old time religion flavor.
- 4. The New American Standard is a distant fourth.
 - a. While accurate, it holds forth a number of examples of dynamic equivalence (thought for thought) translation
- E. All others cannot be relied on to faithfully reproduce the scriptures.
 - 1. The Revised Standard Version was translated by nine men, eight of whom publicly declared their liberal biases against the scriptures.
 - 2. New International Version is a dynamic equivalence translation.
 - a. Premillennialist and Calvinist
 - b. Untrustworthy and denominational
 - 3. Remember that all headings, footnotes, cross references, chapter and verse divisions, helps, and comments are uninspired additions

Conclusion:

A. *Read Lightfoot, p. 67*

1. *Read Turner, p. 12*