

How Do You Recognize A True Minister? – Part 2

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Last time we discussed how a true minister should treat and relate to the brethren. Just by way of introduction and summary of what we saw last time:

The first point: We defined the word “minister”. We found that it means *a worker who serves*, with emphasis on the word “work” and on the word “serve.” That was the first point.

The second point: We established the fact that a minister should first serve God and Jesus Christ, obviously, but then serve the brethren, not a work, not an administration, but his work is to serve the people of God. That was the second point.

The third point: The work of a true minister is to help “complete” the brethren. That word, we found out, can mean *mature, whole or complete*. In other words, prepare the brethren ready to be the Bride of Christ, because Christ is not going to marry somebody He cannot recognize. He cannot marry somebody He is not compatible with. So the job of the ministry is to help prepare individuals to be the very Bride of Christ, to change their lives to become the image of our Lord and Savior. That was the third point.

The fourth point: We established the fact that in order to be made complete, the brethren must be fed. We read scriptures where Christ told Peter three times, “Feed My sheep; feed My lambs.” So that was a direct command from Christ to the apostles. Then we saw later on that the apostles, both Paul and Peter, repeated that command to feed the sheep, feed the flock, and that command was then a direct command from an apostle(s) to all the elders. So they continued with that instruction, no doubt about that. So the fourth point is that the brethren must be fed.

The fifth point: We looked at the scriptures and it became clear that the ministry ordained by God, are to be shepherds, assistant shepherds with Christ being the chief shepherd, the true shepherd. Therefore, all the ministry are just assistant shepherds helping the chief shepherd take care of His flock. The flock, you see, belongs to Christ. The flock does not belong to a minister. A minister does not own the flock. They do not belong to him. He just assists Christ in taking care of Christ’s flock. We assist and Christ does the heavy lifting. It’s just that simple. God and Christ work behind the scenes in ways humans cannot work. God and Christ can do things humans cannot do. They do the heavy lifting. All we do is help. So that was the fifth point, that ministers are assistant shepherds.

The sixth point: This is where we ended part way through last time, that it is very clear in the Bible that Christ tells the ministry what a minister must do and how he must do it. It is very clear and understandable. There were four areas that we covered. We covered three and we’ll get the fourth today, of what a minister should do.

We went to 1 Timothy 4 and verse 2. You can begin turning over there because we're going to pick that up when we finish the summary of last week.

The first thing the ministry is told to do is to preach the word. We found through other scriptures that the ministry is to preach the word and never vary from it, adding nothing to God's word or taking nothing away, but to preach God's word for the rest of his life. A minister must be very discerning and careful about ever deviating from what he has been taught. Before somebody goes off in a different direction or some new understanding, you have to be very, very careful about that. So the first responsibility is to preach the word.

We found the second one is to correct. And that simply means to tell someone a fault. If they have made a mistake, if they've sinned or if they're heading off in a wrong direction, to tell them their fault. We were told how it should be done. We won't turn there, but in Galatians 6:1, it says if a man or woman is overtaken in a fault, those of you who are spiritual restore them in a spirit of meekness. That applies even more to the ministry, so it's incumbent on the minister to approach them in a meek and humble attitude and yet with the goal of trying to restore them along the path of God. That's why the crook is in the shepherd's staff that he walked with, because he could take a little lamb or sheep that's heading off in a wrong direction and put the hook around its neck and gently pull it in the direction he wants them to go. In other words, gently reasoning, using God's spirit with the goal of getting the brethren to see themselves as God and Christ see them. That's true for all of us, every one of us. That is the goal.

The third area we covered after correction, Paul was telling Timothy to rebuke. That's a stronger word than "correct". It means to *reprimand*, or *admonish* or, by implication, to *forbid*; basically telling someone, "Look, you cannot do this. You cannot be a Christian and continue on this path. You cannot attend with God's people if you're going off in this direction." It's a stronger word than "correct".

We also found out that in the past, all too often, rebuke was made in a harsh manner, attacking and personal. That is not the way to do it. We won't turn there, but 1 Timothy 5 and the first three verses, remember Paul was instructing a very young minister when he said, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father." Paul also says, "Rebuke not the younger men, but entreat them as brothers and entreat older women as mothers and entreat younger women as sisters." We gave some examples of how even a rebuke or telling somebody that they can't do this or they shouldn't do that, can be done without rancor. It can be done without harshness. It can be done without yelling and screaming and all of that.

So those were the first three:

- Preach the word
- Correct
- Rebuke

That's where we stopped last time. Now in this second part of how a minister should treat and relate to the brethren, we come to the fourth in 2 Timothy 4 and verse 2.

2 Timothy 4:2. *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct (we covered that) rebuke (covered that) ... (NIV)*

The fourth is *encourage*, out of the NIV.

The Greek word used there in the NIV or in all the translations obviously is Strong's 3870. Thayer's says it means to *strengthen, to comfort or to console*. It can mean to *encourage* obviously too. It is the same word that is used "entreat" in 1 Timothy 5 and the first two verses that we read just a minute ago. Entreat an older man as a father. Entreat an older woman as a mother. It's the same Greek word. It means to *strengthen, comfort, console or encourage*. Therefore, if you look at this word it's a job description of the ministry. Ministers should be encouragers of the brethren. Ministers should be strengtheners of the brethren. Ministers should be comforters of the brethren or consolers of the brethren. In other words, if there's a trial going on, if there's a death in the family or somebody's horribly sick, guess who should be there? Who should be in the hospital or who should be at the funeral home or in somebody's living room trying to console or comfort or strengthen or encourage?

Also, on the positive side it's up to the ministry to let people know when they do something godly, when they do something good. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 1:24. You can keep a marker here in 2 Timothy 4. Notice what Paul said. He had to correct the Corinthian church in the first letter and then he had to correct them again in the second letter to bring this guy back after he had repented. Notice what he says to the Corinthian church.

2 Corinthians 1:24. *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, ... (KJV)*

We can't make anybody believe anything or increase their faith by beating on them or putting a gun to their head. Notice what he says.

24b) ... but are helpers of your joy: ... (KJV)

To encourage joy, to help joy, to facilitate joy.

24 continued) ... for by faith you stand. (KJV)

One of the big ways a minister can encourage brethren is to have all of us understand that with God's help, nothing is impossible, no matter how harsh the trial, no matter how close to death, how much pain, how much suffering, nothing is impossible with God.

Let's go to Luke 18 and see verse 27. Christ said that and He was trying to get across to the people that, "Look, you deal with what you can touch or what you can smell or

see or hear”, but Christ is saying, “I deal in a whole different realm that human beings cannot comprehend.” We can’t. We don’t understand it. He said in Luke 18:27.

Luke 18:27. *And he said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” (KJV)*

In Bob’s case, he had aggressive cancer seven years ago and nothing today. Many times that has happened. Dorothy and I continually marvel how God works behind the scenes to solve a problem that we can’t or we don’t see a way out. Or you pray to God, “God, I don’t want to deal with this problem. Please take care of it.” And God does. Nothing is impossible with God. Any difficulty can be overcome. Any difficulty can be overcome.

Let’s go to Romans 8:28. This is an understanding that the ministry, in encouraging brethren, needs to get across. This is one of the most fundamental and foundational scriptures in the Bible because it establishes the relationship between God and Christ and all the rest of us.

Romans 8:28. *And we know that all things ... KJV*

Good things, bad things, comfortable things and painful things.

28b) ... work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. (KJV)

So our part is to respond to the calling and then to love God and Jesus Christ with all our heart. If we do that, then God says, “Look, I don’t care what comes your way, pain and suffering (sometimes that’s necessary) or blessings upon blessings” (that’s wonderful). He said, “Whatever it is, it is for your good. It’s for your ultimate good and for your ultimate benefit.”

When you lose a mate of fifty or sixty years, you can say, “How can that be good?” Well, it teaches us things. It teaches us to rely on God and Jesus Christ. It teaches us that this physical life has an end and it teaches us that if we want to have eternal life, we must seek salvation and do whatever is necessary to be the Bride of Christ. So good can come out of any trial, any pain, any suffering. So no matter what comes upon us, we can have the faith and the comfort and the joy knowing that God either caused it or God allowed it, but at the end of the day it’s for our benefit. It’s to help us become His children eternally in His kingdom.

So the ministry is there to encourage the brethren no matter what kind of trials they’re going through. The reality is that all of us need encouragement, especially in the society in which we live. There is so much negativity, there is so much evil. You can’t pick up the newspaper without seeing the horrible things that are happening on this earth. We all need encouragement.

There is the atmosphere inside the greater church where people are throwing rocks at each other and accusing and self righteously condemning. We all need encouragement. This fourth point, “encourage” is a responsibility of the ministry. It is very important. Not to browbeat people, not to put people down, not to elevate the self, but to be there in the trenches and encourage the brethren. So in 2 Timothy 4 and verse 2, we’ve now covered those four:

- Preaching the word
- Correcting
- Rebuking
- Encouragement

That leads us to the seventh point. There will be a total of ten.

The seventh point is, Christ here in 2 Timothy 4 tells the ministry how to do these four things, how they should be done.

He told them what to do and now he tells them how.

***2 Timothy 4:2.** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort (encourage) ... KJV*

Notice the next phrase.

2b) ... with all longsuffering (great patience) and doctrine. (KJV)

This is critically important, because without patience people get abused. Without patience people get hurt. The word for “patience” is Strong’s 3115 and it can mean *patience* obviously, but it can also mean *forbearance*. The word “forbearance” means *to put up with*. That is appropriate because we’re all human beings. We all make mistakes. We all do things wrong and in our interpersonal relations within the church we need, in some cases, just to put up with each other because we’re different. Everybody’s different and everybody has bad days. Everybody makes mistakes.

Now in the past, the quick and dirty way to get rid of a problem was to disfellowship people or to run them off. We talked about that last time. I had a good friend that was just run off because they felt he was a pain in the neck, and sometimes my good buddy could be a pain in the neck. We all can be a pain in the neck, but a minister is to have forbearance. Quite often an individual was told, “You’re in a bad attitude. Get out of here.” You don’t see a lot of patience there.

I can remember the Feast in Edmonton. This was approximately 1995; it may have been ‘96, that one of the visiting ministers there (this was after or during the breakup of Worldwide. This was not a Worldwide Feast site) but a man who now claims to be the only apostle to the church in the 21st century was there. There were some people standing in a circle around him. He was pontificating and answering questions and a

man came up and asked a question. Now he had a little edge to his voice, yes. He wasn't angry or accusatory, but he asked a question and this man disfellowshipped him on the spot for being in a bad attitude. He kicked him out of the Feast. He wouldn't let him attend because he asked a question.

Okay, now what does the Bible say about that? Let's go to 2 Timothy, chapter 2 and verse 24. Again, Paul is talking to this young minister. There's a lot of advice here. Timothy is an elder.

2 Timothy 2:24. And the servant of the Lord ... KJV

The Greek word for "servant" (we talked about that in the past) is "doulos" and it means a slave. We talked about that in the sermon on slavery.

24b) ... must not strive; ... KJV

We'll get into the definition of that word in just a second.

24 continued) ...but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient. (KJV)

That's the instruction to a minister by an apostle. Now the Greek word for "strive" is Strong's 3164, and it literally means *to go to war*. He says a minister should not be ready to fight, not be ready to go to war or to battle. It means figuratively *to quarrel, dispute or fight*. He's telling Timothy, and by extension, to all elders, "Look, you can't have a combative personality. You can't have an aggressive, fighting personality that at the flip of a switch you're ready to pull your sword out and start swinging at people." He says, "Rather, you should be gentle and patient." The Greek word for "patient" is Strong's 420 and guess what that means? It means *enduring ill*. He says, "patient" means *enduring bad stuff, enduring unpleasant things; enduring ill or forbearing or putting up with*.

Now the reality is this. Sometimes brothers and sisters can lose it with a minister. They can. It happens because we are imperfect. They can do it because they're under a lot of stress at the moment. They can do it because maybe they're in a lot of pain, or they have not slept in days, sleep deprivation. They can lose it with a minister because they are grieving over some loss or some problem. Or, and what I find very common, is that sometimes a brother or sister can lose it with a minister because they are angry at themselves over their own sins. They are angry with themselves and we've all been there and done that. That's how the cat gets kicked, you know. Hubby's mad at himself over something he did and the cat is lying on the floor and he takes out his frustration by kicking the cat across the room. Well, sometimes the minister can be there and people are angry at themselves because of their own sins. They know it, but they take it out on those around them and if the minister happens to be around, sometimes people can just lose it.

In the old days that was almost immediate suspension or being disfellowshipped, but I've learned when that happens you just sit there and take it. Let them vent and let them say what they're going to say, and realize that tomorrow or later that day or the next week they might realize that they did something wrong and they might repent.

One member about ten or twelve years ago said some horrible things to my face about me and then she began to gossip about me. You learn to just take it. They were part of a different fellowship but I had known them for years and I continue to visit them maybe five or six times a year. Ten years later this individual came back and said, "I'm sorry. All those things I said, I just wasn't thinking straight. I am so sorry." You see if you had turned that initial incident into a fight, the minister with a member, you lose the brethren. If you start fighting back, you lose them. You just can't allow yourself to do that. This is why we are told that we must have great patience, great forbearance, be willing to endure something that is ill and not right for the sake of the brethren.

I can remember when Greg Gaetzman first came to Wausau and what he found there. This was a long time ago. What they found was that the brethren were way off track. What he could have done is go in with a whip and a chair and begin screaming and yelling and disfellowshipping people and all of that. He did not do that. He asked God to give him time, a lack of interference from those above him to give him time to help the brethren. A few years later, guess what? He had a church that was following God, obeying God's law, loving God with all their heart, loving each other as they love themselves. Several of the cheese heads have said to me privately, "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Greg." That's a perfect example of a minister showing great patience with the brethren. By the way, hello to all the cheese heads that are listening today.

So we see here 2 Timothy 4:2, the first way to implement these four things is to have great patience.

Now let's look at the second one. Let's read 2 Timothy 4:2 again.

Number one: Preach the word

Number two: Correct

Number three: Rebuke,

Number four: Encourage, with great patience and the NIV says, careful instruction.

The King James says "doctrine". The New King James says "teaching", careful instruction and careful teaching.

Paul had many trials and many people opposing him and persecuting him. Notice what he said in 1 Thessalonians 2:7. We'll read it from the NIV. I don't normally use that but in this case it doesn't change the meaning. It just makes it a little clearer. It puts it in modern English. Did Paul come in with a whip and a chair? Notice what he says.

1 Thessalonians 2:7. *But we (referring to himself) were gentle among you, I ...*
KJV

Then he gives an example.

7b) ... like a mother caring for her little children. (NIV)

A good mother carefully instructs her children. A good mother tells her children how it ought to be done, or teaches them how God or Christ would want it done and how you should have done this, and “No, you can’t do this because God doesn’t want you to do that and Christ would have never done that.”

It just kills me, you’re out in the world and you see a little kid maybe two, three, four, five or six years old and you see the mother just yelling and screaming at this little child. You can imagine if they do this in public what goes on behind closed doors. The little child there is just shocked and in tears. It just gets my stomach going when I see that. Yes, there are times when you have to be stern with your children, but too often you see the parent is just venting their anger on their own kids.

Paul was saying, “We were gentle among you. We didn’t do that. We didn’t start yelling and screaming and saying, ‘I’m the boss; you better do what I tell you.’” As he says here, as a mother cares for her children, you calmly teach how things should be done. Not yelling and screaming, but calmly teach how things should be done. This is what Christ says. This is what the Bible says. “Have you considered this?” Not with anger and rancor and upset.

We see here that careful instruction is very important, coupled with patience. That allows a congregation to be put on the right track over a period of time, going in the right direction, united in the right direction because they’re following God’s way. A minister is just a facilitator, a helper, an assistant shepherd in doing that. Great patience and careful instruction is how it’s to be done.

Now the eighth point. This is one that has been violated and abused over the decades, sad to say.

The eighth point is: A true minister must treat all the brethren with dignity and respect.

They must do that. As I said, this has been abused and violated horribly in the past. I’ve seen where a wealthy person or a person of high standing was in the church. Relatively few were called. We know 1 Corinthians 1:26 says that, but when one of them was called, all of a sudden the ministry rushes to them and, as we’re going to see in a minute, “Come sit here; let me shine the spotlight on you,” and all of that. They would rush to make their friendship.

Those with little education were, all too often, looked down upon. Those with handicaps were looked down upon and discriminated against and ignored. I know of one lady who was put off in the corner because she had a handicap. Those of a different race were

looked down upon. I received an email from a woman two or three weeks ago; she gave me her history in the church going back to Worldwide days. She is a black lady and she outlined some of the abuse and discrimination that she and her family endured over the years. They were country people and they were looked down upon by the city people. Then the white people looked down upon the black people, etc. It just kills you when you read things like that because that should not be in God's Church.

I've had a little experience in that because I have learned what it's like to be a black man in a white man's world. What I mean by that is, I'd been in the church about three or four years and started giving sermonettes and had moved to Detroit. This was in the late sixties and as you recall, that was in the height of the civil rights movement and you remember that Detroit had horrible riots about that time. There were army tanks in the streets and areas of town being burned. It was a very volatile situation. We had segregated churches, a black church and a white church. One of my very first sermonettes, generally they would assign you to outlying churches rather than the big giant mother church so to speak. I was sent to the black church. We got together at holy days, and I knew a few and was greeted warmly. About half way through my sermonette I looked out and I realized that I'm the only white guy in this building. It hit me just like that. I hadn't thought of it before. I got to thinking, "That is how they feel." Coming into a white man's world, they feel like they're outnumbered, outgunned, looked down upon or whatever. I didn't feel looked down upon at all. They made me most welcome, but the fact is you look out on a sea of African Americans and you're the only white guy, it makes an impression.

I can remember being invited to dinner during that time by a young black couple. After church I left my car somewhere relatively safe and got into their car and we drove into the area where the black people mostly lived. He said, "Don't bring your car; just come with us." We pulled up in front of their house. They lived in a flat upstairs and he went up to make sure everything was okay. Then he came out on the porch and looked up and down the street, watched very carefully and then said, "Now you can come." You see he would have gotten in trouble for inviting a white man into his house. I never thought about that. He was risking his health and wellbeing by inviting the likes of me to have a meal with him. It was very impressive.

Then in the church, being a bottom rung elder, I'd been the recipient of discrimination. I can't remember the number of times I was told, "You're only a local church elder," meaning "You're lower than pond scum in the pecking order." Or being looked down upon because you never graduated from Ambassador College, and of course you can't have a straight thought unless you were an Ambassador College graduate. So I've had a little experience of not being treated with dignity and respect and I've watched that happen in God's Church. Frankly, it happens to this very day in God's Church.

One of my good friends in the church is a fellow that never graduated from high school and he had a horrible upbringing. He was a manual laborer. That's all he was qualified to do. I can remember at two Feasts, back to back, after the breakup of Worldwide with a group that formed, my friend walked up and wanted to talk to the leader. He had a

couple of questions. The best he had was overalls, a flannel shirt and work boots. He came to the Feast that way. They were clean. He actually pressed his overalls. They had a crease in them. His work boots were shined. He went up to this leader. There was a group of people and he asked a question and the leader would not acknowledge him. He asked a question and the leader looked elsewhere to somebody else. He would not make eye contact and would not acknowledge that this guy even said a word. Then the next Feast, a representative from the group came, and he is now an apostle. My friend walked up to him and talked to him individually. He looked him straight in the face and asked a question (work boots, overalls and flannel shirt) and he was right in front of him and the minister turned like this. He's here and the minister is looking out over there. My friend walked in front of him. Now they're face to face again and the minister turned another ninety degrees and would not talk to him and would not acknowledge his presence. It was like he had a cloaking device and was stealthy and my friend was not able to be seen. But oh, when a heavy tithe payer walked in or when somebody's boss walked in he was right there.

Let's go to Jude verse 12 and then we'll go to verse 16. Notice what it says, again out of the NIV.

Jude 12. *These men are blemishes at your love feasts, (notice) eating with you without the slightest qualm ... NIV*

These have to be ministers because he says:

12b) ... shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain ... NIV

The King James says *clouds without water.*

12 continued) ... blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead. (NIV)

Physical death and a spiritual death coming. Jumping to verse 16.

16) These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. (NIV)

They will talk and flatter others if they get something out of it, but if somebody has nothing to give, then they're unimportant, they're not worth paying attention to.

The reason I point these incidents out is not to bash other people or groups or focus on the negative, but I point it out because God does not want this kind of behavior from a minister, He doesn't. It abhors Him because these people are His sheep. These people are His children and He doesn't want them ignored or abused or mistreated. That is not the way He intends for ministers to conduct themselves.

Let's go to the poster child scripture for treating equally without respect of persons, James, chapter 2, and we'll begin in verse 1. I think everybody knows where we're going. We're being told here something very fundamental in how we should treat other people, especially how the ministry ought to treat brethren.

James 2:1. *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with respect of persons.*

2) *For if there comes to your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;*

3) *And you have respect to him that wears the gay clothing, and say to him, Sit here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand over there, or sit here under my footstool:*

4) *Are you not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thoughts? (KJV)*

Aren't you judging this person's character?

5) *Hearken, my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, ... KJV*

The weak of the world, 1 Corinthians 1:26.

5b) *...and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?*

6) *But you have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

7) *Don't they blaspheme that worthy name by the which you are called? KJV*

Using God's name in vain all the time.

8) *If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well:*

9) *But if you have respect of persons ... KJV*

It can't be any more plain.

9b) *...you commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. (KJV)*

Unbelievable. This is very plain; God's word is very plain.

This week I watched a documentary on Vince Lombardi. This is an anniversary of sorts. I think it would have been his 100th birthday or something about this time, but anyway they've been showing a lot of the great football games that he coached. He was probably the greatest football coach that has ever lived. He was the coach of the Green Bay Packers, and they won three consecutive NFL Championships and won the first Super Bowl. Vince Lombardi was not a respecter of persons. He was one of the first NFL coaches to hire and seek out black players. He became coach in the mid '60s, so

again this is at the height of all that turmoil. He was color blind as far as race was concerned. As part of this documentary, they had the offensive center of one of the championship teams, a guy named Bill Curry. He's about my age. They interviewed him regarding Vince Lombardi, and he was just in a monologue looking right into the camera and he said, "I grew up in Georgia and I was taught as early as I can remember that whites were superior to blacks in every way. I went to a segregated high school; I went to a segregated college; I played football in college and upon graduation the Green Bay Packers drafted me into the NFL." He said, "I didn't know where Green Bay was, a little town up in Wisconsin, way up north and I'm a southern boy." He said, "I went to training camp." They took over a small college in Wisconsin for their training camp. It had a field, a dining hall and dormitories, and Vince Lombardi rented that college for the Green Bay training camp. He said, "When I arrived at camp I found out that several of the veterans were black and this was a new experience for me. I didn't know how to treat them and I didn't know how to talk to them. I felt very uncomfortable around them." He said, "I was just lost at sea because this went contrary to everything I had been taught. I'm a rookie, they're the veterans and yet I'm supposed to be superior to them in the way I was taught." It was a couple of weeks into training camp and he said, "I had a very, very bad day. I couldn't do anything right and Lombardi was just screaming at me and on my case the whole day. The more he was on me, the more mistakes I made." He said, "I was so down. After I got out of the dining hall, I walked out into the night air. It was dark and I just sat down on the grass and hung my head. I was thinking that there's no way I'm going to make this team. I'm not cut out for the NFL. I don't have the ability to do that." Then he said, "All of a sudden out of the dark I heard this big baritone voice say, 'What are you doing over there?'" He said, "I looked around and it was Willie Davis." Willie Davis is a black man. Willie Davis was the captain of the defense. Willie Davis was this giant of a man who was one of the best NFL players on defense in the whole league. He said, "Willie Davis came over and said, 'Look, I know you had a bad day. I know you're down, but I tell you that you have what it takes to make this team.'" Then he said something that changed his life forever (Bill Curry). He said, "I will help you get there. I will help you make this team." Bill Curry said, "Here's a black man whose race I had previously looked down upon and here he comes over and tells me that I have what it takes and that he's going to help me make it." He said, "Those few comments changed my life forever. It changed my life forever in the sense I never viewed a black man the same ever again. It changed my view of myself, because here was a man that had confidence in me that I could make it."

It reminds me of Proverbs 25 where it says, *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.* Willie Davis said the right thing at the right time because he cared for this guy, and Bill Curry said, "It changed my life forever." He went on to be in the Pro Bowl and he went on to help the team win the Super Bowl, from a rookie that was ready to quit.

So this tells us the joy and beauty of doing things God's way where we are not respecters of persons, and a minister cannot be that way. You see, all brethren, all over the world no matter what race or educational level or background are children of God,

called by name by the Father. Let's go to Galatians 3:28 and see this fundamental scripture that all of us should remember, but especially the ministry. Paul makes it so clear. It couldn't be any clearer. We cannot discriminate against one another or look down on one another.

Galatians 3:28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... (KJV)*

There was a huge division in that day between Jews and Greeks.

28b) ... there is neither bond nor free, ... KJV

A huge division between masters and slaves, free men and slaves.

28 continued) ... there is neither male nor female: ... KJV

Women were property back then. You could say there's neither black or white or red or yellow.

28 continued) ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

We are all equal because of Christ, you see, because Christ died not just for a certain group. He died for all mankind. He died for those who have no education. He died for those who have graduate educations. He died for those who are wealthy. He died for those that are poor. He died for all different races and colors and backgrounds. We are all children of God and because of that all brethren deserve the respect of the ministry, even those brethren who are not part of our fellowship. They deserve our respect too.

So, closing out point eight, a minister should treat everyone with dignity and respect because they are the children of God.

Now the ninth point: Love should be the underlying motivation of any minister.

Everything comes back to love. Paul said, "I show you a better way. You can know all this other stuff, you can have all these other gifts, but I show you a better way", and he talks about love. Notice what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:22. He's talking to the brethren in this epistle, but it applies especially to the ministry. Notice what he says.

1 Peter 1:22. *See you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit ... KJV*

Notice this. You've come to the point where you've purified your life.

22b) ... unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that you] love one another with a pure heart fervently: (KJV)

The Greek word for “unfeigned” is Strong’s 505, and it means *sincere, without hypocrisy*. He says, “Don’t have fake love, don’t have put on love, but sincere love with a pure heart.” The word “pure” in addition to being translated *pure*, it can also mean *clean or clear, not crowded, not cloudy, but clean of malice or agendas*. This especially applies to the ministry. Unfeigned, not fake, true pure love for the brethren; we need to do that.

Notice Matthew, chapter 18. Christ had a lot to say about how ministers should behave themselves. We’re going to read verses 10 through 14. This is a very familiar scripture that we’ve covered many times before, but take this into consideration when we talk about how a minister should have love for the brethren.

Matthew 18:10. *Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; ... KJV*

Now He’s talking to His disciples, but it applies to all of us.

10b) ... for I say to you, that in heaven their angels ... KJV

Angels (plural) indicating all of God’s children have multiple angels.

10 continued) ... do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11) For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. (KJV)

We all were lost before we were called.

12) How think you? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, ... KJV

And we’ll talk about what this word “astray” means in just a second.

12b) ... does he not leave the ninety and nine, and goes into the mountains and seeks that which is gone astray?

13) And if so be that he finds it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that [sheep] than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14) Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. (KJV)

Now the word “astray” is Strong’s 4105 and Zodiades says it means *to wander or go astray, to get off the track*. The words “little ones” is one Greek word that is translated two English words; that’s 3398 and it’s the Greek word “micros” and it’s where we get the word “micro” as in microscope where you look at little things through a microscope. It means *least, less or small*. He used it twice here in Matthew 18 that we just read. He said, “Don’t despise one of these little ones.” He doesn’t want any of these little ones to perish and Christ is giving the analogy that if one of these little ones goes astray and it’s brought back into the fold, great rejoicing occurs in heaven.

But you see, a little one is humble and small in their own eyes, and yet at the same time sometimes little ones get confused. We've all been there and we've all done that. We get confused and we get off track. We go in a wrong direction and we need gentle help and gentle correction and gentle guidance, not being kicked to the curb. Again, that's where the crook on the staff is. Just take the little lamb by the neck and kind of pull it around and have it face another direction.

Now this scripture is not referring to those who leave the flock throwing hand grenades. We're not talking about that. We're not talking about those who leave the flock with an agenda to cause division. We're not talking about those who leave the flock to promote heresy. We're not talking about going and rescuing those. You don't run after a guy throwing hand grenades at you. That is stupid. But a minister should ask himself, "Have I done everything within my power to rescue this person or to save this situation? Have I done everything possible to take care of this, to go after the one that is lost or the one going astray? You see, all that a minister does should be with the idea in mind, what is best for my brother or sister? Everything I do, what is best for them? Love is doing what is best for them, but the caveat is doing what is best for them is not always what they want, but what is best for them. Closing out this ninth point, is that love should be the motivation of every minister's actions and thoughts and how he treats the brethren, doing what is best for them to see them as the Bride of Christ.

That leads us now to the last point. A true minister must exhibit the fruits of God's spirit.

It can't be any plainer in the scriptures, and it's true for all of us obviously. A true minister should exhibit the fruits of God's spirit. We don't need to turn to Galatians 5; we know what they are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. It's a minister's responsibility to exhibit all of those character traits of God's spirit. He must demonstrate those in being a shepherd and he also must demonstrate those in his personal life and within his family. That's very important. You see, all of those characteristics must be applied in the home first and then from there carried to the brethren and in his job. It's got to be applied in the home first and then reflected in his job as a minister. A minister obviously has to take care of his family and pay attention to his family. If his home life or his marriage or his children are a disaster, then that is going to affect his ministry negatively and obviously set a poor example for all the brethren.

Let's go to 1 Timothy 3. Paul is instructing Timothy about the qualifications for an elder. In 1 Timothy 3, 4 and 5, he lists many qualifications but we're going to focus on a minister's own family, one of the qualifications. He's saying if you want to be a bishop, if you want to be a shepherd, you have to be ...

1 Timothy 3:4. *One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (KJV)*

If a man doesn't know how to rule his own house, how on earth can he take care of the Church of God? If his children are rebellious and they talk back and they could care less about God and they're disobedient, that says something. Now look at chapter 5 and verse 8. This is talking to everybody now, but particularly it applies even more so to a minister.

1 Timothy 5:8. *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. (KJV)*

An infidel is somebody who doesn't believe in God. What this tells us is if we don't provide for our own house, our own family, we are worse than somebody who doesn't even believe in God. Now providing for one's own house, normally you think of food and clothing and shelter and obviously it applies to that, but it also applies to the needs of one's mate and for one's children, to provide love, kindness, gentleness, understanding, patience, sympathy, care, helpfulness and all of that.

Yet looking back over the decades, some of the most unhappy women I ever met were minister's wives, and some of the most brow beaten kids and some of the most rebellious kids were in a minister's family, and quite often in the upper crust ministers' families. So for a minister it's a continual battle and it requires balance of providing for one's family and the needs of one's family, but also being a shepherd for the sheep. There is a balancing act and sometimes I know ministers, maybe out of a good heart, ignore their families thinking they were going to focus on being a minister, and as a result their families suffered. We cannot do that. A minister must exhibit the fruits of God's spirit in his family, in his personal life, in his marriage, in his child rearing as well as in the church.

The Bible says a minister has to be blameless and that is a scary, scary thought. Let's go to 1 Timothy 3:2, again talking about the qualifications of a minister. It says, "a bishop" and the word "bishop" simply means an *overseer*.

1 Timothy 3:2. *A bishop then must be blameless, ... KJV*

Not part of the problem, not contributing to a problem.

2b) ...the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; (KJV)

So being blameless means that you're not part of the problem, you should be part of the solution to the problem. Humility is the key to making all of this happen. Let's go to Philippians 2:3. This applies again to all of us, but it especially applies to the ministry, and in fulfilling the role of a minister the man must be humble, otherwise it falls apart. Everything falls apart. Nothing happens good out of a haughty attitude or a self righteous attitude or an arrogant attitude. We will read this from the New King James.

Philippians 2:3. *[Let] nothing [be done] through selfish ambition or conceit, ... KJV*

“I am better than you. I’m above you.” Nothing should be done with that attitude.

3b) ... but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (KJV)

Christ was at a wedding supper and He noticed the people that took the upper rooms, and He said, “You need to take the lowest rooms. If somebody wants to place you in an upper room, great, so be it.” But He said, “In lowliness of mind we need to esteem others better than ourselves.” It goes back to the point of not being a respecter of persons. Yet many ministers, as I pointed out earlier, feel threatened when somebody asks a question, and that shouldn’t be. James 3:17 tells us the answer to that. James is talking about the wisdom from above, meaning the wisdom from heaven, the wisdom from God’s throne, the wisdom from God and Jesus Christ.

James 3:17. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure ... KJV*

Clear, honest, no agenda.

17b) ... then peaceable ... KJV

Meaning the goal is to have peace. That’s why we named this church Pacific which means *peace*. I think all of us are tired of fighting, tired of intrigue, tired of all that; agendas, confrontations.

17 continued) ... gentle, [and] easy to be entreated, ... KJV

And notice what he said, the wisdom from above is easy to be entreated. The New Living Translation says, “Willing to yield to others.” Not having to have one’s own way all the time.

17 continued) ... full of mercy and good fruits, ... KJV

We’re talking about the fruits of God’s spirit.

17 continued) ... without partiality (not being a respecter of persons), and without hypocrisy. (KJV)

So when somebody asks a question, the minister should not be afraid of a question or view it as some kind of threat. The fact is we are all walking down the same path; we’re all in the same boat, ministers or members, it makes no difference. We all want to be in the Kingdom of God. We all want to be like Jesus Christ and God has ordained a ministry to help brethren attain that, but the ministry isn’t perfect. We have our own problems. We have our own failings and shortcomings and character flaws. We’re in the same boat. So for somebody to ask a minister a question is not a threat, and

believe me, no minister has all the answers. We're struggling to find the answers ourselves and you learn by experience and you learn through God's holy spirit and you learn through God's word.

So in closing this tenth point, the brethren should see Christ in their minister. They should never see Satan in their minister, and I've seen Satan in a minister and I've seen Satan in brethren, and we never want to go there. It's a terrible responsibility. But this tenth point, a minister should exhibit the fruits of God's holy spirit, therefore when somebody looks at a minister they see Christ in the minister. They see the fruits of that spirit.

Okay, let's close and summarize. Several years ago, twelve or fifteen years ago, I took a lot of heat from other ministers for stating the truths that we just talked about in these last two Sabbaths. I took a lot of criticism and a lot of heat because some in authority did not want ministers to behave the way I just described. What they wanted was a minister to bark orders and to rule with a rod of iron and to have the brethren hop to and be obedient and to be suck-ups frankly. They wanted a minister to sit in an ivory tower and be above "the prayers and the payers" and then elevate the self. When these scriptures began to make an impression on me and I began to talk about that, I took a lot of heat because they said, "You're lowering the image of a minister." No, a minister is a servant. A minister is a helper of people's joy. What we've just read comes from the scriptures and this is the way that God wants a minister to be.

The goal of a minister, the ultimate goal is to do everything in his power to see that the brethren enter the Kingdom of God. That is the goal. Not power, not prestige, not authority, not elevating the self; the goal is to make sure within one's capability through the power of God's holy spirit to make sure that all the flock, all the brethren attain the Kingdom of God and are there to marry Jesus Christ.

Let's go to our final scripture, 1 Thessalonians 2:19. Paul says it directly. This is what Paul says, that the goal of the minister should be. It's been there all along. It's not to worship a corporation and it's not to establish some edifice. The brethren are the edifice. The brethren are what counts, obviously after God and Jesus Christ. Notice what Paul says to this church and to us today.

1 Thessalonians 2:19. *For what [is] our hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? ...*
KJV

What is a minister's hope or what is a minister's joy, or what is a minister's crown of rejoicing?

19b) ... [Are] not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? (KJV)

He said, "That's the ultimate goal. That's the ultimate joy. That's the ultimate hope. That's the ultimate crown to see all of God's people have a crown on their head and enter into the Kingdom of God as the Bride of Christ.

So it's my hope in giving these two sermons that those of you who had bad experiences in the past will find it a little easier to talk to a minister, to find it a little easier maybe to have a bit more trust in a minister, or to find it easier to respect the ministry a little more, and especially not to be afraid of a minister. How can a minister do his job if people are afraid of him? What we want, the goal is for brethren to feel safe and comfortable in the presence of a minister, because the church, you see, should be a refuge. That's why we named it Pacific. It's a safe place; it's home; a safe refuge. So the brethren should feel very comfortable and very safe being in the presence of a minister. I hope you come to see that a true minister is a servant who will help the brethren walk the path to the Kingdom of God.

When we stop and think about it, what does this say about God, that He would ordain a group of men and their wives to help the brethren be the Bride of Christ? What does that say about God's love for the brethren? The ministry is there to be servants, to serve and help the brethren become eternal, to become the Bride of Christ. You see, God designed the ministry to be a blessing. In the past sometimes that wasn't the case, but that was God's design and that speaks to God's love for each one of us. The principals we've given here apply to all Christians, but especially to the ministry.

The point of the sermon is to encourage you that God has provided a ministry and provided specific instructions to the ministry as to how a minister should conduct himself, but it's all for the benefit of the brethren because He loves the brethren, He loves His children, He loves His flock so much. Because of the knowledge God has given us in His word that we've talked about, hopefully it becomes easier for the brethren to judge a minister by the minister's fruits. It makes that easier, so the brethren don't get led astray by a wolf in sheep's clothing. But it all comes back to God. God loves each one of us so much that He has given us a church, He has given us a ministry, He has given us a home to help us to become like Him and like Jesus Christ.