

The Gospel Preacher



A Practical Look at Preachers and Preaching

**Compiled by
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Preface

Having been blessed to be able to preach the gospel on a “full-time basis” for forty years, I have had the opportunity to read about and experience what it is like to be a gospel preacher.

I have been a part of or witnessed many good things in those forty years. On the other hand, I have also seen abuses by both preachers and congregations which have damaged the cause of Christ.

In addition to doing located work, I have also had the opportunity to be involved in three preacher training programs presented by local churches. I have always been interested in such programs because I started in “full-time” work in such a program that was conducted by the church in Downers Grove, Illinois. Under the leadership of two capable elders, Leon Boyd and Bob Hewlett, and under the tutelage of W.C. Hinton, Jr., I was able to establish a solid foundation to begin my preaching which has remained with me all these years.

I was recently asked by a young man who has been preaching and teaching by appointment and has an interest in “full-time” work, if I would inform him as to what is involved in preaching on a “full-time” basis. His request has provided the impetus for the publication of this study.

I developed this study for the first preacher training program we conducted at the Centerville Road congregation in Tallahassee, Florida, some twenty years ago. Over the years I have shared it with several young men who had a desire to preach or who were in the very early years of their preaching.

My purpose in this study is three-fold:

1. To describe and define scriptural preaching and the one who does it.
2. To illustrate the importance of gospel preaching.
3. To give some practical advice on all aspects of life for the man who would preach and for others who want to understand the work of preaching.

I have tried to honestly present both the positive and negative aspects of being a “full-time” preacher. The negative observations are not intended to discourage one from preaching but rather to alert him to some abuses which could take place. They are also included so that brethren who have such ideas might correct them.

May all of us, whether preachers or not, do all things to the glory of God and for the betterment of the cause of Christ.

Gene Taylor
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The Need for Preachers

I. The Essential Nature of This Study

- A. This is a neglected area in the teaching of most churches.
 - 1. Preachers are hesitant to deal with it because their motives might be misjudged.
 - 2. Others see no need to study it.
- B. Faulty concepts about the work and erroneous practices, of both churches and preachers, need to be corrected.
- C. Churches and those who preach are to encourage and equip men to preach the gospel (2 Tim. 2:2).
 - 1. To equip them for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - 2. To encourage them to give diligence to study and development (2 Tim. 2:15).
- D. The word is to be preached by those who feel compelled to do the work (1 Cor. 9:16).
 - 1. The desire to preach, by itself, is not enough to assure success.
 - 2. One must possess some inherent abilities and he must work to develop them and acquire new ones.

II. The Worth of Preaching

- A. As an essential work of the church, the word is to be preached in its purity (2 Tim. 4:1-5).
 - 1. To carry out the responsibility to the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 - 2. To equip and edify the members of the church (Acts 20:32).
- B. God placed this work in the church (Eph. 4:11-16).
- C. Those who preach are considered worthy of heaven's praise (Rom. 10:14-15).

III. The Shortage of Quality Preachers

- A. Some factors which contribute to this shortage.
 - 1. Too many who could preach are too materialistic.
 - 2. Too many churches fail to give proper consideration to adequate financial support for preachers.
 - 3. Too many preachers are subjected to unjust criticism.
 - 4. Too many churches have too many problems.
 - 5. Too many parents discourage their sons from becoming preachers and their daughters from marrying one.
- B. Solutions to this shortage.
 - 1. We must encourage and impress able men to undertake the work.
 - 2. We must convince the church to encourage men to become preachers.

3. We must convince parents to provide encouragement and opportunity for their sons who would preach.
4. We must set a good example by treating preachers fairly and making sure all criticism of them is just.
5. We must use our resources to equip those who desire to preach so that they can acquire and develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful.

Scriptural Designations of the Work

I. Evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8)

A. From *Euangelistes*.

1. "Lit. a messenger of good, denotes a preacher of the gospel" (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 44).
2. "A bringer of good tidings, an evangelist. This name is given in the N.T. to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles" (Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of NT Words*, 257).
3. This is a form of *euangelion*, "glad tidings" or "good news." It is used in the New Testament with reference to the news or tidings having to do with Christ and His kingdom and all blessings therein.

B. The gospel is the thing brought, the evangelist is the messenger who brings it.

C. The length of time a man stays in one place is not inherent in the word. It does not mean transient or drifter.

D. Some think an evangelist cannot preach the gospel to the church since it is not "news" to them.

1. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to teach and instruct brethren (I Tim. 1:3; 4:6; 2 Tim. 4:5).
2. Paul was ready to preach the gospel at Rome to those who were "saints" (Rom. 1:7-8, 15).

II. Preacher (1 Tim. 2:7; Rom. 10:14)

A. From *Kerux*.

1. "A herald...used of the preacher of the gospel; (b) of Noah, as a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. 2:5" (Vine, 202).
2. "The herald or proclaimer of the divine word" (Thayer, 346).

B. Related words.

1. *Kerusso*: "to be a herald, to officiate as herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald; always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed;..." (Thayer).
2. *Kerugma*: "a proclamation by a herald, denotes a message, a preaching (the substance of what is preached as distinct from the act of preaching). 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim. 4:17; Tit. 1:3" (Vine).

III. Minister (Eph. 3:7; 1 Tim. 4:6)

A. From *Diakonos*.

1. "A servant, attendant, minister, deacon" (Vine, 72).

2. "One who executes the commands of another, esp. Of a master, a servant, attendant, minister...1. univ. Of the servant of a king...of one who promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church, Col. 1:25...teachers of the Christian religion, I Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:4; I Thes. 3:2" (Thayer, 138).
- B. The particular work in which he serves is that of teaching the gospel.

IV. Teacher or Instructor

- A. *Didasko* (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 4:11): "To give instruction" (Vine, 111).
- B. *Paideuo* (2 Tim. 2:25): "To train children, teach...instructing, correcting, 2 Tim. 2:25" (Vine, 264).
- C. *Katecheo* (Gal. 6:6): "2. to teach orally, to instruct" (Thayer, 340).

V. Summary and Conclusions

- A. A summary.
1. **Preacher** tells what one does: proclaims a message.
 2. **Evangelist** tells the nature of the message: good news.
 3. **Minister** describes his relationship to what he does: servant not master.
 4. **Teacher** describes the object in view: instruction and correction.
- B. Some conclusions.
1. These terms are not titles of distinction.
 - a. The Lord condemned the wearing of flattering titles (Matt. 23:8-12).
 - b. They denote his peculiar work without any clergy/laity distinctions.
 2. The nature of his service is spiritual not physical or material.
 - a. As proclaimers of the word, the apostles would not leave the teaching work to serve tables (Acts 6:2).
 - b. Many preachers grow weary attending to physical things which ought to be done by others so they can attend to their preaching and teaching.

The Importance of Preaching

I. Many Brethren and Some Preachers Do Not Fully Appreciate the Importance of Preaching

- A. Some look upon the preacher as a necessary evil to be tolerated not accepted as others.
- B. Some preachers evidence a lack of appreciation for their work by their attitude.
 - 1. Some are content to work well below their potential. They put in enough time to “get up a lesson” and never become the kind of Bible students they ought to be.
 - 2. They “tolerate” brethren and never develop any real sympathy or feeling for them.
 - 3. They are usually sarcastic, lazy, soured on the brethren, and looking for a place to move.

II. Preaching Is a Gift of Christ (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12)

- A. The work of an evangelist is a function (*doma*) set in the church by Christ.
 - 1. Just as He provided the gifts of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, He gave the gift of evangelists.
 - 2. All of these are necessary to bring the body, the church, to completion.
- B. It does not involve a miraculous call or the impartation of mystic powers.
 - 1. God makes preachers as He makes elders (Acts 20:28).
 - 2. When faithful men study and learn the will of God and it moves them to want to spend their time in proclaiming it, then God makes them preachers (Jer. 20:9).
- C. Because it is a gift of Christ, we must be careful that Christ get the glory.
 - 1. We need to distinguish between the man and the service he renders. Greater emphasis should be placed on the message than on the messenger (1 Thes. 5:12-13).
 - 2. As with elders, so also let preachers be esteemed not for **who** they are but rather for **what** they do.
 - 3. There is too much of a tendency to honor preachers because we like their personality, looks, tone of voice, pulpit mannerisms, etc.
 - 4. One who faithfully does the work of a preacher is fulfilling a divine function and it should be regarded in that way.

III. The Great Potential of Preaching

- A. Preaching is designed to save souls (1 Tim. 4:16).
- B. Preaching is designed to build up the church (Eph. 4:11-16).

IV. Preaching Is a Sacred Trust

- A. It is a trust committed from God (1 Tim. 1:11; 6:20; 1 Thes. 2:4).
- B. It is a powerful trust (Rom. 1:16).
- C. In the hands of the gospel preacher is the power to save or condemn, enlighten or blind, guide men aright or astray.
- D. Faithfulness and courage are required in stewards. Preaching is not a mere social profes-sion but a sacred stewardship of God for which answers must and will be given (1 Cor. 4:2; Jas. 3:1).

Man's Qualifications for Preaching

I. The Reality of the Problem

- A. The difference between what the Bible teaches on the qualifications and work of a preacher and what people sometimes expect is a source of constant friction.
 - 1. Some requirements of brethren when they interview a preacher and criticisms often heard about preachers evidence this fact.
 - 2. Some preachers have adopted the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" attitude and have set about to meet all of the human standards laid down by brethren.
- B. Evidence of the problem.
 - 1. Article: "The Perfect Preacher."

"The Perfect Preacher"

Results of a computerized survey indicate that the perfect preacher preaches exactly fifteen minutes. He condemns sin, but never embarrasses anyone. He works from 8:00 a.m. until midnight and is also the janitor.

He makes \$60 a week, wears good clothes, drives a new car, and gives \$50 a week to the poor. He is 28 years old, has been preaching for 25 years, is wonderfully gentle and handsome, loves to work with teenagers and spends countless hours with senior citizens. He makes 15 calls daily on church families, shut-ins and hospital patients, and is always in his office when needed.

If your preacher does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other churches that are tired of their preachers, too. Then bundle up your preacher and send him to the church at the top of the list. In one week you will receive 1,643 preachers. One of them should be perfect.

-Adapted-

- 2. Excerpts from letters from churches sent to H.E. Phillips requesting his help in finding a preacher. (H.E. Phillips, "So You Want a Preacher?" - h.e.phillips.org)
 - a. "Would you help find a preacher between 35 and 40 years old, with a friendly wife and not more than three children, who has a good disposition to get along with all kinds of people, and who can get his sermon across in not more than 30 minutes."
 - b. "Will you help us find a preacher who will really do the work of the church?"

- c. From an elder asking Phillips if he knew a preacher who was about ready to move: "Our preacher is moving in three months. He has been with us two years and we think that is long enough for a preacher to stay at one place. He gets too close to the members if he stays longer." When Phillips suggested a preacher who might want to move, this elder asked, "Where did he go to school and how many degrees does he have?"

II. Some Man-Made Qualifications

A. Secular education.

1. In an increasing number of congregations a preacher is not wanted unless he holds a certain degree(s) from a certain school.
 - a. There is more of a demand for the "proper" educational credentials than most realize.
 - b. There is nothing wrong with secular education and with an individual who desires to preach enhancing his knowledge and skills through education but it is not a Scriptural requirement.
2. Consider Paul who taught "not in words of wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1,4-5) and who was "untrained in speech" (2 Cor. 11:6).
3. A good secular education at an institution of higher learning does not assure a more effective preacher.
 - a. Some of the best preachers have been "self-made" men educated in the Bible and useful related subjects without having a college degree.
 - b. Some men have become so obsessed with their scholarship that they have lost touch with the common man and with their true responsibilities as preachers.

B. Dynamic personality.

1. It is sad but some brethren place greater emphasis on this than on a man's knowledge and ability.
2. All Christians, preachers included, ought to try to develop respectable manners, good grooming, and the ability to get along with people.
 - a. But some brethren demand a dynamic man with a bubbling personality.
 - b. Some want a person who is always smiling, never tired, anxious, or upset.
 - c. A popular or favorite preacher is often used as the standard by which all others are measured in this regard.
3. Let a preacher be himself as long as his personality is in line with the will of God. If he has a vivacious personality, fine. If he is reserved and quiet, let him be.

C. Style and dress.

1. One does not have much control over his physical features but all of us should seek to do the best with what we have.
 - a. We can be neat and clean.
 - b. We can seek to dress with good taste.

2. Some want the preacher to be very fashionable.
 - a. Some think his attire, if stylish, will have a positive effect on reaching some women and the young people.
 - b. These would not have tolerated John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4).
 - c. Of Jesus it was said, "He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53:2).
 - d. I wonder what would be the reaction today to the apostle Paul's appearance (Gal. 4:13-15).
 3. Preachers can go to extremes: some are always dressed in a suit and tie while some are sloppy and unkempt.
- D. Social finesse.
1. Some expect a preacher to join one or two luncheon clubs, get elected to some office or some organization of civic importance, etc., in hopes that the local community will think more of the church.
 2. All members should be civic-minded (in the world, not of the world) and be involved in the community but this should be left up to the individual.
- E. Entertainer.
1. Some want a preacher who is loud, can keep them amused with stories and antics, and be the life of the party at all gatherings.
 - a. Some rate this as the most important aspect of a preacher.
 - b. Humor is needed at times in order to relieve pressure but all must realize the work of preaching the gospel is serious business.
 2. Some think that this is the only way the young can be reached.
- F. The right age.
1. Some congregations want a man who is just exactly the right age, neither too old nor too young. A young preacher is "too immature" while an older preacher "won't be able to relate to the young people."
 2. This would eliminate both Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12; Phil. 2:19-20) and Paul (Phile. 9).
- G. Married.
1. Most congregations demand a married man but that eliminates many good men (even Paul).
 2. Though a preacher with a good wife is blessed in his work, brethren have no right to require it of him.
- H. The right number and kind of children.
1. Some men have not been wanted at some churches because they either had too many children or no children.
 2. The size of a man's family is only his and his wife's business.
 3. Many times brethren impose a double standard for preacher's children expecting of them things that are not required of other members' children.

4. Brethren must realize that the preacher and his wife are struggling along with them to bring up their children properly and it does not help when brethren add extra pressure to it.

Scriptural Qualifications for Preaching

Our source of information is not the expectations and demands of men but the word of God. Several epistles written by the apostle Paul provide good sources of information in regard to the preacher, his work, and his qualifications. First and Second Timothy and Titus were written to young preachers. Second Corinthians gives a lot of personal insight into the life and work of Paul himself.

I. Gentleness (2 Tim. 2:24)

- A. From *Epios*: “mild, gentle, was frequently used by Greek writers as characterizing a nurse with trying children or a teacher with refractory scholars, or of parents toward their children” (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 145).
- B. Other New Testament uses of the term and related passages.
 - 1. Paul’s conduct toward converts at Thessalonica (1 Thes. 2:7).
 - 2. The wisdom that is from above is “gentle” (Jas. 3:17).
 - 3. Be as harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16).
- C. This is not an easy qualification to acquire and keep.
 - 1. Many exasperating situations arise.
 - 2. There is a time and place for severe rebuke but let it be measured and administered only to those who have shown they are not interested in the truth but are determined to hinder it.
 - 3. The preacher must not be high-handed and arrogant. He must practice the “golden rule.”

II. Able (Apt) to Teach (2 Tim. 2:24; 2:2)

- A. From *Didaktikos*: “skilled in teaching” (Vine, 112).
- B. There are some who should not preach because they do not have the ability. While some abilities are acquired, there needs to be some native ability.
- C. A failure to realize that one must possess some inherent abilities has caused much harm.

III. Patient (Forbearing) (2 Tim. 2:24)

- A. From *Anexikakos*: “patiently forbearing evil, lit. patient of wrong” (Vine, 117).
- B. One who preaches must be patient with brethren in their failings.
 - 1. They are not sinlessly perfect and neither is he.
 - 2. He must realize, also, that they will not change overnight.
 - 3. Some have become disillusioned by this and quit while others have developed a stern, hyper-critical disposition.
- C. The preacher must be patient when he is wronged.

1. He cannot use the pulpit to nurse a personal grudge nor should he line up sympathizers (2 Tim.4:16-17).
2. The example of Paul. He was wronged by false brethren (2 Cor. 11:26), wrongly placed in prison (Phil. 1:16), suffered afflictions (2 Tim. 4:5), endured hardship (2 Tim. 2:3), and shed many tears (2 Tim. 1:4).
3. Thin-skinned preachers are in for some bad times.
 - a. Some immediately think of moving. It is better to stay and try to work out the problem if possible.
 - b. There will always be critics—even among your “friends.”

IV. Humble (Meek) (2 Tim. 2:25)

- A. From *Praus*: “...gentle, mild, meek” (Vine, 737).
 1. Meekness is strength under control.
 2. Meekness concerns not only one’s attitude toward himself but the ability to direct his energies toward doing the most good even when he might have to subdue his own personal wish or bite his tongue.
- B. He should know where he fits into God’s plan and be content to exercise himself there (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 3:5-7).
 1. A certain amount of confidence and poise is good but one should not be puffed up.
 2. Consider: If Paul and Apollos were only seed planters and watering servants, what are we? (1 Cor. 9:16).
 3. The work the preacher does is important but he is not indispensable and wisdom will not perish without him.

V. Watchful (Sober) (2 Tim. 4:5)

- A. This involves being of sound mind and possessing good judgment as opposed to being impetuous and frivolous.
- B. Upon this quality, or the lack of it, often hinges the difference between strife and peace in a congregation.
- C. Since it is not always easy to know what is the best judgment in difficult questions, problems, and situations, one must follow the advice of James 1:18-21.
 1. Some, when under pressure, come “apart at the seams.”
 2. These should either grow up or quit preaching.
- D. Soberness is also opposed to flippancy.
 1. To some preachers, everything is a joke.
 2. A sense of humor is essential but not everything is funny.

VI. Faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:2)

- A. From *Pistos*: “worthy of trust; that can be relied on” (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of NT Words*, 514).
 - 1. One must keep the same charge that was given to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:1-2).
 - 2. One must keep that which is committed to his trust (2 Tim.4:1-2).
 - 3. One must hold fast the pattern of sound words (2 Tim.1:13).
- B. Unreliable men have no business preaching.
 - 1. Unless one is of upright character and full of faith, he should not be entrusted with preaching the gospel.
 - 2. On the other hand, congregations must show they trust him.

VII. Some Common Sense Things a Preacher Must Possess

- A. His life. He must be an example of what he preaches.
- B. His attitude toward the word. He must view it as the inspired word of God and as the final authority in all matters.
- C. His willingness to stand for the whole counsel of God.
- D. His approach to his work. Balanced. Not a hobby-rider.
- E. His ability to preach and teach. He must be a student of the word, have the ability to organize and arrange lessons in a clear way and have a good speaking ability.
- F. His ability to work with people. People of diverse backgrounds, ages, and socio-economic levels.

The Preacher's Work

I. The Purposes of a Gospel Preacher

- A. The purpose of a preacher is not to be:
 - 1. A humorist or storyteller.
 - 2. An "ear-tickler" (2 Tim. 4:3).
 - 3. A social revolutionary or social crusader.
 - 4. Marriage counselor.
 - 5. Psychiatrist.
 - 6. Financial advisor.
- B. The purpose of the gospel preacher is to:
 - 1. Save souls (1 Tim. 4:16).
 - 2. Disturb complacency (Rom. 12:11).
 - 3. Encourage love of the brethren (Rom. 12:10).
 - 4. Urge others not to teach false doctrines (1 Tim. 1:3-4)
 - 5. Help people remember the principles of God which constitute the basis of righteous living (Titus 3:1-2).
 - 6. Mark those who cause divisions and occasions of stumbling (Rom. 16:17).
 - 7. Exhort fellow-members to be characterized by love and good works (Heb. 10:24).
 - 8. Contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).
 - 9. Warn against love of the world (1 John 2:15-17).
 - 10. Restore the erring (Jas. 5:19-20).
 - 11. Please God and enjoy His favor (Gal. 1:10).

II. The Work of a Preacher

- A. As seen in 2 Timothy 4:1-3.
 - 1. Reprove: convict, convince of sin.
 - 2. Rebuke: to find fault, adjudge.
 - 3. Exhort: to urge one to pursue a course (prospective, future).
 - 4. Teaching: doctrine, that which is taught.
- B. His equipment to accomplish this work: Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - 1. Reproof: convict of sinfulness.
 - 2. Correction: restore to upright or right state.
 - 3. Instruction: the whole training of a child; instruction which aims at the increase of virtue.
 - 4. Teaching: doctrine.

III. What It Means to Be a Preacher

- A. It means to study the Bible. To read it, meditate upon it, and to never stop studying it.

- B. It means to go to the lost, the weak, any who need your help.
- C. It means to talk to a large crowd, a small group, or an individual whether you are in the mood or not.
- D. It means to deal with people and to love them. All kinds of people: good, weak, stubborn, sinful, church members, the unconverted, other preachers, elders, deacons, your friends, even your enemies.
- E. It means to fight.
 - 1. To fight Satan and evil.
 - 2. To oppose false teachers, ambitious brethren, those with great zeal who lack knowledge and sometimes lack sense—preaching sermons you would rather not preach, making calls you would rather not make.
- F. It means to have joy, peace, and an eternal reward.

The Needs of a Preacher

No passage in the New Testament emphasizes the great importance of gospel preaching more than Romans 10:13-15. It shows that preachers are an indispensable part of God's plan of redemption. In order to do this great work, though, there are some things the preacher needs.

I. He Needs Knowledge

- A. Timothy, an excellent preacher, had known the Scriptures from his youth (2 Tim. 3:15).
- B. It matters little what else he knows if a preacher does not know the Bible.
- C. The Scriptures were given by God that the preacher may be completely furnished to his work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- D. Therefore, the preacher must give himself to reading (1 Tim. 4:13) and studying (2 Tim. 2:15) the word of God.

II. He Needs Dedication

- A. If a man does not love the Lord and the souls of men, he will never be an effective preacher.
 - 1. It is not enough to love to preach, to love to study, etc.
 - 2. He must have a deep desire to save sinners
- B. The example of Paul (Rom. 9:2-3; 10:1).
- C. A person who does not feel genuine anxiety for those lost in sin is lacking dedication.

III. He Needs Courage

- A. The truth he preaches will often be met with opposition, animosity, and even cruelty.
- B. The example of Jesus and His apostles (Matt. 5:11-12; John 15:18-20).
- C. In order to faithfully proclaim the word, he must have the necessary courage (Phil. 4:13).

IV. He Needs Patience

- A. The preacher must have the ability to calmly endure and be longsuffering.
- B. The example of Timothy (2 Tim. 4:2).
- C. He must be patient with sinners and with brethren.
- D. He must be patient to give the word he has preached time to have its effect.

V. He Needs Respect

- A. A preacher must be honored and respected if he is to fulfill his work.

- B. This honor is to accrue to him, not because of the excellence of his character or abilities, but because of the nature of his work.
- C. If the preacher is criticized before children and others, merely because a difference of opinion or his lack of “polish,” his influence for good will likely be destroyed by it.
- D. People need to be careful what they say, and why they say it, about the preacher.

VI. He Needs Encouragement

- A. The preacher needs those who will “back him up” when he has stood for the truth.
- B. While compliments about lessons and work will cheer him considerably, if he ever feels he is alone in fighting against sin and ungodliness, he will become discouraged.
- C. The example of Elijah (1 Kings 19:1ff).
- D. Preachers need those who will “hold up their hands” (Ex. 17:8-16).

VII. He Needs Correction

- A. Preachers are men and they will make mistakes.
 - 1. If there is something amiss in his life, he needs to be reproved.
 - 2. If there is something amiss in his teaching, he needs to know it (Acts 18:26).
- B. The same Scriptural procedure used in correcting the faults of others is to be followed in correcting a preacher (Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Gal. 6:1).

VIII. He Needs Opportunity

- A. When brethren invite a preacher to work with them, often they do not invite him into their homes, introduce him to their friends and neighbors, arrange no classes for him, ask him to go see no one, and do not invite anyone to come hear him preach. Yet, they wonder why the church does not grow.
- B. If the preacher is not good at supplying his own contacts, his work will be meager.

IX. He Needs Adequate Support

- A. A preacher has enough to concern him without the added burden of financial difficulties.
- B. Some churches pay their preacher as little as they can.
- C. A rule of thumb: When a congregation is afraid of overpaying their preacher, they usually wind up not paying him enough.
- D. Preachers are dishonored and discouraged when they are kept on a “hand-to-mouth” standard of living.

The Prophets: Examples to Preachers

While it is true that men today cannot be prophets in the same sense of the word as the Old Testament prophets, they can be the same caliber of spokesmen those men were. A listing of their qualities will show how preachers of today need to be like them.

I. They Were Men of Deep Conviction

- A. They were convinced of their message and the need for people to respond to it (Jer. 4:19).
- B. Men of great conviction are needed today.

II. They Did Not “Beat Around the Bush” in Getting Their Message Across

- A. The example of Nathan in his confrontation with David (2 Sam. 12:7).
- B. People need to fully and clearly understand the message the preacher is delivering.

III. They Did Not Fear the Reaction of Men

- A. The example of Elijah in denouncing Ahab’s sin (1 Kings 21).
- B. As it took a lot of courage to tell Ahab he was wrong, such courage is needed today.

IV. They Did Not Go Along With the Crowd

- A. The example of Micaiah (1 Kings 22).
 - 1. Four hundred prophets told the kings of Judah and Israel what they wanted to hear.
 - 2. Micaiah, the four hundred first, did not go along with the crowd or the “official position.”
- B. Even if it means standing alone, the preacher must stand for the truth.

V. They Were Willing to Suffer and Die for God’s Causes

- A. Consider what is said of them in Hebrews 11:37; Matthew 23:29-37a; and Acts 7:51-52.
- B. The disciples of Jesus will suffer persecution (Matt. 5:11-12; 2 Tim. 3:12).

VI. They Had Grief and Pity

- A. The example of Jeremiah (Jer. 8:21).
- B. The preacher must be able to weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15).

VII. They Proclaimed Judgment

- A. This is a recurring theme for most of the prophets (Micah 3:12).
- B. Judgment must be preached today (Acts 17:30-31).

VIII. They Rebuked False Prophets and Leaders

- A. The example of Micah (Micah 3:11).
- B. No sinner is to be exempt from rebuke.

IX. They Spoke Out on Morality and Ethics

- A. The example of Amos (Amos 5:11).
- B. Much of the immorality seen in society would not be found in local churches if preachers were speaking out on morality, holiness, and godliness.

X. They Became Discouraged But Not Defeated

- A. The example of Jeremiah (Jer. 9:2) but he did not quit (Jer. 20:9).
- B. Discouragements will come in the life of every preacher but he must not allow them to keep him from fulfilling his God-given responsibilities.

The Preacher's Family

One of the greatest dangers for a preacher is to lose his own family while he is trying to save the world. Such would be one of the greatest failures he would ever suffer. As a preacher and Christian he is to deny self (Luke 9:23-25) but he must be aware of the danger of including his family in that denial.

God never commands any man to deny his family. Actually, He condemns the one who does (1 Tim. 5:8). Jesus wants the local church led by those who have saved their families (1 Tim. 3:4-5), not by those who have neglected them or driven them away.

A preacher's family is governed by the same principles as any other man's. Yet, certain circumstances make his position unique from other families. He must adapt God's principles to his own family environment.

I. His Position in the Home

- A. Head of the household (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18-21).
 - 1. He is to guide and lead his family and to keep them under control. If he does not, his influence for good is limited.
 - 2. Some preachers' wives and/or children are constant issues in the church, often unjustly, but sometimes they conduct themselves in such a way to become a point of controversy.
 - 3. Since his unique position puts pressure on the family, he must be strong enough to help them bear it.
- B. He must not sacrifice his family.
 - 1. He preaches to others that they must not sacrifice their families for a career. Neither should he.
 - 2. He has no right to neglect his family (1 Tim. 5:8), even for his work.
- C. Absenteeism.
 - 1. Though he must spend hours away from them, he must seek to spend time with them.
 - 2. Sometimes churches praise the preacher for not spending much time with family. Beware of such an attitude.

II. His Relationship With His Wife

- A. His responsibility to her is seen in Ephesians 5:22-33.
 - 1. The preacher who does not properly love his wife knows nothing of Christ's love for the church.
 - 2. His love for her is to be as sacrificial as Christ's love for the church.

- B. What relation does a preacher's wife have to his work?
1. Do not have, and never let the brethren have, greater expectations and requirements of her than the Lord does.
 2. Some churches think they are hiring two ministers for the price of one.
 - a. They expect the preacher's wife to be social director, hostess, secretary, visitation coordinator, babysitter, etc.
 - b. When you are supported by a church to work with them, they are only employing you.
 3. Never allow unfair or unjust criticism to be leveled at her by anyone.
- C. Your behavior toward other women.
1. When preachers marry, they are to keep themselves only to their wives.
 2. A preacher who is too friendly, flirtatious, and close to his sisters in Christ will hurt his wife and cast doubts on his faithfulness, love, and integrity.
 3. Some practical suggestions.
 - a. Keep your hands to yourself. Be careful of brotherly hugs and "holy" kisses.
 - b. Avoid situations where you or a woman could be tempted.
 - c. Avoid situations where others could accuse you of evil.
 - d. Assist women with their problems but be careful when, where, and how.

III. His Relationship With His Children

- A. His responsibilities to them.
1. To bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
 2. Not to discourage them (Col. 3:21).
 3. Provide all their needs (1 Tim. 5:8).
- B. The problem of rearing a preacher's children normally.
1. Many times, the attitudes, expectations, and actions of brethren make this difficult, if not impossible.
 2. He must give attention to some problems areas:
 - a. Extra pressures. Behavior and action are closely monitored by people. They expect them to be "angels."
 - b. Double standards. Conduct which is allowed in other children is not proper for them.
 - c. Instability. With the constant likelihood of moving, it can be difficult for them to adjust to new environments, to make new friends, to leave behind those places, things, and people to which they have become attached, etc.
 - d. Testing by friends. Sometimes it is hard for them to form friendships because their friends think they have to act differently around the preacher.

IV. Relationship With Other Family

- A. His responsibility to them. If he is fortunate, his family will all be Christians but, usually, that is not the case.
- B. At times his preaching and convictions may stand between them and him. What must he do?
 - 1. Choose Christ first (Matt. 10:34-37). When conflicts come, he cannot betray the Lord for the sake of his family (cf. Matt. 10:21-22).
 - 2. Find comfort in his spiritual family (Mark 10:29-31). God has given him another family for strength and comfort if his physical family rejects him because of his faith.

Advice to Young Preachers

Several years ago, as a young preacher, I came across a bulletin article that was very helpful to me. It was titled "Advice to Young Preachers." It offered practical information as to what I should do and how I should conduct myself as a gospel preacher.

This lesson is that article. It was written by Dick Blackford. The principles found in it are still true and still helpful to the preacher of the gospel.

Advice to Young Preachers

It is always easier to give advice than it is to take it. Anyway, didn't the Lord say, "It is more blessed to give than receive.?" Well, the Lord wasn't really talking about advice when He said that, but after reflecting on ten years of full time preaching, I believe I have discovered some things that will be helpful to those who are just starting out (I rejoice that there appears to be more young men entering this great work!).

Perhaps this advice would "set" better if it came from an old preacher, but I am not ready to put myself in that category. So if you will forget about the source and concentrate on the advice, it will help you. Some of this advice was learned the easy way (someone gave it to me) and some was learned the hard way (by experience). So, here it goes:

1. **Begin the day by asking God's help** (James 5:16). You are not self-sufficient (Prov. 3:5).
2. **Don't take the brethren for granted.** Usually, you can expect an adequate salary. But everything else done for you will be purely as a result of the good grace of the brethren. Be grateful and appreciative. Don't forget the lepers (Luke 17:12-19).
3. **In giving and receiving, don't always be on the receiving end.** Be thoughtful. "Do unto others" (Matt. 7:12).
4. **Learn to listen to and accept criticism—both constructive and destructive.** A man who cannot do this will never make it as a preacher. In fact, get close to a mature member of the congregation and ask him or her to give you some honest advice when you need it.
5. **Don't wear your feelings on your sleeve where they can get hurt easily.** Try to be understanding even when it seems others are not.

6. **Always return borrowed property**—in a reasonable length of time—in good condition.

7. **Don't expect too much too soon.** If you are expecting the brethren to make immediate changes (overnight!), you will soon become discouraged. Be realistic. They probably didn't get in their condition overnight. Be patient, but keep trying.

8. **Don't let a few "raw deals" cause you to grow sour on the brotherhood**—unless you think it is fair for the brethren to become sour on all preachers because they may have gotten a "raw deal" or two. Don't develop a persecution complex or always be on the defensive. If you do, you will end up looking for things that can be interpreted as a "slam" against the preacher—some things that were probably never intended that way. You will become miserable. Also, remember that preachers are not always right.

9. **Don't overestimate yourself.** What you think of your ability to communicate is not the best criteria by which to judge it. The question is—are you communicating? If not, examine yourself first.

10. **Always give an honest day's labor**—and then give a little extra (Rom. 12:17).

11. **Don't concentrate on solving brotherhood issues** to the neglect of your local work.

12. **Learn that one of the worst things is gossip.** Don't participate in it and don't tolerate it. Learn to distinguish between sincere concern and hurtful talk.

13. **Concentrate on your decorum out of the pulpit as much as you do your ability in the pulpit.** People are watching. You are to be an example (1 Tim. 4:12).

14. **"Let no man despise thy youth"** (1 Tim. 4:12). That is, do not misuse your youth so as to cause others to dislike you. Conversely, if you are teaching the truth, do not allow it to be dismissed because of the source—your youth. Make some noise. Do not be manipulated.

15. **Don't try to exhaust your subject in one sermon.** You may exhaust your audience. It is better to terminate a sermon when they are wanting to hear more than when they are wishing they had heard less. However, it is of primary import that you do justice to your lesson. You will have to play this "by ear" and realize that all do not have the same attention span. Also, remember that some preachers can hold the attention of an audience longer than others. Of some it is said, "I could listen to him for hours." Of others, well... If brethren complain that your sermons are too long, try to determine what is wrong. It could be them. It could be you. Or it could be both.

16. **Relate to the young people while you are young.** It will be more difficult to influence them when you get older. Generally, you will always be able to relate to the older folks. Do not interpret this to mean you can neglect the elderly. “Do nothing by partiality” (1 Tim. 5:21).

17. **Use good judgment in your associations with the opposite sex.** “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22).

18. **When a controversy arises over difficult matters, don’t be hasty** (Prov. 29:11). Proceed with caution. Determine what the Lord’s side is in the matter. Then stand up and be counted.

19. **Use seasoning in your speech** (Col. 4:6). Generally, it will be unnecessary to be sarcastic. If manners go with Christianity, they certainly go with preaching. It is good to have some. Of course there are times when you will need to use great plainness of speech on false teachers (2 Cor. 3:12; 3 John 9,10).

20. **Be considerate of your wife.** Help her with the children as often as possible. Because of your work, there will be times when you will not be able to do this. Be genuinely complimentary of her. You will be receiving more praise than you deserve, whereas she will be receiving far less than she deserves. Your responsibilities as a gospel preacher do not nullify your responsibilities as a husband and father. Some have found that out too late. Probably the greatest complaint of preachers’ wives and families is that “he keeps his nose stuck in a book and doesn’t have time for the family.”

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