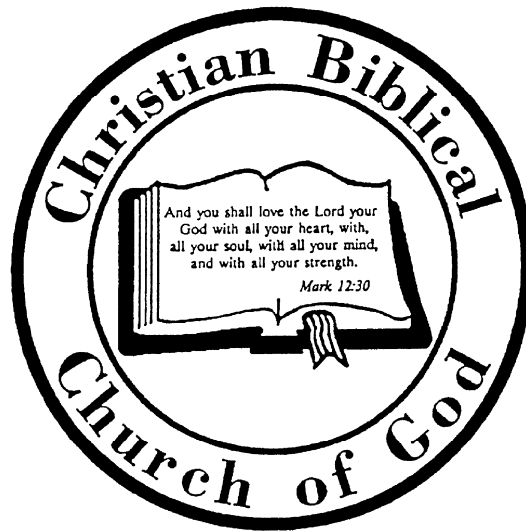


Study Package Nine

The Church, God's Government and the Ministry



Transcript Book

By Fred R. Coulter

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Fred R. Coulter
Christian Biblical Church of God
P. O. Box 1442
Hollister, California 95024-1442

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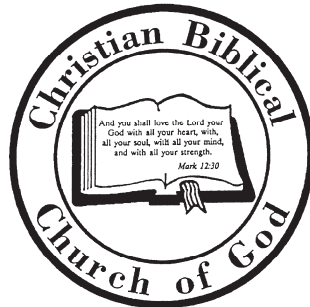
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Study Package Nine

Series of 11 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



Signature

Date

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Study Package Nine

The Church, God's Government, and the Ministry

Foreword

This book is comprised of a series of sermon transcripts by Fred R. Coulter, a minister of Jesus Christ for 50 years. Through the years of his ministry he has studied out the teachings of the Bible. This book is the result of those years of study. It addresses what the roles are for the church, God's government, and the ministry are in the time before Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

The first five sermon transcripts expound upon how the structure of God's Church is to be. Some of the main points that are in these transcripts, "Church Structure I" through "Church Structure V", are as follows.

- If any organization is of God, that organization cannot be destroyed by men, either from within or from without.
- Every single individual has to establish their personal relationship and commitment to God the Father and Jesus Christ on their own.
- The primary job of the ministry is to reach the Word of God. It is not to rule over the people whose ruler is Jesus Christ.
- A church that belongs to God is a gathering together of those that God the Father has called. These individuals have repented before God, accepted the rule of God in their lives through baptism, and as a result have received God's Holy Spirit.
- The main function of a church that belongs to God is to come together to fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Together they learn from the Word of God.
- A true minister of God is known by the keeping of God's commandments, by understanding the very nature of God, and by the godly fruits in their lives.
- A church that belongs to God is not a command and a control dictatorship.

The sixth and seventh transcripts teach about how God governs those who have willingly come under God's authority through repentance and baptism. These transcripts are "What Is the Government of God? I" and "What is the Government of God? II". In these two transcripts the following points are found.

- What kind of a government is a true government of a church that belongs to God?
- How should a government in a church operate?
- How should the government of a church affect each individual person within a congregation?
- A ministry is not the government of God – God does the governing in the lives of those that are God’s.

Now the subject of how a church should not come to idolize a man is addressed. This is covered in the eighth transcript “Should You Follow a Man? I” and the ninth transcript “Should You Follow a Man? II” of this sermon transcript book. Some noteworthy points that these two transcripts cover are as follows.

- A false teaching was the start of all the problems you see in mankind today.
- Jesus Christ warned His Church that many false prophets and many antichrists will try to infiltrate a true church that obeys God.
- The key question for a church is: Are the members and ministry trying to please God or are they trying to please men.
- A minister that is true to Jesus Christ teaches only God’s Word and acknowledges and practices that the congregation belongs only to God.

The tenth transcript of this book is titled “The Church of God – The Spiritual Body of Christ”. It gives more information about the real Church of God. It teaches that all true Christians are spiritually branches of Christ. Any member or group that detaches from Christ will cease to grow spiritually.

The last transcript, the eleventh transcript, in this book is titled “The Church of God – The Ministry of the New Testament Church.” It teaches that a spiritual elder is responsible before Christ to do what the Word of God says is to be done or what the Word of God says is not to be done. A ministry that is serving God can only serve in truth if that ministry is totally committed to God.

Special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Nancy Spaller, and Laila Patterson for transcribing the sermons.

Church Structure I

(Unless the Lord Build the House the Weary Builders Toil in Vain)

Fred R. Coulter

{transcriber's note: keep in mind since the giving of this sermon many splits/divisions have transpired within all the Churches of God, including the United Church of God and the Worldwide CoG has been completely destroyed}

I want to read some excerpts of a letter, because this letter is so prophetic. How can a person be prophetic and not be a prophet? Have you ever thought of that? You can be prophetic and not be a prophet if you just convey the Truth.

So, for those who have not listened to the Resignation sermon that I gave in 1979, go ahead and listen to it. Then read this letter. This all ties into what we're discussing about church organization. There's another sermon on how church organization begins with the government of God in each person through the Holy Spirit.

Excerpts from letter:

We were baptized into the Body of Christ, not into any denomination, and yet, we have believed for most of these years that the only way into God's kingdom was through the WCG.

However, it is very alarming to look where we have come and where we are headed as part of this denomination.

I want you to realize that this was written about 1979-80.

We all know and can plainly see before our eyes that the actions being pursued by this organization at this very moment are methodically destroying it just as much as if it were a step-by-step plan that a step-by-step plan was carefully being followed.

Would God allow this to happen if this organization were of Him? Of course not! The Bible is very clear that if it is of God, any organization, then it's impossible for man to destroy it be it from within or without.

If this organization is not of God, then it can be destroyed. I believe that before much longer we will have irrefutable and undeniable proof that we are seeing this happen.

Which is also true and profound!

Somewhere somehow on the face of this earth God and Jesus Christ are developing a spiritually mature group of Christians who know where they are going and how they're going to get there, and don't

depend on specific, detailed instructions of each baby step they take and each thought that goes through their heads.

That is very prophetic and very profound! Brethren, let's hope that we are arriving at this point that we can. I'm sure that we're not the only group, please understand that; I'm convinced of that.

Are we praying for the unity for which Jesus prayed? What has happened to the unity that was once part of this Church, or more importantly, why is the unity of this Church being destroyed?

Is it because of the answers to all of the above questions? Is there a denominational division within the Worldwide Church of God (WCG)? Certainly it has been divided so many ways in the past few years—and it's going to continue to divide, as we will see, if we will just admit it—until there is nothing left.

Those are some words—aren't they? Is it happening? Are we seeing it today? *Yes!*

This organization is no longer following the plain teachings and the perfect example of Jesus Christ!

Increasingly, the things that are happening and the actions of individuals leading this organization are causing division, strife, animosity, jealousy, covetousness and hatred on frightening levels of intensity.

No concept in the Bible is more important than love. God is love, and yet, we are part of an organization that undoubtedly has more hate and revenge as a basis for its actions per capita than any other you know of.

I believe that there are hundreds, and I hope thousands of ministers and members who are earnestly beginning to examine all of the above questions seeking answers that will help them find peace with themselves and with God.

There is still so much frustration on the part of some about so many things that are happening. For instance, why hasn't a man arisen out of the mess that we are in to lead and show the people plainly the way to God? The answer is obvious: Every single individual has to establish his personal relationship and commitment to God and Jesus Christ on his own.

That fits right in exactly what we are talking about in how to organize a church. It starts with *Christ in you!*

What good does it do for one or another minister to arise and lead off people after himself with his own particular specialized brand of religion? It does no good!

What if the elect of God are independent God-fearing Christians who are truly members of the Body of Jesus Christ, not any denomination. The very elect are going to be the only ones who are not deceived by false prophets in the end-time.

Think about how prophetic the rest of this letter is.

Is it possible that ruinness heresies and counterfeit arguments have shrewdly been introduced into the Worldwide Church of God? Is it possible that anyone could be motivated by greed and shamelessly exploiting innocent people? Is it possible that the teachings and the examples of the Master are being denied? And on this account, we are going to see before our very eyes the destruction of their organization!

Somewhere somehow there is a group of people on this earth who are going to be part of God's kingdom when Christ returns who are living the kind of lives God says we must live and not making excuses every step of the way.

I believe our responsibility as a Christian is to glorify God in everything we do in our lives is a sacred one.

Practicing Christ's simple teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, living a life as nearly as like He lived as possible, setting an example, being a light to the world, conducting our lives every single day in such a way as to be admired and respected by every other person with whom we come into contact is of the utmost importance.

This organization is bringing shame and disgrace on the name of God and is destroying itself. May God have mercy on us all!

In light of that, let me read a letter from one of the victims; I received this in 1995:

Dear Mr. Coulter: I've attended the Worldwide Church of God for almost 29 years. I feel like my heart is breaking. I attended my last Sabbath last week. I can no longer continue to go to a church that does not recognize the Holy Days and the Sabbath.

This whole thing seems like a nightmare! My best friend told me a little about you. She quit a couple of weeks ago herself. I understand that you have a Care Package that you send out.

We've got lots to send out! We're really able to help these people.

I would appreciate it if you could send me the package. Also, you said that you have eight sermons on Colossians, could you please send them, also. My mother had attended church for 30 years, and she and my sister left two years ago when all this first came out. I have tried real hard to hang in, but I know that God's Holy Days and Sabbaths are important.

Our minister, just this past week, practically said it was okay to keep Christmas and Easter. He said, 'No one will judge you.' I cried all during services. I knew it was my last day, and you don't realize how much you love the Church and the people, and God's laws, until you have to quit.

Well, she's just ready to start!

I'm going to send you my mother's name and address and she would like a care package, too.

Brethren, you combine both of these letters together. We also need to understand how a church is to be organized.

Here is the absolute truth in Psa. 127. We're going to see come out of this... There was a big meeting in Indianapolis in 1995 in which 200 ministers and their wives attended who were formerly with WCG. They are going to form what is called *United Church of God*.

Unfortunately they are already divided. Some of them believe in the 'one-glob God trinity': one God in three manifestations. They do not even have a statement of beliefs. Someone called me to tell me that someone called them to come and 'join us.' He said for them to send a statement of beliefs, and was told they didn't have one. 'Well, how do you know what you believe?'

If you don't have the right God, then you're worshipping the wrong god. At this late date, considering the letter that these people wrote and considering the things that we have gone through, I'm here to tell you that *reorganization is not going to solve it!* I mean, we tried that! There's got to be repentance, and here is the only basis:

Psalm 127:1: "**Unless the LORD builds the**

house, they labor in vain who build it...” Can we not say that of Worldwide and other churches. Worldwide is not the only church this has happened to; it’s happened to other churches.

And to show you how absolutely upside down and topsy-turvy that things are going in the world, we just read this letter and we know that Worldwide went to Sunday-keeping. There is an amalgamation of one of the churches of WCG and a Presbyterian Church in Pasadena to attend church on Sunday.

I’m sitting there writing this letter and I get a call from a man who said that So and So told him to call. He asked if I was the Christian Biblical Church of God and was I in charge. I said, ‘At least you’ve reached me, maybe I help you, because I’m not, Christ is in charge of every one of us.’ So, he gave me his name and said, ‘I’m a pastor of 200 people in Missouri near Kansas City. We keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days. This person wanted me to call and let you know that we converted from Sunday-keeping, Christmas and Easter, and you won’t believe the blessings that God has given us in doing so.’

I thought: *How ironic!* Here I’m writing this letter, I was imputing my resignation letter, and I said, ‘This is unreal.’ Churches of God are going to Sunday-keeping, Christmas and Easter, and here’s a whole group that has converted to Sabbath and Holy Days.

I said to the pastor, ‘How did you come to understand that?’ He said, ‘We just studied our Bibles. We have since picked up some ex-WCG members.’ I thought: *That is amazing!* So, I go back to my computer to do some typing and I get a call from New Zealand. The world is very small, it’s only a touch tone away.

So, he said that he’s in this Church of God where they have this heavy hierarchical authority, and he’s been about beaten to death with it. I guess the sermons and information is getting around.

It is true, v 1: “Unless the Lord builds the house...” and Who is really building *the true spiritual* Church of God? *God is!*

“...they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD keeps the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of toil; for He provides for His beloved *even* as they sleep” (vs 1-2). Quite a very profound few verses; it fits right in with what is going on today.

I did get information about the United Church of God, and it’s just exactly as I figured it would be; it’s a political re-organization, that’s all it

is. I don’t have the complete list, but let me tell you that some are on the Board of Directors. David Hulme is director of the Board of Directors. Many have read his resignation letter, which went on the Internet and in it he states that in the 70s he knew that Joseph Tkach did not believe in the Sabbath, but Sunday.

So, if you’re looking for Truth, you want to *act* on Truth.

- If you knew in the 70s that this was so, why did you stay there so long and do the programs?
- Why did you stay there so long for your paycheck and for political power?
- Do you love the Truth? *or* not?
- Do you think that they can lead the people back to God without repenting themselves? *No way!*

Then you have other ones on there:

- Doug Horchak whose wife is the daughter of Joseph Tkach
- Burt McNair
- Victor Kubik

It’s just the third level of politicians all together. It won’t work, brethren! *It won’t work!* We know from experience! *God tells us right in His Word that it won’t work!*

If you don’t believe the Word of God, and if you don’t know Who God is, how are you going to lead a Church of God?

Just to review a couple of things that are very, very important. ***Christ in you with the Holy Spirit is the hope of glory***, and that is the government of God in you.

- let the *peace of Christ* rule in you
- let the Word of God richly dwell in you
- let Christ dwell in your heart by faith being rooted and grounded in love

That’s each one of us!

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.” You have to be “...**led by** the Spirit of God...”

We’ve learned by experience that when you let God lead each one in their own individual lives, where they’re growing, praying, studying and yielding to God—each one individually—then when we come together everything is so much better.

- we don’t come together because it’s a group
- we don’t come together because we’re constrained
- ***we come to together to fellowship with***

*each other, and our fellowship is truly
with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ*

With that, when we come together and we are led of the Holy Spirit then things really develop into the kind of spiritually mature group that was written about in this letter.

- that doesn't mean that we're free of problems
- that doesn't mean that we don't have things to overcome

As a matter of fact, the way we view ourselves, with God's Spirit, is that we have a longer way to go than anybody else. That's so important for us to realize and understand.

Here's the foundation for everyone, for doing anything as a minister with the people of God. After Paul said, 'Who is Paul? Who is Apollos?' There's no such thing as 'leading high-ranking ministers.'

1 Corinthians 3:9: "For we are God's fellow workers; *and* you are God's husbandry, *even* God's building. As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*. **For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ**" (vs 9-11).

And every one of these spin-off groups are building too much on a man! Every single one! Until they overcome that, there is going to be difficulty in degree. Don't think for a minute that we're going to get into the Kingdom of God unless we're building on Christ.

Everyone is going to have a choice, v 12: "Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble, **the work of each one shall be manifested; for the day of trial will declare it**, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is" (vs 12-13).

We're going to start looking into how you should organize, whatever function needs to be, when there are a number of brethren who come together for a congregation.

Let's see what Paul said. Many people are trying to run the Church in a way that God never intended it to be run. They have the wrong idea of what a church is, especially in this modern era when you have a corporation and a board, people get that all confused on how to run a church.

The first thing to do is have everyone be

focusing in on growing in grace and knowledge and having the love of God and the Spirit of God constantly. Let's see some of the problems that came about:

Acts 20:19: "I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations, which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; *and* how I did not keep back anything that was profitable *but* preached to you..." (vs 19-20).

This is something that needs to be at this particular time with the things that are going on in the Church of God, they need to know the things that are profitable for them.

"...and taught you publicly and from house to house... [that means teaching in house to house] ...earnestly testifying, both to *the* Jews and *the* Greeks, **repentance toward God...**" (vs 20-21). That's where it all begins!

With all this re-organization, unless there is true repentance from the heart, all the re-organization isn't going to amount to a 'hill of beans.' Joel 2 shows the most important ingredient that is necessary in anyone's life—not only to come to conversion; not only before baptism—but as we continuously go on our Christian way and walk in changing, growing and overcoming.

Joel 2:12: 'Therefore, even now,' says the LORD, **'turn to Me with all your heart...'** That's what God wants. And because you're dealing with God, Who is a person. You're dealing with Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of the Church. God wants a personal relationship with us. That's why He wants it with "...your heart..."

If God were 'just a glob in three manifestations of the same glob' He wouldn't want your whole heart. He wouldn't need it. But since He created us in His image, and we are called to this glorious calling that He's giving us, **He wants our whole heart!**

"...and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (v 12). I think, in the light of this letter that was written, *very prophetic*, there should be that.

Verse 13: "Yes, **rend your heart** and not your garments..." *Repentance!* Rending your garments is something outside; you tear your clothes. Re-organization is *rending your garments, because you're not changing the heart!*

"...and return to the LORD your God: for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil" (v 13).

Repentance is a continuous ongoing thing!
And we come to greater degrees of repentance as

God leads us with His Spirit, the longer that we have God's Spirit.

Acts 20:21: "...**repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**" Why is that important? *Because everything we receive has got to come from God!* Even the true understanding on how to organize a church.

I remember when I first gave the sermon series on *What is the Government of God?* I said in there not to ask me how to organize a church because I couldn't tell you. We thought we had it organized great. We had board here and a board there and a board every place else. *It just collapsed under its own carnality!*

- Does a committee ensure righteousness?
No!

Look at Washington, D.C.!

- Do they have committees? *Everywhere!*
- Are they corrupt? *Yes!*
- Why do we need faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ?

I want you to see how all of this is tied in together.

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh... [came into being as flesh] ...and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), **full of grace and truth.**"

Why do we need grace before truth? *You need to have the grace of God before truth because the truth of human nature is too tough to take without the grace of God and you understanding it!*

The whole Truth of God has got to come through His grace. That's why it says "...grace and truth."

Why grace? We have for the motto of the Christian Biblical Church of God: you shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being (Deut. 6).

When Jesus quoted this to the lawyers who asked, 'Which is the great commandment?' And the lawyers responded back and said, 'Yes, and this is more than all burnt offerings.' Jesus looked at him and said, '**You're not far from the Kingdom of God.**'

Why did He say that? *Because in the New Testament we have to understand this first, because God gave His grace, which is **God loved us first!*** Then He called us! So, there has to be that grace *first*. It's more profound for us to understand that God loved us first, and when we are dealing with organizing the Church, its very important that we understand that that's how it began. God loved us

first, 'full of grace and truth'!

Verse 15: "John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me."' That means that literally He existed before John.

Verse 16: "And of **His fullness** we have all received..."

- What is the fullness of Christ?
- Have we beheld His glory as the only Begotten of God, full of grace and truth?
- Is Christ ever empty? *No!*
- Do we constantly receive of His fullness?
- When we receive, is there more there yet to come? *Yes!*

We are to be receiving of the fullness of Christ constantly! Notice what John says after that:

"...and grace upon grace" (v 16). How can you have a Church of God exist without knowing and teaching grace? *Cannot be!* You can re-organize all you want, but unless you repent and return to the love of God and understand His grace, you're just in for another fall. I hope they do repent. My desire is that they do repent and come to understand this.

Verse 17: "For the Law was given through Moses..."—which was marvelous and fine, and today they're throwing it out! God doesn't want you to throw it out. He wants you to fulfill it in your life.

"...and **the** grace and **the** Truth came through Jesus Christ" (v 17)—because He loved us *first*. Christ gave up His whole existence as God and risked everything so that we could be called.

This is why we need to have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. *No man!* The first seed of destruction that was sown years and years ago was *when they place a man between you and Christ!* Anytime that is done, *that organization is doomed for destruction sooner or later!*

Acts 20:22—Paul says: "And now behold, I am bound in the spirit, *and* am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall happen to me there; except that the Holy Spirit fully testifies in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I myself do not take any of these things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (vs 22-24).

I want you to notice how these things flow in Paul's instruction to them; *repentance, faith and grace!* It will be important when we understand what else is going to follow here.

Verse 25: “And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more.” It’s important for us to understand the preaching and witnessing of the Kingdom of God does not make the Church a kingdom, because *the Kingdom* is coming.

Verse 26: “Wherefore, I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all, for I have not held back from preaching to you all the counsel of God” (vs 26-27). There’s one thing about when you preach the Truth and stick with the Scriptures of God. You don’t have to worry, you can say whatever God wants you to say and it’s going to be the Truth. Some people may not like it some of the time, but given the long haul God’s Word always prevails!

“...I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all... [I wish the WCG could say that!] ...for I have not held back from preaching to you all the counsel of God.”

Verse 28: “Take heed, therefore, to yourselves... [Paul is talking all the elders] ...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.” All of those who are re-organizing, please listen, hear, fear and understand that Christ purchased every one of the brethren with His own blood individually, one by one! They belong to Him!

A church is not be re-organized for the benefit of any. If you say that you’re *standing for the Truth*, that’s fine. But if *stand for the Truth you must stand when the Truth comes to your attention!*

You cannot say that you’re standing for the Truth today when 25-plus years ago you knew that the one in charge of the Church today didn’t believe in the Sabbath. You’re not *standing for the Truth!* No politician can lead the people of God to Truth! It won’t work! God doesn’t want any politics. That’s what’s been wrong, because they haven’t taken this verse to heed:

Verse 28: **“Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.”**

Paul knew that there were going to be difficulties happening, v 29: “For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” Happened then, happening now, and it will happen again!

Verse 30: “And from among your own

elves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves.” So, you have two kinds of problems:

1. those who are entering in who are grievous wolves that appear like sheep
2. those who arise from within

Even those who were once originally converted! This is why there has to be constant vigilance.

Verse 31: “Watch, therefore, remembering that ***for three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears.***” That’s is really quite a warning! All we have recorded here are just these few verses.

Verse 32: “And now I commit you, brethren, to God and to **the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.”

Through this chapter, in warning the elders and also pointing what the Church really is and how it should be run, Paul is also showing at the end **“...to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance...”** If anything is going to be done, it must be done:

- on the foundation of Jesus Christ
- with the love and grace of God

Verse 33: “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothing. Rather, you yourselves know that these hands did minister to my needs and to those who were with me. *In* all things, I have showed you that you are obligated to so labor to support those who are weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus Himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive””: (vs 33-35). It is interesting that that is not recorded in the Gospels.

Verse 36: “And after saying these things, he knelt with them all *and* prayed. Then there was much weeping by everyone; and they embraced Paul *and* fervently kissed him, being distressed most of all by his saying that they would not see his face any more. Then they accompanied him to the ship” (vs 36-38). Then Paul went on his way.

What happened to the Church at Ephesus, I don’t know, but it lasted quite a while. Let’s see what the Church at Ephesus did. For a while they really heeded Paul’s warnings. For a while they kept the true love and faith that Paul warned them that they should do.

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write: “These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands.” I know your works, and your labor, and your

endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars” (vs 1-2).

This shows that we need to do the same thing. ***We need to check out everything by God's Word!*** That's what we failed to do; I know exactly. I'm going to show you some of the mistakes we made when we first left, and it all seemed so right at the time. *There is a way that seems right, but the ends thereof are the ways of death!* We didn't do what they were doing here, to check out with the Word of God and find out whether what we were doing was true or not.

Likewise with anyone who is preaching! We need to do that; test them. I tell you one thing, I haven't found one, yet, of all the different re-organizations that has the right foundation of Christ or that really has a clue as to what they are doing. I would like to try and help them if they would have let me.

One man called me and asked me if I was going to Indianapolis to the meeting. Because I knew who the participants were, I said, 'I tell you what, since you're in communication with them, you tell them this: If they invite me I would like to have one hour to speak to all of them. (Because they say 'he's written a good book' and all this sort of thing.) If they do, fine, I'll come. But if they don't, you tell them that they are hypocrites.' That's the only way to deal with this stuff. *I didn't get an invitation!*

I wasn't going to go back and correct them. But I was going to from minister to minister—heart to heart—and ask:

- Where is your heart?
- Do you love God?
- Are you ready to start out on this venture now ready to proclaim that you're here to cure all the ills from WCG when you yourselves were the problems?
- How do you think you can solve it when you yourselves are the problem when you don't repent?

They weren't doing this!

Verse 3: “And *that* you have borne *much* and have endured, and for My name's sake have labored and have not grown weary; nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love**” (vs 3-4).

(go to the next track)

Are there not lessons that you learn when you suffer? If everything is going along nice and smooth and wonderful, and God would let everything go perfect for you in spite of every one of

your mistakes and your sinful carnal nature, would you change? *No! Human nature is looking for a comfort zone.* If you're in that comfort zone, there's no need to change.

God says, “All right, I'm going to get your attention. Did He not do it to Job? *Classic example!* Got Job's attention—didn't He?

God is getting the attention of some people. What we need to understand during these days of difficulty and small groups getting together and trying to do God's work. What do I mean *God's work*? Not the spiritual work. They're trying to come in and get rid of evil by force, that they're going to do *themselves*. They're actually trying to do *God's* work.

It's the same way with these people who want to be the sovereignists. They want to re-establish the Constitutional government. The penalty of this country is that since we left the Constitutional government—the way it was setup—we have the form we have now.

What they're trying to do is remove God's penalty and re-establish what they had back when they had the Declaration of Independence. It's never going to happen because they're trying create the Kingdom of God on earth. They're actually trying to do *God's* will. They are taking the *will* that God says is 'Mine alone to do.' And they're trying to say, 'Lord, we'll do it for You.' ***It won't work!***

All these militaristic groups out here, what does it say in Rev. 13, right in the middle of *the mark of the beast*? 'He who lives by the sword is going to die by the sword. *He that has an ear, let him hear!*' that's for us today.

Are we going to stand up and be members of the Church of God and say, 'These people are evil and wrong and invading my home.' BOOM! 'We'll blow them away in the name of God.' Is that what Christ did on the cross? ***NO!***

We need to understand that's going to happen. That's why the most important thing we need to do, and the way we are going to work the longest and be the most effective, and reach more people, is to really preach the Truth of God and the love of God, and give them faith, hope and love that God wants to give them. ***Then*** if God decides there will be miracles, there will be.

1-Corinthians 12:4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all” (vs 4-6). God is not the author of confusion. God is the Author of peace.

Verse 7: “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*”—overall, the whole Body of Christ in general as God views the Church.

Verse 8: “For to one, a **word of wisdom is given by the Spirit...**” That’s interesting. We were sitting around how to do this and that, and I just had to say, ‘Gary Smith had a lot more wisdom than me in what he’s done.’

“...and to another, a word of knowledge... [rattle off facts and figures, Scriptures and things like this] ...according to **the same Spirit**; and to a different one, faith by **the same Spirit**; and to another, gifts of healing by **the same Spirit**; and to another, *the working of miracles...*” (vs 8-10). These are more than just healing, it can whatever God decides it’s going to be.

There was the miracle of the blinding of the false prophet Emmaus who was called Bar-Jesus. Can you imagine that? Running around saying he’s the son of Jesus?’ That’s what Bar-Jesus means; deceiving people and perverting the Gospel. So, Paul said, ‘you’re cursed from God’ and BAM! he was blind! That was a miracle. So, it’s more than just healing. There are healings, and there are miracles that are profound healings, and unusual events.

“...and to another, prophecy...” (v 10)—inspired speaking and also to prophesy. I’ll tell you the best way to prophesy: ***always speak the truth!***

“...and to another, discerning of spirits...” (v 10). That’s something to pray about that there will be. Not discerning spirits, then they all crept in within!

“...and to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the interpretation of languages*. But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God Himself desires*. For even as the body is one and has many members, yet, all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; so also *is Christ*. For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit” (vs 10-13).

When you read the rest of it about the head and the mouth and so forth, that also can have a false interpretation. If you speak the words of God, then that’s correct. Going down to the feet, if you’re walking the walk of Christ, that’s still part of Christ.

I think all of the analogies that we’ve learned in the past may not necessarily be in degree truthful. It may be somewhat, but this telling us how God looks at the Church. There are some things that we need to understand, that when there’s a time of

scattering:

- God is scattering to cleanse
- God is scattering to purge
- God is scattering to build faith
- God is scattering to build love if you choose it

It works and affects a very powerful and meaningful thing in everyone’s lives.

Then Paul goes on in 1-Cor. 13 and says that he’s going to ‘show you the better way, which is the way of love.’

The Church is the ‘Ecclesia.’ Let’s understand something about the Church. We’re going to go to the ‘pope’s verse. I haven’t had a chance to finish reading the pope’s book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* by Pope John Paul II, but I tell you, if he’s not hypnotized and mesmerized with this one verse, I don’t know. This is *not* the pope’s verse; please understand that. These are the words of Christ misinterpreted by the pope.

Matthew 16:18: “And I say also to you, that you are Peter; but upon this Rock... [meaning Himself; Christ] ...I will build My Church...”

1-Cor. 12 tells us that God places all those in the Body as it pleases Him. So, whatever we do, brethren, *it has to be the will of God!* He gives us certain decisions that we need to make and do, but whatever we do it needs to be the will of God.

I remember some years ago after the Feast of Tabernacles and I went back to a group in Georgia; Carl Franklin was down there with me. The wanted me to absolutely verify how they were going to make these guys elders. Carl and I got there and Carl picked up on the spirit that was there. I picked up on some of the things that were there. They said, ‘We need some elders here. How should we do it?’

I said, ‘Make sure that *it is the will of God.*’ I’ve laid hands on people suddenly and it was not the will of God, and God sure enough used that to correct me. He did, and it wasn’t very pleasant; it was very nasty.

They said, ‘Should be put names in a hat and draw them out as a lottery?’ I said, ‘Make sure that whatever you do *it is the will of God.*’ Then they said, ‘Would it be all right if we have different ones come up and speak and see how they’re doing.’ I said that that would be all right, but *make sure it’s the will of God.*’

If there’s any one thing I’ve learned, ***if you’re going to do your will and attach the name of God to it, He’s going to hold you accountable.*** Somewhere down the road He’s going to let you know ‘that wasn’t My will.’

So, whatever we do, brethren, we're going to do the will of God and build it on the will of God. Who is going to build the Church? Christ said, *'I will build the Church!'* How does He build the Church? Is He not the one Who calls? *God the Father starts it, and Christ follows through and finishes it up!*

He has also given some other guidelines in how to do it after He is building His Church. There is something very important to realize; always understand this: ***You cannot accomplish spiritual things by physical means!***

If you go out and beat the bushes and send out letters and plead with everybody, do all these physical means to get numbers, dollars, mailing lists, to get people, *you are not building the Church of God!* However, through that, God is going to still call some few that He knows are His.

Again, *it must be the will of God!* Christ said that *He* would build His Church. So, we have to look to Christ to build it. That's why we ask God to send the ones *He* wants. We're small and fragile, we have a lot of wounds to heal; we don't need any more hassle! When all of those are taken care of, and all of those are healed, and God gives us peace and rest, then God, I'm sure, will open the door so we can reach out to new people. So that we can have a new message, a new method, a new way *inspired of Christ*, that *He* can build *His* Church. That's the way it has to be done.

What constitutes the smallest congregation? *Two!* Actually, when you think about it, if you're truly fellowshiping with God the Father and Jesus Christ, there are three in that. There are some people who have been so hurt and so wounded that's what they have to do.

If you've been beaten up, run over, pummeled, kicked, stomped on and then picked up and beaten like some of these cartoons just being blasted here and there and run over, shot through and stomped down, you need to kind of go over in a corner and just be by yourself and say, 'God, help me and heal me.'

- you've been betrayed by brethren
- you've been betrayed by ministers

Listen, I think there are literally thousands of people out there just sitting at home not knowing what to do. Pray for them, that God will send them, that they will hear. That is the smallest congregation.

Now when you get together, guess what's going to happen every once in a while? *You're going to get your nose bent out of shape!* That will happen.

The best way to minimize that is that you're

really teaching, and preaching and practicing and emphasizing the love of God. Then you're going to minimize your problems, and whoever the elder is, wherever he is, if he's doing that he doesn't have to exercise authority. The authority of the love of God is already being exercised in your life. When you come together:

- Does not love get rid of strife?
- Does not love help you to esteem the other better than yourself?
- Does not love help you to show no partiality?
- *Yes, it does!*

In that atmosphere

- Can you not have better fellowship with one another because you're fellowshiping with Christ? *Yes!*

Now let's see how to handle problems when they come along, and start in Matt. 18. In each place it says that what you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, *if it's according to the will of God!*

Obviously, those are on small matters. God isn't going to give any of us the authority to decide which day is the Sabbath. God alone decided that. He's not going to give us the authority to decide Who is the *true* God. He's already decided that! So, this big thing that whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, please trust me, *it is small things!* So, let's not make big political things out of them because they're not! God is also very efficient. If you have a problem with somebody He says, 'Look! I want you exercise truth and honesty' and do this:

Matthew 18:15: "So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him **alone**..." That does not mean to run and pick up the phone and tell your best friend, 'Did you know...'

As we're going through this you will see how absolutely incredibly satanic it was to have spies within the congregation who were bucking for deaconships, deaconesses, elders, be on the inside with the minister.

I've heard horror stories where one woman was down in this big congregation in Texas and they had a lot of widows around there. There was one widow who had a lot of kids and in order for her to keep more money coming to her, she was the minister's personal little spy. Every Friday night before Bible study you knew if you were up there talking to the minister and So and So was sitting there with her list, you were on the hot seat. It's absolutely satanic and against God.

God wants it alone because love covers sin. That's what it has to be! Sins that affect all the

brethren in the public, Christ says that those need to be known. So, He says, "...go and show him his fault between you and him **alone...**"

"...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother" (v 15). This puts the responsibility both places. If someone comes to you and says, 'I've got something against you...' then you better get off your little stinking high-horse and listen.

If it's true, admit it. It won't hurt you. God does not uphold your pride. If it hurts your pride, that's the whole lesson! You can admit it! "...**If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother.**"

Verse 16: "But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

Now then, God does something even better. If that doesn't solve the problem, God has a little discipline here to make sure that you want to resolve your problems. If that doesn't work and you can't sit down and work it out between you, then God says:

Verse 17: "And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the Church..." How is that done? Church here still means the members. By the way, it does not mean the ministry. It never did, but in this case ministers may be involved to kind of help referee the thing.

What they do, they would come to whomever would be the elder and say, 'I've got somewhat against somebody, and these witnesses were there and it didn't work out and now we need to bring it to the whole Church.' So, then the minister says, 'Okay, and you write up all the things on your side; you get the other person to write up their side. Makes no judgment, makes no accusation, doesn't not go against anybody. He's not for anybody, but he says, 'Okay, on such and such a day we're going to have a meeting and we're going to discuss this and I want all the members here so we can have everybody's input on it.' That's the way it should be done.

If you know that is truly going to happen, how many times do you think that would be necessary? Not very often. But again, if it is based on love you're going to minimize these things. How important is it to settle the problem between you and your brother? Is prayer and Bible Study more important so that you can be more righteous?

Let's see what Jesus says, and this is pretty profound. Have you ever prayed in an attitude of hatred toward someone? *God, I'm offended and this person did this to me! God, take care of them; they raised their eyebrows at me when I passed by them!*

Do you know why God wants you to go one to one to each individual? I'll tell you the greatest problem and the worst sin that people do: they will say:

- I **know** what they're thinking
- I **know** why they did this

Wives are the greatest offenders of that, because many times in your guessing what your husband may do or be thinking, you may be right a lot of the time, but that doesn't mean that *you know*. It was a good guess, and that's how misunderstandings come—isn't it? You *think you know why* this person is doing it. Sometimes it's well telegraphed. I mean, if it's just pure unadulterated vanity running around, it doesn't take a real genius to figure that out. But you still don't know their thoughts or mind.

When things like that come up what you need to do is this: Stop and quietly ask them:

- Are you there when I'm praying on my knees before God?
- Do you know my heart and mind before God?
- Can you really know what I'm thinking?

All you're doing is responding off an apparent reaction. Your visualization of that person and your reaction to it, and your thinking you know what they're thinking, and it may not be anywhere close to what is really going on in that person's mind. If you can get that first lesson, this is one of the most important lessons in husband/wife relationships and in relationships with brethren. It's so important!

Matthew 5:23: "For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar..." Coming right before God and you're going offer this sacrifice, and our prayers are like sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices to God. When you're praying, where do they go? *Up to God, to the altar in heaven above!*

"...and there remember that your brother has something against you... [anything] ...leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way...*" (vs 23-24). God says:

- I don't even want to hear you.
- If you have hate in your heart, how are you going to pray to Me?
- If you have a false accusation in your mind against your brother, how are you going to deal with Me in truth and honesty?

You're not! What you may do is pray and ask God to give you strength so you can handle it. He'll answer that prayer.

“...first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (v 23). That’s how important it is.

There’s another thing in interpersonal relationships that is also important. This is how it needs to be done. That’s why God wants every one of us to come to ‘ground zero’ so we can understand the Truth of His Word and how to apply it in love and grace. That’s what He wants.

This part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Ephesians 4:23: “And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth. Therefore, let each one put away lies *and* speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another” (vs 23-25). The whole Church together.

Verse 26: “*When* you become angry...” There’s a time to be angry; Christ healed in anger. There is a time to express that anger in a right way to effect a change of heart and mind that hopefully there will be repentance.

Does God run around and crash His wrath upon everybody everyday? *No! Those should be rare occurrences!* But sometimes it’s necessary.

“...do not sin...” (v 26). Be truthful and be honest in your anger and no four-letter words! Furthermore, once you’ve done that, get it out of your system!

“...Do not let the sun go down on your anger...” (v 26). Don’t go to bed on it, with it brewing in your mind.

Have you ever been brewing something in your mind in anger and seething and developing hatred thinking you know what this person thinks? How did you sleep? Not very well! I remember going through that. I remember wondering what on earth was happening. I was all upset and miserable. You think that maybe you go and get a little something to drink to help you go to sleep, and all that does is stir you up and you lay there and toss and turn all night. And you wake up in the morning just wiped out!

There’s a reason for it. You have to forget and put those things behind. Some things take a little longer to do than others. But eventually you’re going to have to do it. It’s better to do when the sun is going down and it’s a new day. Why pollute this time.

Always remember: ***Don’t destroy tomorrow with the problems of today, if you can solve them today!*** Isn’t that much easier. Wouldn’t it be nicer to go to bed and sleep well and get up in the morning

and really feel good and thank God for today? *What was done yesterday you can’t change!* What you do today, why mess it up?

I’ve heard some people say that ‘hate is the only way to go’—which leads to bitterness, which leads to anger. God’s Spirit can’t work with that kind of attitude. How can you say in the name of Christ ‘I hate you’? *No way! It isn’t going to work!*

If they’re really so evil and rotten just avoid them. That’s why God gave us two feet, so we can walk away from it.

Verse 27: “Neither give place to the devil.” Why? *Because when you’re in that rage of anger, guess what? Who is the ‘prince of the power of the air’? throwing missiles upon you? And saying, ‘you are right! You are so right! Yes, look at this Scripture over here; you are right! I know my Bible, too, I quoted it to Christ; I’ll show you how to use this in hatred.’*

Paul wrote something different. All of this is on interpersonal relationships with brethren. It also applies to any elders, because elders and ministers are also brethren. This is what has been missing in the Church of God, and that’s why it’s being scattered to the four winds, five winds, ten winds, twenty winds, fifty winds—whatever it is.

John Morgan in Australia has a chart six feet long and he checked out 140 churches beginning back at the last century and carrying it down to now. Poor Alan Ruth when he got that his chart looked like it was totally inadequate, but he was expressing for today.

Now what are both of you going to do with your charts? You’ve got to make them longer and bigger, or print smaller and send magnifying glasses with it. The reason God is doing that is because He wants to know:

- Do you love Me?
- Are you going to preach love?
- Are you going to preach the faith?
- Are you going to preach the hope?
- Are you going to live it?
 - ✓ That’s what God wants to know!
 - ✓ That’s why it’s all happening!
 - ✓ That’s why God destroyed it!
 - He destroyed Jerusalem for the same thing!
 - He got rid of the temple where He put His presence!
 - He got rid of the priesthood!

May we learn! Here’s what we are to learn; here’s how it has to be. This is the pinnacle of Christian character and brotherly love that has to be.

If you want to know how to get along in a congregation, this is it. If any minister wants to know how to preach the Truth of God and serve the brethren, this is it:

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the Spirit*...” Notice that God’s Spirit is going to fellowship with you and each other in a dynamic and really loving and positive way when you do this.

“...if any *deep* inner affections... [sympathy, understanding, mercy] ...and compassions, fulfill my joy that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing” (vs 1-2).

How can we be of one mind? ‘We’re going to marshal you up and by command and control we are going to give you a list. You better not deviate from that list because you’re not of one mind.’ **NO!**

How are you all one mind? Verse 5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus.” Is that not true? *Yes!* Isn’t that so simple? Is that not the simplicity of Christ?

I remember people asking me, ‘In this church I belong to, where is the simplicity of Christ? If it’s so simple why is it so complicated?’ *The reason is because of misapplied Scriptures!* That always complicates things!

Verse 3: “Let **nothing** be done through contention or vainglory...” Keep that in mind if you’re teaching, preaching, visiting or fellowshiping, let nothing be done that way, because all you’re doing is serving yourself and your own ego. Sooner or later it will catch up with you.

“...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself” (v 3). There’s one thing about that, that always works! One note of caution: Do not let someone come along who is not exercising the same thing and leverage you into a position that is not right before God.

There are wolves out there who will take advantage of that and come lapping in and devour the naive. That’s why Christ said, ‘Be harmless as doves, but as wise as a serpent.’ We’ve been through enough devices, can we not recognize them and learn the lesson? *Yes, let’s hope so!*

Verse 4: “Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others.” If you truly love God and the brethren, you can do that. This is not Communism. This is Christianity!

Communism is that you ‘ain’t got nothing’ so you lust after what everybody else has so you can

share the loot. Then when you’re sharing the loot, since you started this revolution, you get the greater portion of the loot.

This is true Christianity right here, v 5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus.” That’s how these things are accomplished. It’s not going to be accomplished with a membership role or command and control. It’s not going to be any of those things, brethren.

I have yet to see any of the spin-offs understand Matt. 20. Not one! Frankly, everyone that I’ve talked to who is a spin-off—and I’ve talked to them all—what do you suppose I told them? ***If it isn’t if Christ and you’re not building on His foundation and seeking the love of God, it won’t work!***

I speak not only from knowledge, but experience! You can re-organize until doomsday, you can structure, have flowcharts... Carl is an expert on flowcharts; he was doing that down in Pasadena. They had flowcharts and how to do all this sort of thing. Without the love of God, the flowchart may have looked good, but the results certainly weren’t! You can organize all you want. That’s what I told them. I told the one who was redoing WCG of Texas that ‘If you’re not going to build on the foundation of Christ I don’t care what you do, it isn’t going to work! You may think you have all this legal stuff to do and papers to do...’ He said he would send what they had.

Guess what I got? *We declare that our doctrine is based upon the doctrine of HWA 1986!* They’re already dead in the water before they’ve gotten the ink off the page. Here’s what Christ said, and ***none of them, none of them, none of them*** understand this. The reason there is so much confusion in the ranks of the ministry is because none of them applied themselves to learn the Greek or the Hebrew. Had they done that they could have learned some very simple things.

Matthew 20:20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons...” She probably said, ‘Hey, John and James, Jesus said He’s going to die, let’s go up and get your position solidified before this happens. None of the other disciples are here, so the first come first serve.’

“...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him” (v 20)—fluttering the eyes, having her boys right there and saying, ‘O Lord, I desire something of You; will You give me my desire?’

Verse 21: “And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these my two sons... [and I love them, Lord] ...may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your

kingdom.’ But Jesus answered *and* said, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able’” (vs 21-22).

You don’t know what you’re asking for! Being a soldier and marching off to battle is grand and glorious until the one next to you gets a bullet right in the head and the whole face is destroyed! Then the reality of the real facts come home!

The same what with this—“...We are able...”—they didn’t know what they were saying.

Verse 23: “And He said to them, ‘You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*... [judging out of your own mouth; be careful what you say and volunteer] ...but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’ And after hearing *this*... [now a little division]: the ten were indignant against the two brothers” (vs 23-24).

‘Did you hear what they said? Even their mother is involved!’ Now, Jesus loved the mother of James and John very much. They were fighting. ‘Why did you do this. You’re selfish; don’t you know that?’ *I wanted that for myself!* That’s why the ten were mad! Who is going to be greatest around here?

Verse 25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers... [Luke 22] ...of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones **exercise authority** over them.” This means **overlordship!** In the Greek:

- lordship to lord is ‘kurio’
- overlording is ‘kata-kurio’
- ‘kata’ means *down, destroying, oppressive, pushing down*

“...and the great ones **exercise authority** over them.” In Acts 8 Simon Magus was ‘a great one.’ Did he not exercise authority? *Yes!* How did he do it? *By witchcraft and deceit!*

- authority—‘exousia’
- ‘kata exousia’—*downward, destructive authority*

You do what I tell you or you are disfellowshipped!

The very thing that Jesus said don’t do is exactly what too many of the Churches of God have done!

(go to the next track)

They got all involved in doing other things. So, there’s a warning for them:

Revelation 2:5: “Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; for if *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent.”

If you think that God is going to do that to any of these re-organizations, *yes!* We’re getting all the wounded from all of these different churches, and even some Sunday-keepers now. That’s amazing!

We’ve covered how the Church is a spiritual organism: *by one spirit you are baptized into one body, which is Christ!* Now then, we need to understand what is it that we do? How are we to do it?

2-Corinthians 3:2: “You are our epistle, and are inscribed in our hearts, being known and read by all men; *for* it is manifest that you are Christ’s epistle, ministered by us; you were not inscribed with *pen and ink*... [it’s not a roll, not a membership list, not a mailing list] ...**but with the Spirit of the living God**...” (vs 2-3). What we have is a spiritual administration.

“...not on tablets of stone, but on fleshly tablets of *the heart*. Now we have this confidence through Christ toward God; not that we are competent of ourselves, *or* credit anything to our own *abilities*: rather, our competency *is* from God” (vs 3-5).

- any minister or any teacher, that’s what it needs to be
- anyone who is in the Church of God, that’s what it needs to be

Our sufficiency is of God!

Verse 6: “Who also made us competent *as* ministers of *the* New Covenant; not of *the* letter, but of *the* Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

I’m going to have a little more to say about covenants. Isn’t it interesting that just when the false teachings—claiming that the New Covenant is throwing away all the laws of God—is being preached within the Churches of God—just when that’s coming out we now have information that is going to be very profound concerning covenants and their requirements on a legal basis: the difference between a covenant and a testament. Once you understand that, that is going to be something, really, really something!

“...not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death...” (vs 6-7)—the Old Covenant. One thing we are not is that we are not an Old

Covenant church! We'll see that there are many other things we are not, too.

"...which was engraved in stones, came into being with glory, so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon Moses' face because of the glory of his face, which *glory* is being set aside; shall not the ministry of the Spirit be far more glorious?" (vs 7-8).

The administration of the spirit is to teach and preach the Word of God, teach and preach repentance and grace and the love of God to up-build, to edify, to teach and to help everyone grow to the fullness of the knowledge of Christ. That is the whole basis for whatever we do.

- a church does not exist because it is a corporation
- a church does not exist because it has a board
- a church does not exist because of authority
- ***a church exists to teach the brethren***

Verse 9: "For if *there was* glory in the ministry of condemnation, to a much greater degree the ministry of righteousness overflows with glory."

Let's understand what a church is *not!*

1. It is not a nation!
Why is that important? *Because we don't administer it as civil law!*
2. It is not a kingship or a dictatorship!
Who is our King? *Christ!*
3. There is not a physical priesthood with a hierarchy such as under the Old Covenant!
4. It is not a synagogue!

A synagogue is a coming together because of law; a church is entirely different. A church is composed of the *called out ones!*

Let's understand something here that's very important. Everything in the New Testament Church begins with the individual.

Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ; according as He has personally chosen us..." (vs 1-4).

First of all, a church consists of *individuals chosen, called and selected* of God the Father! They are elected/selected by God. A church is an 'ekklesia' which is a coming together of those whom

have been called of God. When we gather together our fellowship is to come together to learn of the Word of God.

You go to a Catholic Church and you have a ritual printed out a year in advance exactly what it is. In the Episcopalian Church, the Methodist Church, in the synagogues, it's all printed out what Scriptures are to be read, what prayer is to be prayed, and *there is no life, no spirit*, it is just to organize a group and come together for that.

A church is not that at all! A church is a coming together because we're fellowshiping with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We are fulfilling the Sabbath, not just keeping it. That's also very important.

5. A church is not a Sanhedrin! *or* Board!
6. A church is not a democracy or a republic!
7. A church is not a modern corporation!

Now let's look at some Scriptures that should never, *never, never* be applied to the Church. Since we are not a nation we do not administer civil laws.

Exo. 18 is very important, because #1 it's in the Bible. But since it's in the Bible, is it something that applies to the Church. Almost every governmental booklet I've read—and I've read about six of them—go to Exo. 18 and they don't understand what is being done here.

We know that Moses was wearing himself out by trying to do the whole thing, so his father-in-law came and told him that he ought to do this:

Exodus 18:17: "And Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'The thing that you do *is* not good. You will surely wear away, both you and this people that *are* with you, for this thing *is* too burdensome for you. You are not able to perform it alone. Hearken now to my voice. I will give you counsel, and God will be with you. You be for the people toward God that you may bring the causes to God. And you shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall make them know the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. And you shall choose out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth... [so far, no problem] ...hating covetousness. And place them over the people to be leaders of thousands, and leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens" (vs 17-21).

Why? Why should this not be used in the Church?

1. we're not a nation
2. we're not on an exodus
3. they were an army marching along

When you are an army you have captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties and captains of ten!

How many are in a squad in an army? *Nine!* It used to be twelve. Then you have a squad leader for each one. Four of those squads equal a platoon. You have a sergeant in charge of the platoon who is under a lieutenant. There are four platoons to a company. There is a captain in charge of each platoon. When you are going to war to kill, to destroy, you must organize that way. You're not organizing for God.

When they were in the wilderness, marching as an army, they were elbow-to-elbow, knee-to-knee, and toe-to-toe. Do you not have to close, tight organization for that? *Yes!*

Did they continue this organization when they became a nation and went into the 'promised land'? There are a couple things in the book of Judges we will see. This kind of organization takes away from Christ ruling in you.

For carnal people marching, that's what you need. Don't you also need that kind of thing at home when you have a home that's crowded and you have a lot of people? Do you not have to have rules: bathroom time, how long to be in there, put everything away, don't leave the toothpaste out, don't squirt it and leave it running, put the top on, squeeze it from the bottom, put the soap up, turn off the shower, wipe off the mirror. Don't leave the dishes on the table, don't eat in the front room, be careful what you're doing. Rules and regulations when you're all living close together!

That's not the function of a church! So, it doesn't apply!

In the book of Judges they had elders, they had princes who were over every one of the tribes. Then they had a system of judges. Nowhere after the exodus do you find captains of thousands, hundreds, fifties and ten. They had their inheritance, they could spread out into the land and they didn't need that kind of supervision.

The people were committing a sin, and the sin gets down to this; here we have a parable that's given, and we're going to see why this parable was given. Everything that reflects itself what we need to do in the Church goes right back to a very fundamental principle, which is Christ in you, and we're going to see that.

Judges 9:8: "The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I leave my fatness with which they honor God and man by me, and go to be promoted over the

trees?' And the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and reign over us.' But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come and reign over us.' And the vine said to them, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheers God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then all the trees said to the bramble-bush, 'You come and reign over us.' And the bramble-bush said to the trees, 'If you truly anoint me king over you, come put your trust in my shadow....'" (vs 8-15).

When you have the wrong kind of governmental structure, you are forced to trust in a man! I want you to re-read this very prophetic letter in light of that. Too many people are still putting their trust in a man. Notice that the 'bramble' is the worst kind; it has thorns, it is miserable, but he said, **"...come put your trust in my shadow....?"**

"...And if not, let fire come out of the bramble and burn up the cedars of Lebanon" (v 15). I'll show you my authority. When you put your trust in a man, he's going to come down with *his* authority! Why do people want to put their trust in a man? We will see why this parable was given.

Judges 8: 22: "And the men of Israel said to Gideon, '**Rule over us**, both you and your son, and your son's son also, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.'.... [What did Gideon say?] ...And Gideon said to them, '**I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The LORD shall rule over you.**'" (vs 22-23). That is the key in everything! That's what God wants.

God wants to do that with converted Christians with His love and with His Spirit. Whenever you have a structure that *rules over you*, you have a substitute for God! Then what do you say? *Well, the minister said... So and So said...* Have you ever heard that before? Rather than what does God say?

Let's see what a hierarchy is. I've got right at the top across of this page of 1-Sam. 8 in big yellow letters outlined with a blue pen: ***If not governed by God then by tyrants!***

They came to Samuel and said, 'Your sons are corrupt, they don't do what you're doing, they take bribes and don't give judgment. So, we're coming to you, and:

1-Samuel 8:5: "And *they* said to him, 'Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.' But the thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD

said to Samuel, ‘Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them’” (vs 5-7).

Is a kingship a proper model for a church to follow? *No!* A monarchy with a king is a step away from God! Is it not also a form of punishment that God gave the people for rejecting His rule in their lives? *Yes, it is!*

Then God said, the king would take your sons and daughters and have armies, and the king will take your food and vineyards and everything, furthermore, he will take another tithes above everything else that you are paying.

Verse 19: “But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, ‘**No**, but we will have a king over us.’” So, they are one more step removed from God.

What is the great principle that we can learn from this? *Whatever organization there is when a group comes together for a task, it should never replace the rule of God! Never! Never!*

1-Samuel 10:18: “And he [Samuel] said to the children of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms of those who oppressed you. And you have this day rejected your God Who Himself saved you out of all your calamities and your tribulations. And you have said to Him, ‘But set a king over us.’ And now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands”’” (vs 18-19).

Rejected God! Any Church that goes to the model of these two things that I have said, God does not want the Church organized as an army *because it is not an army!*

- The Church is ***the Body of Christ!***
- The Church coming together is to be ***the ground and pillar of Truth with Christ in you!***

2-Samuel 18:1: “And David numbered the people who were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.” For what? *His army!* If you’re going to have an army, that’s how you’re going to do it. *But the Church is not an army!*

Let’s see one of the very last instructions that Jesus Christ gave to His disciples. I have yet to see one single church government or church structure booklet, or writing put out by anyone, who honestly and forthrightly, in a proper manner quotes Matt. 20:25 on. They don’t do it. The reason they

don’t do it is because if they did they would lose their authority. But, if you lose manmade authority, you’re giving up sin!

- let Christ rule the people
- let God’s Spirit guide them
- let’s all grow in grace and knowledge

After John’s mother tried to get the inside track for James and John, and said, ‘O Lord, my sons are really good. They’re so good, how about if You put one on the right hand and one on the left hand.’ Jesus said, ‘Woman, you don’t know what you’re asking.’ Then about that time the other ten came up and got mad and were indignant. Jesus then cleared the whole deck and cleared the record:

Matthew 20:25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers... [princes or kings] ...of the nations...’” What was it that we just read that Israel wanted? *They wanted a king and a ruler just like the nations!*

What happens when you get a king? *The word of the king is supreme!* Cut his head off, it’s gone! Whatever the king says... Read the book of Esther. The king of Persia made a decree and he could not alter it.

“...‘You know that the rulers **exercise lordship** over them...’” (v 25). This comes from two Greek words: ‘kata-kurio.’

1. ‘kata’ means *down, oppressing, destructive*; from which we have the word *catastrophe*

Was the Worldwide Church of God in catastrophe? *Yes!* They violated and broke the very thing that Jesus said not to do! I’m here to tell you on the Word of God, any church organization that violates this is doomed for destruction.

2. ‘kurio’ means *lordship*

Who is our Lord? *Christ!* He is called ‘kurios’; the verb is ‘kurio’ so ‘kata-kurio’ is something He says you shall not do.

“...and **the great ones exercise authority** over them” (v 25). What is a *great one*? What and who is a *great one*?

Acts 8:9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some **great one**... [a religious leader] ...To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God’” (vs 9-10).

- Who sits in his office today? *Viva Papa! The pope!*

- What is it said of the pope? *His word is the Word of God!*
- Does he exercise authority? *They have to come and kiss his ring to show obeisance!*

Matthew 20:25: "...and the great ones **exercise authority** over them." The Greek is 'exousia.' What do you think is the other part that comes before 'exousia'? 'kata exousia' meaning *downward oppressive, destructive authority!*

Notice what Jesus said. Are the words of Jesus the command of God? He said, 'You shall do no murder, you shall not commit adultery.' For the Church He says:

Verse 26: "**However, it shall not be this way among you...**" The very first command when you get together with those who are in the Church of God is to not bear authority, to not overlord. ***That's the very first one that's violated!***

That one is nowhere to be found in any of the literature! They give mouth and lip service to not overlording, by reading 1-Peter 5; that they do. But they do not practice it, because they turn around and overlord. Did Paul learn this lesson? *Yes, he did!*

2-Corinthians 1:23: "But I call upon God to bear witness of my intentions, that in order to spare you I did not yet come to Corinth; **not that we exercise lordship over your faith...**" (vs 23-24). What does that mean? Paul says they don't. the word there is 'kurio': We don't rule over your faith! We are not lords over your faith.

"...but because we are working with you *to increase* your joy. For you stand by faith" (v 24). He learned that you don't rule over the faith. You don't 'kata kurio' and you don't 'kata exousia' over the brethren.

That makes it a whole lot better coming together when we understand that. Yes, Paul knew that! Yes, he understood that!

Verse 26: "However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant." We've got a tremendous lesson here. Servant is *to serve, to help.*

- What was the whole example of foot-washing that Jesus did? *To serve!*
- How did the Creator come to this world? *In the form of a slave!*

Matthew 20:27: "And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave; just as **the Son of man did not come to be served...**" (vs 27-28). Think about that! Even the Son of man Who created everything, every human being came not to be served.

"...but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (v 28).

What does Christ think about all of this overbearingness and the wrong kind of authority and structure and all that sort of thing? Let's understand a couple of things, first of all:

Any church that does that is not built on Christ! It just becomes a political thing with hirelings. All of those who stayed and endured all the lies and all of the duplicity in WCG so that they could leave with the brethren intact *did so they could be paid!*

- until they repent of being hirelings
- until they repent of false doctrines
- until they repent of doing these things it's only going to be more trouble down the road

You can be guaranteed that!

How should a church be organized? *I think that it depends on the size of the Church!* I don't think it's good to have huge, giant churches. Just like with taking the Passover, was not the Passover better in a small group? *Yes!* Do you think that churches with 2000-3000 just all getting together, what happens when you have churches that big? *You've got little groups over here and over there!* You have little groups within the big group.

I think that part of the thing that led to all of this uplifting of people was trying to get them all together in giant and big groups. But part of the problem was with the college. Teachers have to be taught. Part of the problem with the college became a breaking of the commandments of Christ. How? By determination and saying that 'we're going to break the commandments of God'? *No! But by doing what they should not have done!*

How do we know who is going to be a minister? *A minister is one who serves!* We're going to see some of the qualification here:

1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer..."—is not to overlord.

1-Peter 5:1: "*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder..." Let's understand that the only office that is an office is an elder. Everything else is a function. An apostle is the function of *being sent.*

Notice that Peter didn't say 'whom am an apostle...' when he's talking to the other ministers. He said he was an apostle at the beginning of the epistle to show that what he was preaching came from Christ.

“...and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God...” (vs 1-2)—John 21 where Christ asked Peter three times: ‘Do you love Me? and Feed the flock.’

Verse 2: “Feed the flock of God *that is* among you...” What is the primary job of any elder? *To feed and teach the flock of God!* That’s the primary job!

Therefore, Timothy was told to ‘give yourself wholly to God and the Scriptures and know them. And I dare say, there are probably a lot of ministers that really don’t know their Bibles anymore. They’ve been too busy politicking. You have to *feed the flock!*

“...exercising oversight...” (v 2). Kind of standing on the side and overseeing everything that is done, that it’s done properly, decently and in order.

“...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain... [there will be money involved] ...but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions... [God’s heritage]...” (vs 2-3).

We’re going to see that that was one of the big sins that happened in the WCG and they paid the price! Woe be to anyone who continues on that.

“...but *by* being examples to the flock of God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory” (vs 3-4).

1-Timothy 3:1: “Faithful *is* the saying, ‘If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.’”

- that doesn’t mean *well paid*
- that doesn’t mean that it is a *good job* for everyone
- *it is a work, a vocation that you dedicate yourself to*

Verse 2: “Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless... [not be in the community of a felonious type of behavior] ...*the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching” (vs 2-3). He needs to teach the Word of God; in that he needs to teach himself, too; that he’s continually upgrading his own knowledge and learning things like that.

Verse 3: “Not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect; (For if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* Church of God?) Not a **novice**...” (vs 3-6)—someone who is newly come to the faith, very young

in age.

“...lest he become conceited *and* fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil” (v 6). Have we seen that happen? Graduate from high school, go to Ambassador College, go four years, get indoctrinated, graduate, get married, get ordained, be given a car and sent off to rule over a church!

- Were they novices? *Yes!*
- Did they get lifted up in pride? *Yes!*
- Did they fall unto the condemnation of the devil? *Yes!*

We have to be honest about it! If there’s going to be any school, it should be to teach the Word of God, and for those people who can really be the kind of teachers they ought to be. When you have that kind of system, then it becomes a political reward.

- Which evangelist do you know?
- Which pastor do you know?
- Which teacher do you know?

You stroke and butter up and you coddle next to, so that when you graduate you will be ordained!

That’s why it all self-destructive! Before our very eyes! How many of the older saints of God would be in the congregation and here is the young ‘whipper-snapper’ not even dry behind the ears from graduating from AC and come out and tell everyone how to live their lives, and he’s never been in the real world! Over and over again it happened!

I’ll tell you where we made the mistake. Notice all the way through Paul is talking about elders. He gave some apostles, some evangelists and so forth. Those are all functions that elders fulfill in doing a job.

- If you’re evangelizing, you’re an evangelist. When you cease evangelizing you’re still an elder.
- If you’re pastoring, you’re a pastor. When you cease pastoring you’re still an elder.

I prefer just to be a teacher! That’s what I want to do, *teach!* If I do that an edify the people of God as an elder, that’s what God wants me to do.

1-Timothy 5:17: “Let the *ordained* elders who are **leading well** be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who are laboring in *the* Word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox treading out *the* corn,’ and, ‘The workman *is* worthy of his hire.’ Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses” (vs 17-19). Handled properly!

Does this sound like Matt. 18, that we’ve covered? *Yes!*

Verse 20: “Those *elders* who sin *should be* corrected in the presence of all in order that the others also may fear.” What was another great sin of WCG? *They never exposed the sins of the ministry when they sinned grievously!*

Therefore, it just built up. They would transfer a minister who ruined a church area over here to another church. Guess what he did when he got over there? *He ruined that church and the people!* So, they would transfer him to another place and guess what he did over there. What they should have done was say, ‘You have disqualified yourself from being an elder, go take a seat in the back row.’

Verse 21: “I charge you before God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you observe these things without prejudice... [no politics] ...*and let* nothing be done by partiality. Do not be quick to lay hands on any man...” (vs 21-22).

We did that in Biblical Church of God, everyone we could get our hands on to make elders. Guess what happened? *God used that to correct me!* THUMP! BAM! BOOM! I have learned: *Don’t ever do that again!*

“...neither take part in *the* sins of others. Keep yourself pure” (v 22). That’s what happened. I was partaker of all of their sins! We didn’t learn the command of:

Matthew 20:25: “...You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them.”

- 21) Judges 9:8-15
- 22) Judges 8:22-23
- 23) 1 Samuel 8:5-7, 19
- 24) 1 Samuel 10:18-19
- 25) 2 Samuel 18:1
- 26) Matthew 20:25
- 27) Acts 8:9-10
- 28) Matthew 20:25-26
- 29) 2 Corinthians 1:23-24
- 30) Matthew 20:26-28
- 31) 1 Timothy 3:1
- 32) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 33) 1 Timothy 3:1-6
- 34) 1 Timothy 5:17-22
- 35) Matthew 20:25

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 6
- Revelation 13
- Luke 22
- Acts 8
- John 21

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Call to Repentance and Resignation*
- Sermon Series: *What is the Government of God?*
- Book: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* by Pope John Paul II

FRC:bo
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All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 127:1-2
- 2) Romans 8:14-15
- 3) 1 Corinthians 13:9-13
- 4) Acts 20:19-21
- 5) Joel 2:12-13
- 6) Acts 20:21
- 7) John 1:14-17
- 8) Acts 20:22-38
- 9) Revelation 2:1-4
- 10) 1 Corinthians 12:4-13
- 11) Matthew 16:18
- 12) Matthew 18:15-17
- 13) Matthew 5:23-24
- 14) Ephesians 4:23-27
- 15) Philippians 2:1-2, 5, 3-5
- 16) Matthew 20:20-25
- 17) Revelation 2:5
- 18) 2 Corinthians 3:2-9
- 19) Ephesians 1:1-4
- 20) Exodus 18:17-21

Church Structure II (How Did the Lord Build the House?)

Fred R. Coulter

- How did the Lord build the house, the New Testament Church?
- How did He intend it to be run?

Let's review just a couple of things and understand what a church is not. This helps us understand what we need to be aiming for in how we need to structure whatever we're going to structure.

1. it is not a nation that has territory, that has subjects, that has laws and rules and things like that

The Church does have laws and rules, but the nation has not yet been formed. We are the forming of the nation as it were.

2. it is not a kingship/dictatorship, hence it does not have a hierarchy

Also, we're going to see that it does not have an 'underarchy.' An 'underarchy' is where all of those in the congregation control everything that is done and the minister is subject to the Board of Deacons. We're also going to see that nowhere do we find in the New Testament where they had Boards. Nowhere do we find that; that's a carryover from incorporation, from the synagogue with the Sanhedrin.

It would not be wrong to have a committee to do a certain function, but to have a standing governing board, then I think we start getting into trouble.

3. it is not a physical priesthood where we have a pope, cardinals, bishops and then priests, etc.
4. it is not a synagogue, nor a Sanhedrin
5. it is not a democracy or a republic
6. it is not a modern corporation

Some of the things that we know will not succeed, which is that if it's not built on the foundation of Christ and the Spirit of God, it won't succeed. There has to be repentance in order for us to get rid of the things that we have accumulated in the way of wrong structure and so forth. It will not succeed if it's run by politics or by hirelings. All of those things is what it is not.

Now let's ask: What is the Church? First of all, we know that the smallest church will be two or three people. That's what Christ said. A church is an 'ekklesia' or a coming together of those who have been called out.

1st and 2nd Cor. is full of how *not to run a church*. Absolutely filled with all the difficulty and problems that were there.

First of all, a church is a gathering together of those that God the Father has called, who have repented and been baptized, and have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit from God the Father.

- everyone belongs to God the Father
- everyone has direct rule by God in their lives

That is the only top down governmental rule that there should be in a church, which then, the Church does not interfere with that function or spirituality between God the Father, Jesus and Christ and the individual one who has been called. When we come together, then we form a congregation or a church.

1-Corinthians 1:26: "For you see your calling, brethren... [we're all brethren; we're all in this together] ...that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen..." (vs 26-28).

We're all here because we're basically rejects of this world, if you want to look at it that way.

- not to put us down
- not to make us nothing
- not to hold us down in subservience to an organization or structure of men

but for us to understand that *God has called us so that we can become the very sons of God!*

"...—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are" (v 28). God wants us to grow:

- in grace and knowledge
- character
- the love of God
- the character of God
- the mind of Christ

so much so that at the resurrection He is going to bring to absolutely nothing the things that are in the world. That's a tremendous calling! That's a

tremendous area of growth! *From nothing to the very sons of God!*

He is doing this, v 29: “So that no flesh might glory in His presence.” That can mean many things. That can mean a person in this life saying:

- God has called me
- God has chosen me
- God has set me over you

Have you heard that in the past? *Yes, you have!*

No one is going to say at the resurrection, ‘God, You had to call me; I was so good, I was so mighty; I was so smart; I was so intelligent. I know that You could not possibly have done what You’re doing without me.’

So, you have the two extremes there: one in this life and the other at the resurrection. “So that no flesh might glory in His presence.” Of course, if you’re resurrected you’re no longer in the flesh.

Verse 30: “But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, as it is written, ‘The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*’” (vs 30-31).

When we look at this and understand this, this is the whole reason why we come together. This is why we come to learn of the Word of God. When we do so, and come together with this attitude, God will bless us

- with His Spirit
- with His love
- with His understanding
- with the knowledge of His Word

God will give us the wisdom that He wants us to have, because we then also realize that *we have nothing we didn’t receive*, and that God in His great love and His great mercy has called us.

1-John 3:1: “Behold!... [see and comprehend] ...What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!...” Not just sons, but children—Greek ‘tekna’—*those who will be actually the living offspring of God!*

“...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. : Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2).

This is the whole basis of a church. It’s not for politics, not for rulership; it is to make us better Christians in Christ. When we understand this and

we all come together and are fellowshiping with God the Father, then we have to realize the main function and purpose of a church is to come together *to fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and to be taught from God’s Word*. That’s the main function of a church and it can have other subsidiary functions.

Let’s see why this is the very key. When we understand this and when we put it together this way, then you can see how we can begin to function without a hierarchy and without an underarchy. We all work together in the spirit and love of God to do what God wants us to do. We’re going to see a little later that when there is a task to be done, then there is leadership, which is necessary to get it done.

A minister who is serving a congregation should truly exercise his leadership by the Word of God and by his example, and by how he lives. That doesn’t mean that he’s going to be perfect. I hope you understand that no person is perfect. But he should, with the Spirit of God and growing in grace and knowledge, know and understand the Word of God to teach the Word of God. We’re going to see how that should be applied in every way.

1-Timothy 3:15—Paul wrote Timothy: “But if I should delay, *you have these things in writing*, so **that you may know how one is obligated to conduct oneself in *the house of God*...**” There is a behavior that a minister has to have, as well. The minister is not the dictator to rule over. The members are not the subjects to be submitting to.

How you should behave yourself in the house of God, “...which is *the Church of the living God*...” (v 15). Remember, the reason we come together is because of God’s Spirit.

“...the pillar and foundation of the Truth” (v 15). This is very important for us to always remember and understand: ***We come together because of the Truth of God!***

- God’s Word is Truth
- His Spirit is the Spirit of Truth
- We are to meet together in sincerity and Truth

With all of this, when we meet together and come together as brethren, then we can have the right and proper kind of fellowship and association:

- loving one another
- respecting one another
- understanding one another
- serving one another
- helping one another

because it’s all based upon the Truth of God. And the Church should uphold and maintain that

Truth!

Now let's look at a couple of other things, which are very, very important for us to understand in relationship to the Church.

1-Corinthians 12:12: "For even as the body is one and has many members, yet, all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; so also is Christ. For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..." (vs 12-13).

I want you to notice how Paul includes himself in every one of these things. He didn't say that for by one spirit *you* have been baptized. He said:

"...by one Spirit **we were all** baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body of Christ is not one member, but many" (vs 13-14). Then Paul draws the parallel of the foot, the hand, the mouth, the eye and all of that.

Verse 18: "But now has God Himself placed each one of the *members* in the body according to His own will." This also has been used to put down brethren by saying that 'since you've been put here in this organization now, and you are to stay there because that's pleasing to God. You can't do anything without our permission,' type of thing. I've seen this verse applied to brethren and misused!

Then he draws the analogy and shows that even those parts of the body that are not comely; in other words those things that are not seen in many cases are the most important. That's what he's saying.

You try getting along with those parts of your body that are uncomely—that is the parts that are not seen—and you have them malfunction—how long is your body going to be functioning well? *No!* But he says that we give more honor even to those.

Verse 24: "But our more presentable *parts* do not have *this* need. Rather, God has tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to those *members* that are deficient, **so that there might not be any division in the body...**" We're at a point today that there is a lot of division and a lot of schism. Why is that? Why does God give divisions and schisms and things like this? *So that we can all begin at a point to come back to Christ!*

We're in this condition because what we did in the past did not please God!

"...but *that* the members might have the same concern for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *him*; and if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with

him. Now you are *the* body of Christ, and *you are all* individual members. And God Himself has placed certain *ones* in the Church..." (vs 25-28).

This appears to be a hierarchy when you first read it. But when you read it and understand what is happening, God is giving the chronological order of how these things occurred beginning with the apostles. Did He not give the apostles first? *Yes!* In time order, not in structure. We'll see this very clearly in just a minute.

"...first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers..." (v 28). Isn't that the way the book of Acts started out?

"...then miracles; then gifts of healings; helps; **governments**; various languages..." (v 28)—a very interesting word. If church government were so all important, in the way that many people think it is, why is it here next to last?

Let's understand what *governments* mean. This Greek word is 'kuberneseis' which means *one who steers or guides*. This government here is exactly what we've been trying to come to in our understanding: *You organize to the task so that:*

- you have leadership
- you have things done in order and in decency
- to give direction

The meaning of this whole word is *hence government in the idea of guiding rather than to rule, administering to rather than administrating over*. This is what Paul was teaching us here. Is this not how we've been running the Christian Biblical Church of God. We organize to a task. Whatever needs to be done, we do. If anything needs to be done, we all pitch in and do it. That's how all of our fellowship groups are run, by the way; they're run the same way. There is leadership, but it is a guiding hand so that we all worship and serve God.

The bigger the group gets the more that we need some of these things. This is not necessarily a permanent thing. Heb. 13 is one that we've heard in the past and heard it over and over again where the ministers have used to take this as to *rule over you*.

Hebrews 13:7: "Remember your leaders who have... [rule over you] ...spoken the Word of God to you, considering the outcome of *their* conduct..."

Verse 17: "Follow... [obey] ...your leaders, and be submissive, because they are looking out for your spiritual well-being, as *those who must be* ready to give an account *to God* in order that they may do this with joy, and not *with* groaning because that *would be* unprofitable for you."

Come to 2-Cor. for just a minute, then we will go back and we will understand and analyze why that verse and these Scriptures have been misapplied.

- How do you misapply Scriptures?
- How is that people misapply Scriptures?
- What is that they do?

First of, the way that you misapply a Scripture is that you have a position or an idea in your mind that you're going to come to rather than have an open mind and come to the Scriptures and say, 'What do the Scriptures teach us?' That's how Scriptures have been misapplied and we'll see that's how Heb. 13 has been misapplied, especially in the light of this.

2-Corinthians 1:24: "Not that we exercise **lordship** ['kurio'] over your faith..." We're going to see that's why so many churches have transgressed against God. They have come along and have said that the ministers, or the ministry, or the board, or the deacon have control over your faith. Then they apply another Scripture, which is misapplied. They don't understand this:

"...but because **we are working with you to increase your joy. For you stand by faith**" (v 24).

Remember, that is after Paul went through everything in 1-Cor.; 1-Cor. 11 is another misapplied Scriptures, and it goes something like this; someone who misapplied this Scripture: 'Since I am God's apostle for this age to this world, and since God gave me knowledge and understanding, as God gave it to the Apostle Paul, and since I am the head of this church and it is government from the top down, therefore, I am following Christ.' This is read in that light:

1-corinthians 11:1: "Be [followers] imitators of me, as I also *am* of Christ." Does that sound familiar the way it was interpreted in the past? *Yes!* That is a complete misinterpretation and application of Scripture, *totally!*

We've seen several things. First of all, was there a position in the person's mind? *Yes!* Whenever you have a position, or you have an interpretation in mind, then you read Scriptures that you want and you can misapply them very easily. What does this verse actually mean in the Greek? *Paul was saying: "Be imitators of me exactly as I also am of Christ."* Not to follow in the sense of rule.

- Do you see the vast difference?
- If you're going to imitate Christ's behavior, Who are you really following? *Christ!*
- Was this person making this claim really

imitating Christ? *No!*

Christ said, 'You shall not do these things. You shall not oppress. You shall not over rule.' So, you can see how Scriptures can be totally misapplied. I'm telling you, brethren, a whole generation of the Churches of God have been so inoculated with the wrong kind of church government. I'm hear to tell you the truth, God is not going to quit scattering, splitting, dividing and sending the Church asunder until we learn the lesson that *Christ alone is Lord!* And until we learn the lesson to run the churches and congregations the way that *God wants it run!*

We will see the truth now concerning Heb. 13. I think it's good that we have some things like this. I have put out quite a few study helps. The reason that I do is because it's so much easier for all of us together than me try and just give the information and you try and write it down in your notes. Then you go home and you put your notebook up, or you forget what you wrote down, or you didn't get it the way that it was said.

This is really taken from a letter that I wrote to someone in response to it; from a printout:

We will be doing more in-depth analysis of Jesus Christ's teachings in the Gospels and exactly how the apostles understood it.

That's what we've been doing in this study.

We can be sure of one thing that is not true, nor God's way: In the WCG the leaders bragged that if there was anything the Catholics have right *it's government from the top down.* But they have never asked the question: **Why would the Church of God use Satan's form of government?**

I remember when I heard that blustering announcement when I was in Pasadena. Oh my, that was something! I said to myself, 'Why would God use Satan's form of government?'

- Did God not say that 'you won't be as the kings of the earth'?
- Did He not say that 'you will not be as the mighty ones'?

But for the time being, in response to questions from someone else, there are two verses in Heb. 13 that have been used to give credence that the ministers have authority to rule over the brethren and that they are to submit to the government of God, i.e. the ministers.

The ministers are not the government of God! Upon Whose shoulders is the government

given? *Christ will be the government* (Isa. 9:6-7), **not any man!** The government of God in the form of a national government is not on the earth! *That comes with the Kingdom of God!* I want to repeat it again: **the ministers are not the government of God; they do not enforce the government of God!** The ministers are to enforce the rules that Christ has given for assembling.

What is the strongest power of coercion that the ministers have? *Disfellowshipment!* But that is done, as we will see, in conjunction with the whole congregation. Why? When it was not done in conjunction with the whole congregation, what happened? *The ministers used it because they were angry against someone!* They disfellowship people because they ask questions.

That's why when we come to 1-Cor. 5, Paul is doing exactly what Jesus said. We've already covered this on how to solve a problem: You go to the person *personally*. If that doesn't work then you take two or three and you go establish everything. If that doesn't work then you bring it to the church, and the church is the congregation, the assembly.

What did the Apostle Paul say about the one who was committing fornication and sleeping with his mother-in-law or his half-mother as it were (1-Cor. 5)? Paul said that when you are 'gathered together and my spirit with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you put such a one out of the Church for the destruction of the flesh.' The whole church was to do it. There are many reasons for that:

1. it reduces the number of problems as they come along
2. everyone can pray that that person who has to be disfellowshipped is put out

That is the greatest authority that is given in extreme situations. That is something that everyone does together. You cannot have an underarchy of members running the ministry, and you cannot have an overarchy or hierarchy of the ministers ruling as lords over the flock. That's why it's very important.

Heb. 13—the translation of the *King James* does give the appearance that this might be the case of ruling over the brethren, especially when these verses are misinterpreted and misapplied from an authoritative hierarchical perspective. Here is the analysis of these verses in Heb. 13:7 and 13.

Hebrews 13:7 (KJV): "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God..."

The English in the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry

reads as follows: "Remembering your leaders, who spoke to you the Word of God..."

{continuing from the handout}:

Berry's translation is more accurate and does not show a rulership over the brethren by the ministry. A more detailed analysis of the Greek is even more enlightening and accurate. The English word *remember* was translated from the Greek verb 'mnemoneuo,' and this verb is used in the imperative mood and has the following meaning: *remember, keep in mind, think about, retain in one's memory.*

The phrase "...them which have the rule over you..." is a very poor translation. Ministers and church leaders who know nothing about the Greek text have misused and misapplied this phrase from the *King James* to reinforce their rule over the brethren.

Because it is in the Bible, they claim that it is Scriptural and have exercised rigid authority over the fellow minister and brethren in the name of church government.

However, the actual meaning of the Greek, from which this phrase was translated, has an entirely different meaning. "...them which have the rule over you..." is translated from the present tense participle.

And I give the whole participle there, with is 'ton he doumenon humon.'

This participle is from the Greek verb 'hegeomai' that has the following meaning: *to lead, to guide, to rule.*

The more accurate translation should read: "Remember those who are leading you." This translation is the most accurate when the rest of the verse is considered.

The whole verse should read; Hebrews 13:7: "Remember your leaders who have spoken the Word of God to you, considering the outcome of *their* conduct; *and imitate their* faith."

From the context of this verb 'hegeomai' could only refer to *leading*, not to rule over the brethren with authority, because the appeal is to *remember* their conduct in faith, to *imitate* their conduct in faith. They are not exhorted to remember the authoritative rule of a hierarchical ministry. The inspired Greek text simply does not mean this.

Now let's come the next phrase in:

Hebrews 13:17 (KJV): “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves...”

However, the *King James* translation of “Obey...” is too strong because the Greek verb in this verse is ‘peithesthe’ in the second person plural, derived from verb ‘peitho,’ not the strong command verb in a military sense, as is the Greek verb ‘hupakouo.’

The Greek word ‘peitho’ has the following meaning: *to convince, to persuade, to make others believe, to win over, conciliate, depend upon, trust in, be convinced, be sure, strive to please, obey and follow.*

That is in that sense. So, the whole meaning of these verses and that they were not properly translated and hence there is not that kind of rulership over the brethren at all. It never intended to be!

Let’s look at a couple of other things here so that we can understand how God wants all of these done and how we are to follow along, how the ministry should be.

Let’s see how the early church functioned. Let’s finish off where we left off last time, showing the qualifications of one who is to be an overseer and the one who is also to be a deacon or deaconess.

1-Timothy 3:6: “Not a novice, lest he become conceited *and* fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil.”

That is why God has given us a non-hierarchical type of structure for the Church. Satan cannot work through that very well. If it’s run:

- by God’s Spirit
 - by God’s Word
- in love and service
- to help
 - to teach
 - to fellowship with God the Father
 - to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ

—and there is no hierarchical command and control authority, Satan the devil doesn’t have much latitude to work—does he? This is why it should not be a novice or one newly come to the faith. Notice where the devil is going to come after someone: someone who is lifted up in pride or vanity.

Verse 7: “It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are outside the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the snare of the devil.*” The devil can come along and he can begin blackmailing, and begin working against a person to

make them do things that they should not do.

Brethren, unfortunately, that did also happen in Worldwide! The tactics that were used were near blackmail. That caused great problems, and every one of us were affected by it. That’s why these qualifications are here. Whenever the conduct of a minister seriously transgresses any one of these things, and there is not repentance and open knowledge of it, then they disqualify themselves until such time that they repent.

There are, however, some sins that are so egregious, some sins that are so absolutely profound and in degree so great that a person may disqualify himself forever in the flesh from being an elder, minister or preacher again. Unfortunately, those who were in those conditions were still put back as ministers.

1-Timothy 5:17: “Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor...” So, there is honor for elders who rule well. But that honor is not to uplift in pride and vanity. As I mentioned before, every one of us need to understand *we have nothing we didn’t receive!*

- If we understand something of God’s Word, **God gave it to us!**
- If we have God’s Spirit to lead us and guide us, **God gave it to us!**
- If God has given us the physical things and tools that we need, **God has given it to us!**

There is nothing that we have that we didn’t receive!

“...especially those who are laboring in *the Word and doctrine*” (v 17). Why? *Because they’re the ones responsible for the teaching!* The teaching is the whole purpose of a congregation coming together. A teacher must be sent! Paul also exhorted to do this.

There are a lot of instructions to ministers in 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. Every minister needs to go through and let these words apply to him most directly.

2-Timothy 2:1: “Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also” (vs 1-2).

That’s something that we need to be doing. That’s something I need to be doing. Pray that God will send those who are faithful men that will be able to be taught so that they can teach others. If something happens somewhere along the line, there will be a continuity, not an inheritance. All these ministers fought over who was to inherit Worldwide,

who was to be the successor to Herbert W. Armstrong. They got it all wrong!

They have to qualify by teaching the Word of God in humility and in truth, not who is the 'chief honcho' in charge. No one succeeds! God's people are not chattel to be inherited.

So, there should be the teaching of the Word and of the doctrine. Of course, in a sense we're all to become teachers in one form or another, because you can directly teach someone else. You can lead them in the Bible. You can show them! You can teach them be it man or woman. That doesn't make you a preacher—does it? *NO!* Did not Pricilla and Aquila take Apollos and take him on the side and teach him the things that he needed to learn from the Scriptures? *Yes!*

1-Timothy 5:18: "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox treading out the corn,' and, 'The workman is worthy of his hire.'" This honor also has to do with remuneration.

(go to the next track)

Verse 19: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.*"

This follows right along with what Jesus Christ said in Matt. 18. If you have something against your brother go to him; if not take two or three witnesses. Now, notice what else it says; this follows right along with Matt. 18; if he won't hear you, tell it to the Church. We have the same thing here:

Verse 20: "Those *elders* who sin ***should be corrected in the presence of all...*** [everyone] ...in order that the others also may fear." Fear Who? *Christ!*

- *fear* taking advantage of the brethren
- *fear* taking advantage of their position
- *fear* getting involved in adultery, thievery and all of these sins of the flesh

That's why Paul says in 1-Timothy 6:9: "For those who desire to become rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which cause men to sink into destruction and perdition."

- Did this happen to the richest Church of God on earth? *Yes, the whole church!*
- Did not the leader of it fall into those things? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "For the love of money is a root of all evils; *by* which some, *while* striving... [covet] ...after riches... [by sending out many brow-beating letters to co-workers] ...were seduced from the faith, and have impaled themselves with many sorrows."

Are those not prophetic words for the richest Church of God on earth? *Yes, they are!* I mean, we need to be honest! If we're going to correct the problems—that's why there are examples for us to learn from—we must understand how they came about so that they can be handled in a proper way that we don't repeat them.

1-Timothy 5:20: "Those *elders* who sin *should be* corrected in the presence of all in order that the others also may fear." Every one of the problems that we've had to live through is because the basic Scriptures here in the New Testament have been violated, the way that the ministry was run and the way they handled the problems.

Let's see what it also says concerning deacons. Deaconships were generally rewards to those who were politically correct with the minister, too many times. Did that also lead to problems? *Grave problems!*

There is one minister who always sought out the building contractor in the area that he was in, and had the building contractor build him a house. Every one of the building contractors were rewarded with local eldership. Wherever that minister went, that's what he did!

So, it was not just the sins of the leadership, it was the sins of the ministers who knew the sins of the leadership and they said, 'They get away with it, I'll do it.'

Here are the qualifications for deacons, 1-Timothy 3:8: "In the same way also, the deacons who serve *must* be serious-minded, not hypocritical, not given to much wine, not greedy for selfish gain... [because they have to handle money to get things done] ...holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And let those *who meet the qualifications* also **be proved first...**" (vs 8-10). That also has to do with anyone who is going to be an elder. Let them be proved/tested first.

"...then let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be* blameless. In the same way also, *their wives must* be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober *and* faithful in all things. Let the deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own households well. For those who have served well acquire for themselves a good standing and much confidence in *the* faith that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 10-13).

All of these things are very important. How are elders made elders? We saw the qualifications. We're going to see that there are basically three ways on how a person is made an elder. In many cases there is congregational input.

How many times could the congregation

have told the ones who were ordaining not to ordain this person because they knew something that the minister didn't know. Had the minister known that, they maybe would have saved everybody a lot of trouble.

We're going to see through this how a church functions together, and that's how we have done from the very day we began with this congregation here, for all who have been with us all the way through thick and thin. I came to the first Bible study because I was asked by the brethren. I didn't go to them and say, 'You're now my church.'

As a matter of fact, I did not even want to go. I had to be convinced to come. It took two weeks before God would get it through my head that 'If you're an elder and teacher then don't leave the people of God alone. Go serve them and do what God wants you to do regardless of what the circumstances are.

Titus 1:4: "To Titus, a true son according to our common faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. For this cause I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things that needed to be done, and might ordain..." (vs 4-5)—appoint; also laying hands on. We will see that the laying on of hands is important.

Let's see how Timothy was made an elder, 2-Timothy 1:6: "For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you **by the laying on of my hands**. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness" (vs 6-7).

Verse 10: "But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel unto which **I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles**" (vs 10-11). Notice how the Apostle Paul considered his apostleship:

1. preaching
2. being sent as an apostle
and more importantly
3. a teacher

Verse 12: "For which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed to *Him* for that day. Hold as the standard for doctrine the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good thing that was committed to you by the Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us" (vs 12-14)—which was by ordination.

Titus 1:5: "...so that you might set in order the things that needed to be done, and might ordain elders in every city, as I commanded you." Paul gave him the instructions to ordain this one, that one and the other one.

In Crete they had particularly difficult problems. The congregations there were being led astray by those who were bringing false doctrines. Read the rest of Titus 1. Paul said, 'You ordain as I commanded you.

Verse 6: "If any man be blameless... [here's the qualification]: ...*the* husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of debauchery or rebellion. For it is obligatory that as **God's steward an overseer...**" (vs 6-7). An elder is an overseer. As we covered, when Paul called all the elder's of Ephesus, he said, 'The Holy Spirit has made you overseers, feed the flock of God.'

Why *steward*? A *steward is one who is commanded by oath and office to care for something that is not his!* A steward is *give permission* to run someone else's property, and is accountable to the owner.

Is the Church someone else's property? *Yes!* It belongs to God the Father and Jesus Christ! That's why Paul says *steward*.

"...be blameless, not self-willed..." (v 7)—to do his own will. What the first thing in every one of our prayers? *Your [God's] will be done!* What was the last prayer of Jesus Christ? *Not My will, but Your will be done, Father!* Not self-willed! That doesn't mean 'mush-minded' either.

"...not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a bully, not greedy for material gain" (v 7)—'filthy lucre' (KJV). Notice how many times it says this. There will be money and things that will be handled by the elders.

Verse 8: "But hospitable, a lover of good..." The Greek there does not mean 'good' men or 'good' things, but a lover of *good* in everything. What is really *good*? *God's way!*

"...sound-minded, just, Holy, self-controlled, holding steadfastly to the faithful Word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine... [rightly dividing the Word of God] ...and to convict those who are gainsayers. For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from the *circumcision party*, whose mouths must be stopped; who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain" (vs 8-11).

Here they had the situation where Paul had

to tell Titus to appoint those as he had commanded. Reminding him again of the qualifications.

Let's see how the Church really worked together; how the apostles worked with those that God into the Church. Immediately on the Day of Pentecost they had 3,000 people; the Church grew and grew. When we come to Acts 6 the Church is really a large size. Notice that they didn't have any great organization. What did they have? *Problems!*

Acts 6:1: "Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." They were still meeting at the area of the temple. They were taking care of the widows, poor, and so forth.

Verse 2: "And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, 'It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business'" (vs 2-3). Everyone had some input. They put forth seven, but who did the final appointing? *The apostles, but it was jointly done together!*

Verse 4: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.' And this declaration was pleasing to all the multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit; and Philip; and Prochorus; and Nicanor; and Timon; and Parmenas; and Nicolas, *who was* a proselyte of Antioch. *And* they set them before the apostles; and after praying, they laid *their* hands on them" (vs 4-6)—ordained them to the office of deacon. These were some deacons; read what they did, read what Stephen did. So, there was growth in what they were doing.

Acts 14—here we find something important concerning the ordaining of elders. This gives the whole story of what happened to Paul and how he was nearly stoned to death.

Acts 14:21: "And after preaching the Gospel to that city, and making many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch... [that's where he had been stoned] ...*where* they established the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *declaring* that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. And when they had chosen for themselves elders in every church..." (vs 21-23)—appointed by laying on of hands. I'm sure they did the same selecting that they did in Acts 6, the same way.

"...and had prayed with fasting, they

committed them to the Lord, on Whom they had believed" (v 23).

Let's see how Timothy was selected; Acts 16:1: "He then arrived at Derbe and Lystra; and behold, there was a certain disciple named Timothy, son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but *his* father *was* a Greek. He was recommended to *Paul* by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium" (vs 1-2).

They had already appointed elders there before, so here's Timothy coming along who had a good report. Is that not what is required (1-Tim 3)? *Well reported!*

Verse 3: "And Paul desired to take him with him; but because of the Jews in those places, he took him and circumcised him, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, the ones that had been decided upon by the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem. Then the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number every day" (vs 3-5).

When you have someone who is young and new, or a novice, what is the example here of how he is to be trained? He went with Paul and was taught directly by Paul all the way through.

Now, let me proffer this as something that I think we should have followed as advice from the Scriptures. When we had all of these young men graduating from Ambassador College... They did take older ones from time to time and teach them and so forth; I was one of the older ones at age 27 when I went, and they had others who were older who came in for a year's training and so forth, which was a good thing to do. What they should have done with these newly graduated young men was say, 'Okay, select which congregation you want to go to, we have men in that area who will help you find a job. Or if we have you to assist, then we are going to give you a three to five year internship in learning what an elder should really be and to serve in the field, and for you to grow in the grace and knowledge and understanding.

There's also the Biblical principle that the Levite did not serve in the temple until he was 30-years-old. He could begin assisting at 20. If they would have done that with Ambassador College, I think that the results would have been a whole lot different than what it turned out to be.

If they would have really truly taught them the Word of God—taught Greek, Hebrew and how to teach—rather than indoctrinate them on how to fit in politically to be acceptable in a hierarchy.

As we go through all of the New Testament we do not find a single Board. We do find that there

were people selected for certain tasks. When Paul took the things down to the saints in Jerusalem, they selected certain ones to be assistants and stewards with Paul to make sure that all the goods got down there, and that they were delivered properly.

They weren't selected to a lifetime job in that particular thing. We have the same thing in our situation. We have certain ones who do certain things. When we have need of other things to be done, then we'll do them. I pray that God will send other men whom we can teach who will be able to help their congregations like I help you and all those on the mailing list.

The letters that I get are really something! We are still the *No Hassle, Recycled Last Resort Church of God!* I got a letter from someone who said, 'We thought that when we left and joined this other new group that that was it, until we heard some of your sermons.' So, we're able to help them. That's what I want to do: ***Let God help us build this step-by-step as it needs to be***, and rush headlong into nothing. Take everything one at a time. We've had the blessing of coming to 'ground zero' and to build on Christ and build it the way that it should be.

I want to call your attention to Acts 15. This is the great conference that they had in Jerusalem. The conference was caused because the Pharisees were preaching things that they should not. You can read it, but let's see the conclusion:

They all put forth their input and then, Acts 15:12: "Then all the multitude kept silence..." So, there was a lot of discussion going on.

"...and heard Barnabas and Paul relate what signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, 'Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree...' (vs 12-15).

Let's state unequivocally, with no doubt, the principle, the rule in the Bible is that doctrine is decided by the Truth of the Scriptures. All doctrine is decided by the Truth of the Scriptures; that's what James said. It may involve a conference, and it may involve the input of many people, but what is the paramount important thing concerning doctrine?

- 1) ***Truth*** because it's the Word of God!
 - 2) ***Proper application of Truth***, rightly dividing the Word of God!
- Without those, does a Board ensure doctrinal purity? ***NO! It does not!***
 - Does not every church have a doctrinal Board? ***Yes!***

Carl Franklin has been on many doctrinal Boards in his experience in the Worldwide Church of God. His experience was that every doctrinal Board has some politician who destroys the whole thing. If they're not being led of the Spirit of God and Truth, how are those ministers, who are slick politicians, every going to be able to come to the knowledge of the Truth when they have a Board?

Let me tell you exactly what happened, and I will use names so that it will be out in the open. This comes from someone who sat on this doctrinal Board in Global Church of God. Remember, they all had my book *The Christian Passover*. I made sure they all got it.

The issue of the 14/15 Passover came up and because there was a Jew who was attending a synagogue every Friday night, but still with Global and on their Board at that particular time, they didn't dare delve into the book and the questions in the book, because they were all politicians. So, the Board decided that they would just keep it the way they've always preached it.

In the meantime, they had forbidden the brethren to read *The Christian Passover* book. I might mention that no one has, to this date yet, substantively brought any correction to the book at all—*period!*

Some have tired; some have derided it, but I'm willing to change whatever needs to be changed if it be not the Truth in the *Passover* book.

That's how most of the Boards function within churches. They are so concerned about the politics of each other that they avoid the Truth of God. James was not concerned with the politics here. He said, 'Okay, I've heard everyone and the Scriptures agree to this...' That's how doctrine should be established, on the Word of God because it is Truth, and it should always be done in Truth with no positions.

It's amazing when you give up all your positions how much Truth you're going to find in the Scriptures. Haven't we learned that through the years? Didn't we learn so many things, and all of you who were participants of it would go along and say, 'You know, brethren, I was thinking on this during the week and BING! this light would go on.'

That's how we were able to learn, because we were seeking Truth! That how it should be in any Church of God. God is not interested in numbers. God is not interested in manmade organization. We should have whatever organization that is necessary with elders, deacons and the whole congregation together to do that which is pleasing to God to accomplish what God wants done. That is to:

- love the brethren
- feed the flock
- teach them the Word of God
- prepare them for eternal life
- prepare them for the return of Christ
- prepare them for the resurrection

That's the whole purpose of the Church!

There can be social functions, but never allow social functions to supplant the purpose of the Church. That the Church become a social organization and the a social club and your ties to God revolves around just your friends that you have in the organization. Be assured and understand that God is going to take those away from you if that is your idol. They will all go!

Let's cover a couple of things here of what a minister should be doing. A minister has to be continually upgrading himself in everything.

2-Timothy 2:15: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God..." Not to a Board, not to a congregation, **but to God!** Everyone who pleases God will surely please those who have God's Spirit in the congregation.

"...a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth" (v 15). If you don't rightly divide the Word of Truth, you can come up with error even though you are using Truth.

Verse 16: "But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness, and their words will eat away at the body like gangrene..." (vs 16-17). Have we not seen all these things taking place within the Church? Eating away! Eating away! Just like a worm eating on the inside of the wood.

"...of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have gone astray from the Truth, claiming that the resurrection has already taken place..." (vs 17-18). We've heard some strange doctrines, too, haven't we? *Yes!*

"...and are destroying the faith of some. nevertheless, the foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who calls upon the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness'" (vs 18-19). Everyone! Elders and brethren; but we're all brethren together!

Verse 20: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; and some *are* for honor; and some *are* for dishonor." Some to drink wine out of, some to bring potty out of, but they're all vessels to be used.

Verse 21: "Therefore, if anyone has purged

himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, having been sanctified and *made* serviceable to the Master, *and* having been prepared for every good work.... [as a minister] ...But flee youthful lusts; and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace with those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart" (vs 21-22).

The only way you can maintain pure-heartedness in the congregation is to constantly preach *faith, hope and love!*

Verse 23: "But foolish and ignorant speculations reject..." Today we can't avoid them, we have to tackle them. We have to learn how to ask the right questions so that we can answer properly.

"...knowing that they engender arguments. Now, it is obligatory *that* a servant of *the* Lord not be argumentative, but gentle toward all, competent to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting those who set themselves in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance unto acknowledging of *the* Truth... [that's what we hope will happen] ...and *that* they may wake up *and* escape from the devil's snare, who have been taken captive by him to *do* his will" (vs 23-26).

Here is how every elder is to do, 1-Timothy 1:11: "According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted. And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (vs 11-15).

1-Timothy 4:7: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables; rather, exercise yourself unto Godliness. For physical exercise is profitable for a short time; but Godliness is profitable for everything, having *the* promise of life—of the *life* that now *is*, and of the *life* that *is* coming. This saying *is* faithful and worthy of full acceptance. Now, it is for this *reason that* we are laboring, and we are personally suffering reproach because we have hope in *the* living God, Who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who are believers. These things command and teach" (vs 7-11). So, we are to command. If we have to, we will!

Verse 12: "Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers—**in word, in conduct, in love, in Spirit, in faith and in purity.** Until I come, devote *yourself* to reading, to encouragement, *and* to doctrine. Do not neglect the

spiritual gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood.... [overseers] ...Meditate on these things; **give yourself wholly to them...**” (vs 12-15). Every elder is to give himself wholly to God. There is to be nothing that will interfere in that relationship between God and the one who is an elder.

“...so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all.... [growth in grace and knowledge] ...Be diligent with yourself... [so that you don't get lifted up in pride and vanity] ...and with the doctrines... [teachings out of the Word of God] ...continue in them. For in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (vs 15-16).

There are other Scriptures that you can read. I suggest to everyone to read all of 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus all the way through. This will give us the instruction on:

- how a church should be run
- how a ministry should be conducted
- how we need to serve the brethren

The Church organization should be for the edifying of the Body of Christ. The functions that a minister carries out:

- if he's evangelizing he will be an evangelist
- if he's pastoring he will be a pastor
- if he is teaching he will be a teacher

But he is always an elder, regardless of what function he is doing. The purpose is that we all come 'to the fullness of the stature and measure of Christ.' That is the purpose of the Church, the ministry and the brethren, and how it should be organized.

Different churches can be organized according to those principles based upon the task that needs to be at hand.

With the Feast of Tabernacles we have little larger congregation, a larger organization and we have extra needs that have to be done. With a small group as we have here, we don't need lots of things. We don't need many deacons standing at the door to serve ten brethren. We can all work together in cooperation and fellowship and understanding in serving God.

That's how, I hope and pray, that God will help us build every fellowship group, every congregation, that God will send those elders and ministers who are truly converted, truly want to serve God and the people of God in the kind of attitude and love that God wants them to have.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
- 2) 1 John 3:1-2
- 3) 1 Timothy 3:15
- 4) 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 24-28
- 5) Hebrews 13:7, 17
- 6) 2 Corinthians 1:24
- 7) 1 Corinthians 11:1
- 8) Hebrews 13:7, 17
- 9) 1 timothy 3:6-7
- 10) 1 Timothy 5:17
- 11) 2 Timothy 2:1-2
- 12) 1 Timothy 5:18-20
- 13) 1 Timothy 6:9-10
- 14) 1 Timothy 5:20
- 15) 1 Timothy 3:8-13
- 16) Titus 1:4-5
- 17) 2 Timothy 1:6-7, 10-14
- 18) Titus 1:5-11
- 19) Acts 6:1-6
- 20) Acts 14:21-23
- 21) Acts 16:1-5
- 22) Acts 15:12-15
- 23) 2 Timothy 2:15-26
- 24) 1 Timothy 1:11-15
- 25) 1 Timothy 4:7-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 9:6-7
- 1 Corinthians 5
- Matthew 18

Also referenced: Books:

Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by George Ricker Berry
The Christian Passover by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
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Church Structure III (How Do You Know a True Minister of God?) Fred R. Coulter

I found out that on the back of an envelope that was mailed to us that someone said I was going to join United Church of God. *Not so! I will not join them!*

What happened was that I talked to a man who was going to go the meeting in Indianapolis, and he encouraged me to go. I said, 'You call Dennis Luker and you have him call me personally and invite me, and let him know that I would like to speak to the whole group for an hour. If they do not invite me and let me speak, then they are not sincere.'

I knew they weren't sincere from the very beginning, and I'll tell you why. Almost all the ministers who left with United and went to the meeting were all in communication with each other via the telephone, but especially the 'leading' ministers—so-called *leading*—via computer networks and coded names.

When a doctrine would come down from Worldwide that would be changed, the ministers who were still in WCG and going to United would say 'we know this isn't correct, but pray that God will intervene.' I talked to a lot of people who said that. What they were trying to do was to get the people to thinking that when they finally made their move that this was God's answer. I have since learned that there was not one ounce of repentance back in Indianapolis.

Since they were a major part of the problem for the last whatever number of years, for them to not repent means that they didn't have a clue as to what they were doing. Don't be too surprised if you understand is just the beginning of more disunity and scattering simply because they didn't know what they believed; they didn't have a belief booklet at that time.

I saw their basic beliefs, which is: We believe in one God and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah sent from God. We believe in the Sabbath and Holy Days and a couple of other things. I looked at that and thought: If you were a good Catholic in Europe, you could ascribe to that, because in Europe they have shifted Sunday to the seventh day on the calendar. They haven't changed the number of days of the month, but they've shifted the sequence of the days in the week.

To a good Catholic and believing in one God, and Christ is the Savior of the world and we believe in the Sabbath and Holy Days, they could

say, 'Yes, that's Sunday and all of our holidays.' They could sign onto that with no trouble at all.

They don't know about the nature of God; some of them believe in 'the one glob and three manifestations.' Some of them believe in 'three in one.' Some of them believe in 'two Gods' and some don't know what they believe.

One of the very first things that God said, as a matter of fact, *the first thing...* Some people ridicule those who preach a 'person of Christ.'

- Is Christ a person? *Yes!*
- Is God the Father a person? *Yes!*
- Are you to have a personal relationship with Them? *Yes!*

You cannot have a personal relationship with a glob anymore than you can with a car. You can love your car all you want, but what can it do back for you? *Nothing!* So, if you don't know God and you don't know the nature of God, how can you have a relationship with God? We have learned in the *Epistles of John* sermon series that our fellowship is truly with the Father and His Son. Unless you know that you cannot have a relationship God. So, the first thing that they don't understand is that they may be able to mouth it:

Exodus 20:3: "You shall have no other gods before Me."

- If you don't know the nature of God, how can you worship the true God?
- Do you not have another god before the *true God* by saying that you don't know the nature of God?

That's why we send out this little four-page thing with our care packages: *90 Facts About God* by Lloyd W. Cary (cbcg.org). He does have a head, eyes, hands, fingers, legs, feet and a body. God speaks and has a tongue, and God has ears. So therefore, you are having a relationship with a person, a personal being who is *God!* If you have it any other way you have *another god* before you—do you not? *You've got to!* We are to *know* God.

Showing not only are we to *know* God, we are to have a double affirmation of *knowing*. As we learned in the *Epistles of John* series this word for *know* comes from 'ginosko' that means *to have experiential knowledge*. Because what you are doing, you have experienced this:

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we **know**

that we **know** Him...” Notice that it is a double affirmation, *we know that we know!*

- Why is it that we have to *know* that we *know*?
- How are you going to be faithful unto death with something you don’t know?

“...**we know** that we **know** Him... [How?] ...**if** we keep His commandments” (v 3). A lot of people come along and say we don’t need to keep His commandments.

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.”

- all the commandments of God are Truth
- all the laws of God are Truth
- all the statutes of God are Truth
- all the words that Jesus spoke are Truth

Jesus said, ‘I am *the Way, the Truth and the Life.*’ So, Christ is not going to tell us any lies. God the Father is not going to tell us any lies. So therefore, if we are not keeping His commandments, which are true, then we’re liars, and if we’re liars “...the Truth is not in...” us.”

Verse 5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is **keeping His Word...**—active present tense. Which word of Jesus do you not want to keep? That’s interesting, isn’t it? **Which word of Jesus do you not want to keep?** *Of course, you want to keep it all!*

“...truly in this one the love of God is **being perfected**. By this *means* we know that we are in Him” (v 5)—because His love is being perfected in us.

That’s how we’re going to know. God wants us to know. There’s a whole Catholic channel devoted to just all Catholic stuff. I was listening to it and he was talking about the apostles and how in Acts 6 because the apostle were busy preaching and praying that they needed to setup the deacons, which they call ‘the holy diakonia’ or severs and setup the whole ‘holy’; order of it.

No they didn’t! They had the congregation select out who was full of the Holy Spirit and keeping God’s word and they set them over the matters.

We’re living in a time where there are so many people preaching out of the Bible: a little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of the other things. The Catholics are. There’s a new Catholic catechism, and for a person not educated in the Bible, you read that, they’ve got lots of Bible here, how can these Catholics be pagans? The new

catechism is filled with lots of Scriptures and things like that.

They can have all the Scriptures in there they want, but remember that they take out the second commandment completely as if it never existed. Then they split the tenth one in two so they still end up with Ten Commandments. So, the Sabbath is the third commandment. The second commandment is that you ‘shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.’

Then they’ve got all kinds of Scriptures in there about many different things, some right, some wrong, some properly interpreted and some not. We’re having a time of terrible confusion just in the world, but now also in the Church. The question is:

- How in the Church of God are you going to know who a *true* minister is?
- Everyone says, ‘I am!’ *He is!* ‘I am!’ *He is!*
- How do you know?
- How do you know who a *true* minister in the Church of God is today?

we’ve got part of it here:

- keeping *His* commandments
- understanding the true nature of God
- the fruits of what they do

Some of the Scriptures are going to be very basic, which you probably have already memorized, but I tell you what, some of those are the very basic ones that you know and have known and that we need to go to as the foundation! So, in order to know who a *true* minister is you have to go to the foundation.

This is especially very important for us to know, Isaiah 8:16: “Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples.” This is a prophecy of the New Covenant and the writings of what we call the New Testament, which should more properly be called the New Covenant, or the Church Covenant. The Old Testament—meaning the books of the Bible—should be properly be called the Writings of the Covenant with Israel. That’s what they should be.

You have the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. God does not deal in a testimony, but He deals with a covenant. This testimony here means in the way of a witness, not as in a last will and covenant. Do you understand the difference?

You come to court and you testify, that is your testimony. In that sense, testament is okay as a testimony, because you are witnessing. But it should not be a testament in the sense of a last will and testament. It’s a little technical, but everything that God does is with a covenant.

Examples: When is a last will and testimony in effect? Think on that! No, not after death. It's executed at death; that's why the administrator is called an executor. It's execute. But when is a testament or last will and testimony in effect? *When you draw it up!* It's also true that the one who is the testator—the one who gives it—can change it at any time. That's still in effect then.

A covenant is different. A covenant is a *promise to perform* by God to you and by you to God. Like a marriage covenant. Do you promise to take So and So to be your lawful wedded wife? To cleave to her? To love her? To provide for her? In sickness and in health? Riches and wealth? Until Death do you part? *I do!* Broad parameters for performance.

Doesn't say how many hours you have to work or what kind of job you have to get. Doesn't say any of those things.

Same way with the wife: Do you promise to take So and So as your lawful wedded husband? To submit to him? To honor him? To obey him? To cleave to him? Love him in sickness and in health? In riches and in wealth? Until death do you part? *I do!*

Again, it doesn't say how many children you're going to have. It doesn't say where you're going to live. You've already agreed just in the covenant, whether it's a mansion or a shack you're going to stay. *So, with the covenant of God!* He says, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' So, a covenant demands performance. This testimony is a witness:

Verse 16: "Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples"—which is a prophecy of what we call the New Testament.

Verse 17: "And I will wait upon the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will trust in Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion" (vs 17-18). That's what the New Testament Church was when it began. That's what it's going to be when it finishes.

Verse 19: "And when they shall say to you, 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits...' This is the New Age movement today. That's all you see; all the cartoons are nothing but ghosts, goblins, monsters, and all this sort of thing.

"...and to wizards who peep and mutter'—*but* should not a people seek unto their God? *Should* the dead *be sought* on behalf of the living?" (v 19). This becomes a religion.

Verse 20: "To the Law... [the Old Covenant]

...and to the testimony!.... [the New Covenant] ...**If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because *there is no light in them.***"

That's why it can't be 70% of the Word of God, not 80% of the Word of God; not 85%, 90% or 95% of the Word of God, but **as close to 100% of the Word of God as possible!** That is how you're going to know.

It's not something that you can know immediately. Most of these people in United Church of God do not have a clue that these people had planned this for two years, and all it was to ensure where the paycheck was going to come from. That's what it was all about. God is not going to honor that. They just started their process of being purged. God is going to test each one:

- Do you love Me?
- Are you going to keep My commandments
- Are you going to repent?

Another thing they're all going to have to do, watch on whose foundation they are going to build. On whose foundation does the New Testament say we should build? *Jesus Christ!* 'If anyone says that we're building on the foundation of a man—Herbert W. Armstrong in particularly—forget it! Herbert Armstrong had about 50% of the Truth. So, if you want to build on his foundation, you've got to take the good, the bad and the ugly. The Truth that he preached was fine. The things that he taught from the Bible were fine. But all the things that he did that were not good, which are too numerous to mention here, need to be completely cast away.

So, here's the whole principle in changing, and I've mentioned about re-organizing, if they're going to re-organize, that's really not the question. The question is: **Have they repented?** It's very important to know the right question. You can re-organize all you want, and I'm telling you from experience:

When we first left Worldwide, we re-organized. We did it almost identical to what United was doing. We thought that the way to get away from a one-man dictatorship was to setup committees. So, we had a national committee and a Board of Trustees. We had a committee for each church and a committee for the elders. We had 250 people in five congregations and we were doing a 48 page magazine and booklets, and we were doing the whole thing.

But not everyone left WCG for the same reason, and we structured it in a way that was very displeasing to God. I defy you to find in the New Testament a Board. You won't find it. A Board does

not guarantee purity.

- Did they not have Boards in WCG? *Yes!*
- Did they not have Boards in International? *Yes!*
- Did they not have Boards in Global/Living? *Yes!*
- Did they not have Boards in United? *Yes!*

They're all wrong! I don't see any Boards in the New Testament at all, because the truth is unless you have the Truth and love of God and His Spirit you can have Boards until there's no room for anyone, and it isn't going to work!

Furthermore, we laid hands suddenly on people we shouldn't have laid hands on, and God used those to punish me very severely. When it happened, I didn't know what happened. That's the way it's going to be with a lot of the brethren, they're not going to know what's going to hit them. All of a sudden what they thought they were trusting in, God is going to say, 'Your day has come and you're no longer going to trust in it.' ZAP! It's gone!

- Now what are you going to do?
- Are you still going to love Me?

What we suffered from Biblical Church of God, that lasted three years and a couple of months, and looks what's happening to some of the other churches three and four years, they are starting to go through the same thing, because all they did was re-organize. They followed the same structure out of which they came. Then following the same structure they hadn't learned the lesson: What is that God wants?

We're going to have to answer the question: What is it that God wants? ***He wants each one of us to have a personal relationship with Him!*** Now then, how we structure around that is going to be very easy and simple to do, and it's not going to be overbearing. God does not want that. If you can't love God the Father and Jesus Christ, and you've got a structure and a minister in between it, it's over with.

So, all their re-organization is just rending the garments as we cover here:

Joel 2:12: "'Therefore, even now,' says the LORD, 'turn to Me with all your heart...'" That's what God wants out of all this mess and all this turning, twisting and upheaval of the Church. Everyone says that when they see someone do something, they say, 'My, I never knew that. I didn't know that this person was that way.'

Well, that's how come all of this had to come, so it would be brought to light, especially

with the ministers. The test is going to be as severe and greater on ministers than just on the brethren. The ministers are going to have to do a whole lot of repenting. I had to repent terribly! God put me through some very difficult and clear down where at age 49 and four children I had no job, no severance, nothing! I had not a friend. All I had was my wife and family, and that was it. Nothing!

I was so hurt, wounded and bruised from that experience, worse than WCG; that's why I had to go out on a hill one day and just ask God to heal my soul. I didn't know what was happening, but I knew that God was there and He was true and right, and He would work it out. *He did!* I just asked God to help me learn the lesson: Why did this happen, God?

Well, through the years I began learning. Get your nose in the Bible, stupid, and study! That's right, I had to learn that you rend your heart.

"...turn to Me with all your heart and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. Yes, rend your heart and not your garments..." (vs 12-13). Re-organization is just *rending a garment*.

What do you? *You take the same thing you had before, you tear it apart and cut it up and patch it back together!* Is that not what they have done? *Yes!*

"...and return to the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil. Who knows *if* He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him..." (vs 13-14).

That's where we are in the Church today. It's being scattered and everyone is going to have to stop and ask:

- Why?
- Where is God?
- Where am I?
- Who is God?
- Who am I?
- Where is His Church?
- Where are His people?
- How do I know which one is a minister?

I'm here to tell you that ***nearly every one of the ministers in WCG have betrayed the brethren!*** And those are the ones who now have re-organized over into United.

Now, people are going to say that I'm bashing ministers. I'm not bashing ministers, I'm just telling the truth in hopes that they will repent.

For example, there's one minister who was preaching the party line two weeks before United

formed and he went over to Indianapolis to the meeting and came back and now was put over a congregation that left to get away from him, and he's been forced back upon them. *So, all the brethren are upset!* Don't blame them, because they just a hireling who is going to preach what he's told to preach.

If they would all just repent: ministers and brethren! It won't hurt! It will be good! Confess your sins! But they are all blind and naked and don't know what they're doing (Rev. 3). God is going to have to try them!

Let's see another thing on how to know who a true minister is. It was mentioned by someone, 'You know, I can't recall ever hearing a minister say that he loved his work, that he loved serving the people, that he loved God.' They preach a lot about love. I'll tell you the misconception about love that has been preached: *If we're all nice to one another and love one another and we do good works in the world that they can see, they will know that we have the love of God.*

What's wrong with that? *You've got to love God first!* Love comes from God. How can we love each other without loving God *first*? With the love of God in you from the Father, then when you say, 'Hello, how are you?' and shake their hand and give them a hug, that's what the Father would do if He was here. That's the Father helping express His love to you.

That's why it's so important that we love God *first*, then we can love each other. When you're really seeking to love God and you understand your own problems and difficulties, isn't it a whole lot easier to be kind, tolerant, understanding and less judging of other people around you? You don't end up judging them.

I'm going to be straightforward because everybody knows what's going on. If you consider this minister-bashing, then reconsider it.

One person said that in going to 'the Global Church of Rod' (Global, now Living Church of God) that everything is law and rigid. It's just like going to court. A minister comes in and you all rise, 'the honorable So and So is here.' Everybody is looking around and judging everyone.

Have you ever had that feeling? They had a whole batch of them in Atlanta just leave; they couldn't stand it. Who wants to go to court every Sabbath? Think on it! You don't want to; Church is so you can learn of God, not be beaten up by the minister in correction because he thinks he's the 'big honcho.' That's just the way that it is.

So, we're going to find out who are the *real*

ministers of God. Jesus asked Peter three times: 'Do you love Me?' Jesus said, 'Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, feed My sheep' (John 21:15-17).

If you want to know who a true minister is, he's someone who is feeding the sheep, taking care of the sheep, watching after them and teaching them the Word of God. Teaching them so that they can grow up into the full maturity of Christ, that they're no longer children 'tossed to and fro.'

A minister in Christ will not keep people as little children. He will teach the brethren to know as much as he can possibly teach them. When he does that, from the fullness of Christ he will be able to teach more, because Christ will teach him more so that that the brethren will learn more.

God right now, if you want to say that we have short time, what's the biggest thing He needs to do? What do you think the biggest thing is He needs to do? *Mature the people in Christ!* We are to grow up in Christ to 'fullness of the stature of the measure of Christ.' That's a pretty big job! Anyone who thinks he's a minister, try that on for size and keep doing that. That's what God would want you to do. Love the brethren; they'll know if you love them. It won't take long to figure out: *true love!* Not his own rigmarole thing, not his own just being friendly and all this sort of thing. But down deep inside:

- he'll be there when you need him
- he'll pray for you when you are sick
- he'll see you when you are in trouble
- he'll help you when you are in distress

so that you, in turn, can be with other and pray for them, to help them so that they can also be uplifted. That's all part of it.

There's one thing that every minister needs to understand and realize that *the members are not chattel that belong to ministers.* They are not!

- Did you call them?
- Did you teach them?
- Did you open up their mind?
- Did you die for them?
- ***NO! Christ did!***

They don't belong to the minister! So, whoever is going to be a minister of Christ is always going to point the people to Christ. He's also going to know that *all the brethren belong to God!* They don't belong to the ministry.

Carl was reading a past publication by the leader of the WCG in 1974, and he said, 'You know, I read that when it first came out, but I never realized how much *he considered the members of the Church were his property!*'

Whose Spirit do you have? *God the Father's! You belong to Him!* Paul understood this.

Acts 20:28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves... [Paul is talking to all the elders] ...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." I'm here to say that there are going to be a lot of ministers who are taking lightly that the brethren belong to God. **All the brethren belong to God!** They are the children of God!

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called **the children of God!**..." Not the sons of a church, an apostle, a minister, *but the sons of God the Father and the brethren of Jesus Christ!* 'The Firstborn from among the dead among many brethren.'

A minister is always going to be aware of that, the one who is *truly serving God*. He's going to preach and teach that. He's going to remind them. And furthermore, I think—and I think it's entirely correct, because there are a lot of different ministers who have an interpretation of what it means to follow Christ. Most of it goes like this: 'I am following Christ, therefore, you follow me and get behind me and what I am doing and then you are following Christ.'

That's how it's generally preached. When you read in the *King James* you think: sure enough, that's what it says.

1-Corinthians 11:1 (KJV): "Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." This should actually read:

Verse 1 (FV): "Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ." Paul is not saying 'follow me because I am me.' He's saying *imitate my behavior as I imitate Christ's behavior!*

- What was he doing for them? *He was teaching them how Christ was behaving!*
- How could they have any comparison unless he was? *It wouldn't be possible!*

So, it means *to imitate*. We're going to take the fangs out of all these hierarchical people by letting the true Word of God be spread abroad so they're not going to be able to. I tell you one thing that a lot of the ministers are not counting on, and it is that God is putting it in the hearts and minds of the members, all the brethren, to begin checking and testing.

One man in Chicago has been through the mill so many times he doesn't want to go through mill any longer. He has his computer on, his Bible open and he has the sermons we send him. When it

comes to something that he wants to check, he puts it on pause and he pulls it down on his computer and BAM! He can know in seconds whether what I said was right or not.

The question comes up that we need to cover: Because you say so and so about such and such, and this person and that person, are you not judging? What kind of judgments should we make? *If you sit in the seat of God and judge a person's heart in condemnation, that's not the kind of judgment you are to make!* But there are judgments that you are to make, and yes, verily, God does expect us to exercise judgment by the way of discernment and understanding so that we know what is happening.

Revelation 2:2—to the Church at Ephesus: "I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil..." They had to make a judgment to know who was evil and who was not.

"...and *that* you did test those... [prove them. How are you going to prove?] ...who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars" (v 2). How are you going to find whether they are liars or not unless you test their doctrine, test them according to the Word.

So, if you're going to make a judgment, it has to be *righteous* judgment. Let's understand that we are living where there is so much false preaching going out, but using a lot of Scriptures. If you handle the Word of God deceitfully, you can take the Truth and make a lie out of it. Just like you can take a true recipe to make something and change one ingredient and you're not going to get what you're supposed to get.

For example: in making pickles, you can use all the salt you want, you can age them all you want, but unless you put alum in there, you're going to get nothing up soft spongy mush.

So, it's the same with 'rightly dividing the Word of God'; you have to 'rightly divide' it, wholly and totally. Let's understand something about what Christ says to the Laodiceans, because I think we all need to conclude that we are Laodiceans. We're certainly not of Smyrna being shot, persecuted thrown in jail. Hopefully we are not those of Thyatira eating things sacrificed to idols, or those of Pergamos beating up on the brethren and preaching the doctrine of Baalim, which is saying it's okay to sin. We hope that we're not those of Sardis who were dead. We all would like to be Philadelphians, but we are not going to declare ourselves something to God, which only God can declare us.

So, let's accept the fact that if we are not Laodiceans at least we are living in the Laodicean age, 'rich and increased with goods.'

Revelation 3:21: "To the one who overcomes..." to the Laodicean who repents. What have we been talking about all the way through here? *Repenting and understanding God!*

"...will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne... (v 21). What do you do when you sit in a throne? *Christ told the apostle that they will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes!* So, if you're going to sit in the throne of Christ, you're going to be judging.

"...even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne" (v 21).

Let's understand that if you are 'wretched, poor, blind and naked' and you repent of that, and you put 'eye-salve on your eyes so you can see' and you're zealous overcoming being lukewarm:

- Then don't you have to make some judgments to arrive at that point?
- If you have eye-salve on your eyes so you can see, are you then not focused to understand good from evil? *Yes!*
- Are you not able to discern and judge what is right and wrong? *Yes!*

Before you weren't because you were blind: wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. You repent and now you can see and you can judge. With all the false preachers around and all of those claiming to be ministers on top of that, then you have make a righteous judgment. That's what Jesus is talking about in making a righteous judgment.

John 7:24—here's the thing that's important: "Judge not according to appearance, but **judge righteous judgment.**" That' is a command! So, we are to make a judgment, and we are not judge their heart to condemnation.

- only God can judge to condemnation
- only God can judge the heart

We can know no man's heart! But we can judge them by their fruits and know them by their fruits. How else are we going to ever know what is right and wrong unless we make righteous judgments? *We won't!*

So, it is true, we are not judge unto condemnation, because when you judge unto condemnation with whatever judgment you judge, you are going to be judged back (Matt. 7).

There's no conflict, it is the right kind of righteous judgment. We need to make righteous

judgments in order to understand what's going on. We will talk a little bit more about judgment and so forth, and see that, yes, God commands us to do that.

Not only do they have to preach the Word, they also have to live by it, believe it and you have be able to see it in action in their lives. Not that they have to be perfect, because no one is and neither are you.

2-Timothy 4:1: "I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the living and the dead* at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word!**..." (vs 1-2). The entire message of Christ which includes His love, grace, about His person, about the Kingdom of God and the return of Christ.

"...Be urgent in season and out of season..." (v 2)—which enough to tell you that they were keeping the Holy Days. Otherwise, why say "...in season and out of season..."

"...convict, rebuke, encourage... [edify] ...with all patience and doctrine" (v 2)—teaching.

- Is their doctrine according to the Word?
- Does it match up with all the Bible?

Verse 3: "For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine..." We've got a lot of brethren who need to repent, because they were willing to listen to these things.

It's like some of the brethren when the minister came out and said, 'These dietary laws were just for the Old Covenant and the Old Covenant is over and done with, so therefore, it's all right if you eat those things. Nothing wrong with that.' They ran out and got shrimp and lobster and themselves a big fine dinner, filled up their freezers with shrimp and lobster and they ate ham and bacon, and had pork chops and pork roasts. In a week they were sick!

(go the next track)

"...but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings*" (v 3).

They will have itching ears for new things. They will go to the teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. So, not only do we have a shakedown of the ministers, but we have a shakedown of all the brethren because they are going to go where they hear what they want to hear. There are plenty enough Churches of God around that:

- If you want to go get beat up, *go!*
- If you want someone to discipline your life, *go!*
- If you want to go somewhere where

someone is going to tell you that it's okay to eat port, keep Christmas and Easter, and it's really not wrong to worship on Sunday, *go!*

- If you want to go with someone who says, 'we just kind of want to cool-out here and we really don't want to be hot or cold, we want to be middle-of-the-roaders,' *go!*

There's a church for everyone. No one is going to say, 'I was in this church and the minister made me...' God is going to say, 'I shook up all the ministers and the brethren, you fit in right here and you settle down to your own level rather than growing up unto Christ.'

Verse 4: "And they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths." If Christmas and Easter are not fables, I don't know what they are. It's a fable to say that the Holy Days of God originated in paganism. That's absolute complete nonsense! They did not!

Verse 5: "But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry."

This is interesting, there are going to be a lot of troubles, v 14: "Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things against me...."

There are a lot of people who have done me evil. I know what that's like; I know what it feels like. I can brush off with a slight of hand that Fred Coulter is going to join the United Churches of God. *No way!* They didn't even have a beliefs booklet; they didn't even know what they believed when they began. They have so many Boards that it's all going to collapse under it's own weight. All of those who came out of WCG who have not repented are directing the whole thing. It's doomed from the start.

"There you go judging, minister-bashing!" *No, I'm not! I'm telling you what's going to happen before it happens!* It's not that I'm a prophet, but if I know the Bible and speak the truth, it's going to happen. So, why not repent now? Why wait until later? It's harder later. I know, I've gone through it.

"...May the Lord reward him according to his works. You also be on guard against him..." (vs 14-15). In other words, Paul is telling Timothy to watch out for this Alexander the coppersmith. We don't have the whole story, but he sure did a number on Paul.

"...because he vehemently opposed our words. During my first defense, no one stood with me..." (vs 15-16). There you go, everyone was against Paul. I know what that's like, too.

"...instead, everyone deserted me. (*I pray that God will not lay it to their charge.*) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear *the Gospel*; and I was delivered out of *the* lion's mouth. And the Lord will deliver me from every wicked deed and will preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 16-18).

So, if you're going to really preach the Truth, you're going to have some of those things come along. We're going to see a little bit about judgment, where God actually commands us to seek judgment. Here's what we need to be preparing to do:

Amos 4:12: "Therefore, I will do this to you, O Israel; and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" When you understand the Church is *spiritual* Israel, we need to ask: Are we preparing to meet God *because that day is not too far away?* How far, I don't know! One man said that we don't have too many years left, regardless of whether we die before Christ comes, it's still not many years left, or whether there are some years left, whatever it is.

Verse 13: "For lo, He forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what his thought *is*. He who makes the morning darkness, and treads upon the high places of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, *is* His name." That's one we're prepared to see.

After saying God says He's going to carry them into captivity and only leave one-tenth left.

Amos 5:6: "**Seek the LORD** and you shall live... [that's what needs to be done in all of us today] ...lest He break out like a fire *on* the house of Joseph and devour it..." That's an interesting prophecy; if we are part of Joseph. Think on that! If, as a nation, we are living in Joseph, which I believe we are, then He's not only talking to the whole nation, He's also talking to the Church within the nation.

"...and there be none to quench it in Bethel—you who turn judgment to wormwood and leave off righteousness *in* the earth!' Seek Him Who created the Pleiades and Orion, and Who turned the deep darkness into the morning, and Him Who darkened the day *into* night. Seek Him Who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth—the LORD *is* His name, Who causes destruction to flash out against the strong, and destruction against the fortress. They hate him who rebukes in the gate, and they despise him who speaks uprightly" (vs 6-10).

I'm experiencing that when I tell people from the Word of God what's going to happen. I try not to do it arrogantly. I don't want to do it arrogantly, I want to do it in love that they may repent. But it still needs to be done.

Verse 11: "Therefore—because of your trampling upon the poor... [I want all ministers to take heed and listen to this. Was this you?]: ...and because you take tribute of grain from him—though you have built houses of carved stone, you shall not dwell in them; though you have planted desirable vineyards, you shall not drink wine from them, for I know your many transgressions and your many sins. They afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate. Therefore, the prudent shall keep silent in that time; for it *is* an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as you have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious *to* the remnant of Joseph" (vs 11-15).

You can continue on with the rest of it there; you can apply part of it the nation and part of it to the Church.

Verse 18: "Woe to those desiring the Day of the LORD!..." How many ministers have said that over and over again to whip the brethren up to fear the day of the Lord's coming. 'If you leave this church you're going to lose your salvation.'

You search the Bible... I challenge you! I talked to a man who did a study on this and he got to thinking one day: Does the Bible say anything about leaving the Church and losing salvation? So, he did a study on it and... *No! You can leave the Truth! You can leave the faith he found out, but **to leave a building or to leave an organization is not leaving God!***

How do you leave God? *You reject His Spirit! You reject His laws!* But if you love the Truth you're going to keep them. A minister will be:

- doing
- seeking
- repenting
- giving proper judgment
- teaching the brethren to have proper judgment
- How should a minister conduct his life?
- How should a minister conduct his ministry?

Paul goes through and explains why we should still follow the laws of clean and unclean meats. We've explained 1-Tim 4:1-4 many times,

but notice what it says:

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the **faith...**"—not the Church. If you leave a church that is losing faith and you leave to gain faith and love the Truth, are you leaving God? *No! You cannot be!*

"...and shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (v 1). That's exactly what happened in Worldwide.

Verse 6—Paul to Timothy: "If you are teaching these things to the brethren... [includes everything written up to this point] ...you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being **nourished by the words of the faith...**" A true minister of God is:

- going to learn the Word of God
- going to grow in the knowledge of God
- going to study the Word of God
- going to be thinking on the Word of God
- going to have it in heart and mind by the Holy Spirit

That's how you're going to know!

So, if you have a minister who gets up there and he gives a sermon that you don't know too much about whether it's right or wrong, and then all the rest of the week all he's doing is out there playing golf and comes back the next Sabbath and tells someone how they ought to live their lives, he's not really a good minister "**...nourished by the words of the faith...**"

"...and of the good doctrines that you have closely followed. But refuse profane and old wives' fables... [and there are many fables going around, flying everywhere; *refuse them*] ...rather, exercise yourself unto Godliness" (vs 6-7)—those things that produce Godly character.

Verse 8: "For physical exercise is profitable for a short time; but Godliness is profitable for everything, having *the* promise of life—of the *life* that now *is*, and of the *life* that *is* coming. This saying *is* faithful and worthy of full acceptance. Now, it is for this *reason that* we are laboring, and we are personally suffering reproach **because we have hope in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men...**" (vs 8-10). Is Christ God? *Yes! That's what it says!* Is Christ our Savior? *Yes!*

"...especially of those who are believers. These things command and teach. Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers... [How?]: ...—in word... [the Word of God] ...in conduct... [how you live your life] ...in love, in Spirit..." (vs 10-12). That people know you have the Spirit of God. You're not going around

bragging, but you're serving.

"...in faith *and* in purity" (v 12). All of those things are how you know a true minister.

Verse 13: "Until I come, devote *yourself* to reading..." the Scriptures, teaching out of the Bible. Go through each book of the Bible and entitle it like: *The Gospel of Christ in Genesis*. Go through and pick out all the things in Genesis that have to do with Christ in the New Testament. Be they prophecies or whatever it may be. Then do so with the rest of the books of the Bible: *The Gospel according to Isaiah*, etc. It think you'll get a whole list of so many things. So, when Paul says to give attendance to reading, that has all of that in there.

"...to encouragement... [edify] ...*and* to doctrine. Do not neglect the *spiritual* gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood" (vs 13-14). It says by *the laying of my hands* (1-Tim. 1).

Apparently, when Timothy was ordained, it was Paul and everybody could gather around and lay hands on him. That must have been some ordination!

Verse 15: "Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them..."

- wholly committed to being a minister of God
- wholly committed to faith
- wholly committed to love and service
- wholly committed to the Spirit of God

In all these things, give yourself *wholly!* That is be wholehearted and entire in it.

"...so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all. Be diligent with yourself ..." (vs 15-16).

- watch out for yourself
- watch out for your own sins
- watch out and ask God to help you overcome your own lusts and temptations

"...and with the doctrines... [keep it and do it right] ...continue in them. For in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (v 16). Why? *Because he's going to teach them to grow up into Christ so that they can receive salvation!*

So, there's quite a bit that you can use discern what a true minister is. Let's see some other things here that are very important concerning who a true minister is, and how it should be. I read this and study this so that I know how I should conduct myself. If I say I'm a minister of Jesus Christ then I have ask myself: Am I really? If I really am how am I going to prove it to myself with God's Spirit? Not to lift myself up above everybody else and say that you better know that I'm a minister and when I come

in you better all stand at attention. *Nonsense! That is not ever going to work!*

So, I read this: *teach me how I should conduct my ministry!*

1-Timothy 1:3: "When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus, in order that you might *solemnly* charge some not to teach other doctrines." So, he's going to make sure that false doctrines are not preached.

- How are we going to know what is true?
- How are we going to know what is false?

If you know what is true then you can recognize what is false, which then becomes a judgment! You have to judge.

Verse 4: "Nor to pay attention to myths..." And one of the fables going around is that certain races of people are conception of Eve through Satan. Therefore, they are beasts and animals, the seed of Satan. *Nonsense! That's a Jewish fable!*

"...and endless genealogies..." I want to tell you the truth about the children of Israel in the flesh. In order for them to become spiritual Israelites they have to *repent and be baptized*. They then are re-grafted back in to spiritual Israel.

How about the Gentiles, what do they have to do? *Repent and be baptized and be grafted into spiritual Israel!* God is creating a new spiritual Israel, which is what is true. I've said that in different ways quite a few times in the past. So, we stay away from all of that.

- Who cares?
- Does it really matter if a person is a Jew?
- What did Paul say?
- *If you're a Jew and you're circumcised, and you break the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision!*

He's saying you are no different than anybody else. So, let's not get all carried away with genealogy. I can show my genealogy back to the throne of David.

- So what?
- Have you repented?

"...which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith. Now, the purpose of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith" (vs 4-5). There you go, there's another measuring of it; not only for the minister, but also for the brethren.

Verse 6: "From which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling." Have you sat in church and listened to some vain jangling recently? Part of it is that you can't say that God is one

hypostasis or three hypostases, because the 'one hypostasis and three hypostases are really one; but God is one, but He's really three.' That is a vain jangling, etc., etc. You could go on and on.

Verse 7: "Desiring to be teachers of *the* law, neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming. Now we know that the law *is* good, if anyone uses it lawfully" (vs 7-8). There it is, God hasn't done away with any of His Law, because God is love and law comes from love.

Verse 9: "Understanding this: that law is not enacted for a righteous man..." No one can accuse you of breaking the Sabbath if you're keeping it. Same way if you're driving your car down the street and you're going the speed limit. You can't be arrested for speeding when you're not exceeding the speed limit. But if you're a sinner, a transgressor, the Law is enacted upon you. That's what it means.

"...but for *the* lawless and disobedient, for *the* ungodly and sinful, for *the* unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing *that* is opposed to sound doctrine" (vs 9-10). Anything!

We are finding that there are an awful lot of those who claim to be ministers who are perjured persons and who are liars. How can you try and form something deceitfully to try and foist it off upon the brethren that this is from God when you've been planning it for two years and ever hope to make it work? God is not going to be mocked! There is going to have to be some vast repenting; if there's no repenting there's more correcting coming, without a doubt, you can be guaranteed.

"...any other thing *that* is opposed to sound doctrine"—anything! Is that a broad statement? *Yes!* That means we are to make judgment based upon sound doctrine.

All of this helps us know who is a minister and who is a member, indeed! We can have our eyes open and take away the blindness and anoint our eyes with eye salve.

Verse 11: "According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted." A minister is a steward over God's property. Think about all that Paul knew; he knew he was writing most of the books of the New Testament. He knew that, because he had to go back and edit every one of them before they were put in. That's why you read the book Romans and there are three 'amen' sections to it. It shows that he edited it at least twice.

You go back and read it and you can see that

especially in Rom. 5 that he wanted everyone to make sure that they understood about Adam and sin and death, and Christ and righteousness, that he repeats himself three times over the same thing. It's very evident that it was edited by Paul. But it was needed to really get it.

Verse 12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me... [to be able to do it] ...that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry." None of the hirelings who were just there because they have razzmatazz, or they can speak, are necessarily true ministers of God.

They may be, but I'm here to tell you that a lot of those ministers who stayed in WCG or came out in United—maybe a good majority of them—really should be told to go sit in the back row with the priests of Baal until we understand how you're going to do.

- you were not trustworthy to stand for the Truth
- you accepted all these lies
- you preached these things to the brethren
- you told them everything was okay *when you knew it wasn't*

Are you being trustworthy?

Verse 13: "Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief." How about those of you who did it **knowingly** in belief. That's another whole story— isn't it?

Those questions need to be asked, and they need to be answered. I'm not trying to bash anybody, I just hope they repent!

Verse 14: "But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (vs 14-15).

I'll tell you, the longer you are in the Church the more you realize how sinful sin is, and how sinful our nature really is. That doesn't mean that you're getting worse and worse. That just means that you have more of God's Spirit to know right from wrong. We know that the people in the world don't know right from wrong. They're not fighting thoughts of evil. They're rather enjoying them. That's why so much evil is going on, but we're fighting thoughts, wondering where did that come from?

You can bring every thought into the captivity to the obedience of Christ. That's all part of

growing and overcoming, which actually means that if you are finding yourself catching evil thoughts in your mind, that is God's Spirit working in your mind to show you what to get rid of. That means that, yes, you are converted and God loves you and is purging this out of you. God wants you to repent of it and replace it with His Spirit and His Word.

It's just opposite when people try to discipline it out, they cannot do it. Then they have to run around and condemn themselves because they're not yielding to Christ and to God.

Paul said that "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." That's how he ended up. He realized how absolutely sinful sin was.

Verse 16: "But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all long-suffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life." Paul is our example! He was a persecutor and murderer of the Church, though he did it in ignorance.

This all fits in to the form and structure of the Church, and how a church should be run. Remember that the purpose of the Church is to come together to learn of the Word of God, to fellowship with the Spirit of God together in love, faith and peace. Everything else beyond that is all extra. If we want:

- to have a social, *fine*
- to have a meal, *fine*
- to have a church picnic and baseball game on Sunday, *fine*
- to do things together in the evening and play cards or whatever to enjoy one another's company, *fine*

All of those things are just that much better. If a church is large enough to have a choir, *fine*. All those things are fine, but they have to be done and structured for the purpose, for the task, so that it can be done decently and orderly, so that edification in the Church will be done according to the fact that the Church is to preach the Word of God and a place where we are to learn the Word of God. God's Spirit rules in every one of us.

1-Timothy 5:17: "Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor..." Some people say that that's double enumeration and take it literally and give themselves huge \$2-300,000 wages.

"...especially those who are laboring in *the Word and doctrine*" (v 17) It's very important to know the Word and doctrine and understand the

Truth.

Verse 18: "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox treading out *the* corn,' and, 'The workman *is* worthy of his hire.' Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on *the testimony of two or three witnesses*" (vs 18-19). This is exactly the same as Matt. 18; go compare it.

Verse 20: "Those *elders* who sin *should be* corrected in the presence of all..."—everyone! This is going to 'cut off at the pass' a lot of sins. It's going to stop a lot of 'peat and repeat' with the ministry when it's all known publicly.

Just like Matt. 18, if a person will not hear you or the two or three, take it to the Church and they will all know. This would be an elder in the Church, because we're talking about those who *labor in Word and doctrine, and elders that lead well*.

"...in order that the others also may fear. I charge you before God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you observe these things without prejudice, *and let* nothing be done by partiality" (vs 20-21). So, no politics! There it is right there!

All these political ministers are going to get their lessons learned. You're either going to become un-political and be humble, or you're going to be corrected by God until you know 'which end is up.'

Verse 22: "**Do not be quick** to lay hands on any man..." We did that; we laid hands and made elders everywhere, who shouldn't have been elders, and God used those to correct me.

"...neither take part in *the* sins of others. Keep yourself pure. No longer drink *only* water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. **Some men's sins are open to public view, going before to judgment; and some men's sins follow after**" (vs 22-24). In other words, you can't discern it. They look good, sound good and you don't know their sins.

Verse 25: "In a similar manner also, the good works *of some* are openly seen; and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden"—which means that God knows, and those who are doing good works whether anyone recognizes them or not. You can't hide it, and in the long run it's going to come to the front.

He's also saying to not run the Church on politics. Don't prefer one, and don't let anyone come and stroke you and all of this sort of thing. That's what Paul is saying.

1-Timothy 6:1: "Let as many slaves as are under the yoke *of servitude* esteem their own masters

worthy of all respect, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine be not blasphemed.” When I read that I was thinking:

- Have we not blasphemed the Word of God by all of our own works?
- Have we not blasphemed the Truth of God and the Gospel by having all of our political structures and organizations?

We’ve got a lot to repent of!

Verse 2: “Do not let those who have believing masters despise *them* because they are brethren; rather, let them serve *them even better*, because they are believing and beloved who are being helped by the good service. These things teach and exhort. **If anyone teaches any different doctrine...** [here’s another one on how you test a minister] **...and does not adhere to sound words, even those** of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness” (vs 2-3). Another thing to judge by:

- What is he teaching?
- What is he preaching?
- What is his life like?

Verse 4: “He is proud and knows nothing.... [Have you ever heard an empty-headed sermon?] ...Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the Truth...” (vs 4-5). Sounds like most of the doctrine we’ve heard coming out of one of the largest Churches of God.

“...—*men* who believe that gain... [‘yes, our income is up by 30%’] ...is Godliness. **From such withdraw yourself**” (v 5). That’s what I used when I gave my resignation sermon: *Call to Repentance and Resignation, 1979*. I’ll guarantee you that all of those who measure their spiritual standing by how many dollars they have in the bank, how many magazines they produce, how many television and radio stations they are on **are headed for a fall!**

If they’ve been through this once and they’re doing it the second time, the fall is going to be even greater and harder, because it’s going to happen.

Verse 6: “But Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, *and it is* evident that neither do we have the power to carry anything out *of the world*.”

Just like they asked at the funeral for a rich man, ‘How much did he leave?’ *All of it!* He

couldn’t take it with him. Even the Pharaoh’s buried in their pyramids, they put it all there, but they didn’t use any of it. It was all petrified with them.

Verse 8: “But having food and clothing, we should be satisfied with these... [that’s a good one to start with] ...for those who desire to become rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which cause men to sink into destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all evils; *by* which some, *while* striving after *riches*, were seduced from the faith, and have impaled themselves with many sorrows” (vs 8-10).

- Does that not sound like the richest church in the world?
- Did not the WCG pierce itself through with many sorrows? Many evils? Many hurtful things?

They had to action off all the Steuben crystal that they had and the paintings that was bought with third-tithe money. Most people did realize it, but third-tithe money to the tune of a million and half in one year was used to run the Gulf Stream jet around on these ‘important’ visits around the world. Never went to the widows.

Did they not pierce themselves through with many sorrows and hurts? *Yes! All the way through the whole church!*

Verse 11: “But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith!... [keep fighting] ...Take hold... [reach out and grasp] ...of eternal life to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses. **I charge you in the sight of God...**” (vs 11-13). That’s pretty profound! That’s pretty straight!

“...Who gives life to every *living* thing, and Jesus Christ, Who *in* testifying before Pontius Pilate gave the exemplary profession *of faith*, **that you keep this commandment without fault and without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (vs 13-14).

That’s the judgment every minister has to judge himself so that he is not judged of God. Is that not one of the things that we are told for Passover? *If we would judge ourselves we would not be judged of God!* Likewise, it applies to every minister. There it is!

Verse 15: “Which in His own times the blessed and only Sovereign will make known, the King of kings and Lord of lords; Who alone has immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach; Whom no man has seen, nor has *the* ability to see; to Whom *belong* eternal honor and

power. Amen. Charge those who are rich in this present age not to be high minded, nor to put *their* hope in *the* uncertainty of riches; but *to put their hope* in the living God, Who abundantly gives us all things for *our* enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous in giving, to be ready to share; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may lay hold on eternal life” (vs 14-19).

Verse 20: “O Timothy, guard the doctrine, which has been entrusted to you, avoiding profane, empty babblings, and contradictions of false knowledge *that is* called science; *through* which some, who are personally professing *these false views*, have missed the mark concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen” (vs 20-21).

That’s telling it pretty much the way it is. That’s how in all this confusion you’re going to know who is a minister of God and who is not a minister of God. Every minister should take those books, study them and pray about them on their knees, and ask themselves:

- Do I love God?
- Do I love the brethren?
- What am I doing?
- Where am I going?
- How is it going to be done?

If they do that then they can be ministers, indeed!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:3
- 2) 1 John 2:3-5
- 3) Isaiah 8:16-20
- 4) Joel 2:12-14
- 5) Acts 20:28
- 6) 1 John 3:1
- 7) 1 Corinthians 11:1
- 8) Revelation 2:1
- 9) Revelation 3:21
- 10) John 7:24
- 11) 2 Timothy 4:1-5, 14-18
- 12) Amos 4:2-13
- 13) Amos 5:6-15, 18
- 14) 1 Timothy 4:1, 6-16
- 15) 1 Timothy 1:3-16
- 16) 1 Timothy 5:17-25
- 17) 1 Timothy 6:1-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 6
- John 21:15-17

- Matthew 7
- Romans 5
- Matthew 18

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Epistles of John*
- Study Paper: *90 Facts About God* by Lloyd W. Cary (cbcg.org)
- Sermon: *Call to Repentance and Resignation, 1979*

FRC:bo
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Church Structure IV (The State of the Church Today #1) Fred R. Coulter

I would like to read this article. Even though this pertains to things in the world, I think we can take a step and it will also pertain to those things that are also in the Church.

Today I'm going to cover some things concerning:

- church structure
- church function
- who should be a minister
- who should not be a minister
- how a minister ought to conduct himself
- who should be a teacher
- who should not be a teacher

But here's something just reflecting in the general things in the world.

Letter to the editor: The Aug. 7 Sunday Forum presents opinions on two supposedly unrelated subjects on the global persecution of Christians and on the United States war on drugs. However, my proposition is that the only solution to the drug problem is religion.

Notice not the Truth of God, but 'religion.'

Man must have a purpose in his life...

That is true, but you need *the purpose*, because if you have *a purpose* that is not *the purpose* then are you ever going to succeed as far as God is concerned. The answer is *no!*

...or he will self-destruct.

That's happening in the Churches of God. A lot of Churches of God are just self-destructing. We'll look at that and see why.

As we've seen in the drug wars today. But of course, Christians are not persecuted in the United States. Then how come we teach evolution as scientific fact in every public school from kindergarten through grade school, even though evolution cannot be proven scientifically.

They have to have great leaps of faith; they have greater faith in that, in *their religion* than in what they're supposed to believe in—*God*.

Further, since evolution is contrary to the teachings of the Bible, the state—through the systematic teaching of evolution—is doing more to enfeeble Christianity than any pogrom could ever do.

An active persecution against a group. But this whole thing of enfeeble or dumbed down is very important because a lot of people in the Church of God have been dumbed down. Not only the brethren, but also the ministry.

It's too bad that many of the kids will gain a prejudice against religion in the public schools.

I tell you what, there's going to be a lot people gaining a prejudice against the Churches of God because of all the things that have been done—silliness and foolishness—by those who are Sabbath-keepers today.

This may well cause these kids to lose the opportunity to know that God is their Creator, that He loves them and that He has a purpose for their lives. Or maybe you would rather have them take drugs.

Or maybe you would rather just have them in an organization. What has happened with the Churches of God is just like a gigantic explosion like what you would see on television where a big flame explosion and all the parts are falling down. When they fall down it exposes everything that has been done.

Every man's work is going to be tried. Some of these Scriptures we're going to cover and use them as foundational points, so I'm not going to elaborate or go into great detail.

1-Corinthians 3:12: "Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble, **the work of each one**..." (vs 12-13).

- this can refer to the ministers who are working with the congregation
- this can refer to, as Paul said, that he was a 'workman'
- this can refer to where Timothy is told to be 'a workman rightly dividing the Word of God'

"...the work of each one shall be manifested..." (v 13). This also applies to every single one of the brethren.

"...for **the day of trial** will declare *it*..." (v 19). There are certain times that come along that are greater than other days. Some other days you may have frustrations and ups and downs, but there are some days that are "...**a day of trial**..."

"...because it shall be revealed by fire; and

the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is" (v 13).

- Does God have to prove anything? *NO!*
- Does God have to prove *His* faith? *NO!*
- Does God have to prove *His* love? *NO!*

But we, as human beings, we are going to have our faith and love proved.

Verse 14: "If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire" (vs 14-15).

In one of the letters that I wrote and covering some of the problems that were besetting. I just may have to name names, and we'll see why it's necessary to do so. There are many people out there going out and deceiving and you don't know what their doctrines are.

Ezekiel 3:17—God to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel..." Everyone is trying to be a watchman to Israel.

I know of at least four or five different ministries that say that they 'are the watchman sitting on the wall.' I think that the wall is getting a little crowded. And with that they are missing the message, so let's just take the message and let none of us get up on the wall.

"...Therefore, hear the word from My mouth... [that's very important because God is going to base everything on what He has said] ...and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you do not give him warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked one shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at your hand" (vs 17-18). Sometimes this needs to be applied to the Church.

Verse 19: "Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul."

- What is our responsibility to other Churches of God?
- Are we butting into their business?
- Should we let them go merrily down the road in their total deception?
- What should we do?

People could say that Ezekiel was butting into people's business when he was bringing this warning message.

Verse 20: "And when the righteous turns

from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness, which he has done, shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous so that the righteous does not sin, and if he does not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also you have delivered your soul." (vs 20-21).

- What is our responsibility when we see all these sins coming along?
- What are we to do?
- What is it?

A lot of people have said that as long as we obey the authority of the Church then even if they're wrong, we're right. That if they preach wrong and false doctrines that's their problem, 'not mine!' Is it?

What about those people who have stayed listening to false doctrine so long, having been dumbed down because they don't know their Bibles and the ministers who are teaching them don't know their Bibles, so you have a double problem. You have 'the blind leading the blind.' How can they possibly recover themselves?

Jeremiah 23:11: "For both prophet and priest are ungodly..."—profane, secularized. 'Let's not be too religious.'

"...yea, in My house... [the Church of God today] ...I have found their evil,' says the LORD" (v 11). That's why this big explosion happened! From God's point of view, it's a huge vomiting session. It's nasty, miserable, smelly, yucky, it's not nice, it's not pleasant, and people's lives are all upset!

Verse 12: 'So their way shall be to them as slippery *ways* in the darkness...' In other words, if they don't return to God, it's going to be just like walking in the dark on plastic, with oil on the plastic. You figure out how you're going to stand on that!

"...they shall be driven on, and fall in *their way*; for I will bring evil on them, even the year of their judgment [visitation],' says the LORD" (v 12). Could this be the year of visitation/judgment upon the Church of God?

Let's look at some of the events that have happened: After ten years of changing doctrine and finally going to Sunday, Christmas and Easter, Joseph Tkach Sr. died! Then Garner Ted Armstrong got caught in another one of his philandering things, this time very badly. It really revealed that he lived a double life for 40 years. {transcriber's note: GTA died in 2003}.

Various other ministers are out there and all

of their little doctrines are coming out. We have problems with the calendar, and believe it or not we have problems with the Sabbath. There are people who now say that the Sabbath begins as sunrise instead of sunset. So, the explosion is testing every man, every person and every minister. I think that this is the year of visitation/judgment.

Notice what God is seeing, v 13: “And I have seen repulsive things in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal... [Did we not have doctrines of Baal come into the Church? What does that do?]: ...and caused My people Israel to go astray.” We can just apply this to the Church in general.

Verse 14: “I have also seen in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing; they commit adultery and walk in lies. They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that none returns from his evil; they are all of them like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” All these things have happened!

Verse 15: “Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets, ‘Behold, I will feed them wormwood, and make them drink poisonous water; for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone forth into all the land.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you vain; they speak a vision from their own heart, not out of the mouth of the LORD’” (vs 15-16).

That becomes very important. We also have in this year of visitation/judgment that there is a crisis in the Global Church of God because of the heavy-handed authority and just literally *ruling* in people’s lives in such a way that it’s incredible. Now God is beginning to wake up the brethren and the leadership of Global really doesn’t know what to do, because it’s the ‘year of visitation/judgment.’ God wants them to return to Him.

As a result of this, all the brethren are out there, and many of them don’t know where to go or what to do. I got a call from a woman who asked, ‘What’s your view on anointing?’ I said, ‘Just what the Scriptures say.’

So, the long and short of it was, because they have been dealing with ministers who have been dumbed down... And one of the biggest problems in the Church today is brethren who know that they know more than the supposed ministers who are teaching them. This creates another great backlash.

So, what happened was that this woman and five other women were going to march up into a hospital where a woman had a complete blockage of cancer in her bowels and they were going to go up

and anoint her and lay hands on her and demand a miracle from God.

I told her, ‘You’ve got to think about what you’re doing. **Think about what you are doing!**’ Someone is out there teaching that *all* people are ministers and teachers, which is not true. I mean, we can all teach to a certain degree certain things, but we’re going to see today that there are minister and teachers and there is the laying on of hands and all of this sort of thing. But there is one man who says that ‘everyone is a minister. No minister is a minister; everybody is a minister.’

He know just enough about the Scriptures that people who read what he writes *think* that he is correct. You’re dealing with a dumbed-down teacher and dumbed down audience. That’s what you’re dealing with! God says to **‘prove** these things.’

What I did with this woman, I said, ‘Be careful what you do. I’m not saying not to pray for her. I’m not saying to not go to the hospital. But what I am saying is to *not take upon yourself to do something God has not given you to do!*’

My mind has been pretty concentrated on this recently, thinking about it and praying about it and trying to come to a greater understanding with it. We need to understand something that is very, very important concerning:

- the Word of God
- what Jesus did
- what Jesus said
- our relationship to that
- the relationship of all teachers to Christ and His Word

All of these things are important, because we’re going to be judged by those things. Here are the words of the Father in this particular case:

Deuteronomy 18:18: “I [the Father] will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you [Moses], and will put My words in His mouth....” I want you to understand how much that the Bible talks about the *words of the mouth of the Lord*. Those are important.

“...And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him” (v 18). There wasn’t one thing that Jesus did that God the Father did not command Him. There was not one thing that Jesus did that was not pleasing to the Father. All of it pleased the Father.

As we have shown about the Passover, that the very words of the Passover—when it should be taken, how it should be taken, the time it should be taken—was all the will of God and the words of

Jesus Christ. Is that not true? Yet, there are some who come along—and I will have to mention some names: Jim Rector and David J. Smith—who teach that the Passover is late in the afternoon on the 14th at 3 pm. This is raging through many people's lives.

I got a couple of letters; one from a woman who said, 'Fred Coulter, you're wrong. The Passover is not when you said it is.' Well, you see, if those were my words then I could say let's listen to what you have to say. But if they're the words of God, then it's not mine and it's not what I'm saying. *It's what God is saying!*

She said, 'I believe that it is 3 pm in the afternoon on the 14th.' I called her and talked to her and asked her where she got the information, and she said, 'David J. Smith of the Church of God Evangelistic Association in Texas.'

What is the principle concerning Unleavened Bread? *A little leaven leavens the whole lump!* Guess what David J. Smith is trying to do? *Establish a place of safety in Texas, and saying that everyone has to move to Texas.*

There's another man—Israel Hawkins—head of The House of Yahweh. He's requiring everyone to move there (also Texas) building a compound where he is. So, it looks like Texas is going to have more than one Waco as it comes down. Guess what they are requiring all the brethren to do? *To change their names to 'Hawkins'!* This is a Church of God!

- someone has got to say that that is wrong
- someone has got to say that this is not right
- someone has got to say that you are serving yourself

The so-called Church of 'brotherly love,' the Philadelphia Church of God—Gerald Flurry—are all getting their passports in line so they can go to Petra.

Now then, you're presuming to take something into your hands that God never gave any authority to do. It's nothing by vanity and stupidity. If you want to follow them, it's a big free world, do it. But ***know for sure that God is going to hold you accountable!***

In bringing some of these things up, I know that some people are going to get all bent out of shape. Get bent out of shape! It's better to bent out of shape at what I say than the words of Christ come and break you. Is that not true? *Yes, indeed!*

I called Jim Rector and I said, 'I understand that you teach the Passover is in the afternoon of the 14th. He said *yes*, and I said, 'You know there's no Scriptural instructions to do so.' He got mad at me and he told someone else that I jumped down his

throat. I didn't jump down his throat; I was just trying to be kind enough to tell him that he was wrong.

Here's what's going to happen because this is a prophecy of Christ that God would send Him. By the way the prophecy of Christ in Isa. 9 about 'unto us a Son is born, unto us a Son is given and His name shall be called Counselor, the Mighty God'; *you think on that!*

- Are we going to go against the Mighty God?
- Is anybody going to go against Christ?
- *Nobody!*

These are sobering times for the Churches of God!

Verse 19: "And it shall come to pass, **whatever man will not hearken**... [listen tentatively to obey] ...to My words, which He shall speak in My name... [that is Christ speaking in the name of the Father] ...**I will require it of him.**"

God is going to require it. Now, that's anybody! Notice that it says *whosoever*. That's anybody in the world not just those in the Church. He's going to require it. 'Those who knows to do good and do it not, to them it is sin.' After all, if the words of Christ are the Truth of God and if they're recorded here for us to do, if these are not the words of *Truth and Life* for us, then how are we ever going to know anything?

That's why God is going to require it. When we understand what God did in order to come in the flesh:

- Do you think that God is going to treat that lightly?
- Do you think that God is going to have us play pity-patty nice little 'religion' and be nice little social people?

OR

- Is He not going to require that we love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being?
- Is that not what God is going to require of us? *Yes, it is!*

Verse 20: "But the prophet..."—anyone who speaks, not just to prophesy events; anyone who is teaching. What did James say?

James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that **we will receive more severe judgment.**" This is what God is saying in:

Deuteronomy 18:20: "But the prophet who shall **presume to speak a word in My name**, which I have not commanded him to speak..." Let's think about that! Timothy was charged to ***Preach the Word!*** (2-Tim.). What is the Word? *The Truth of*

God! Scriptures of God! Not his own ideas, not a social gospel. None of those things count.

- What's going to save us? *Christ Who is called the Word!*
- What are the words that are going to save us? *The words that Christ spoke!*
- Did He not say, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life'?
- Did not Jesus say, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'?
- *Yes, all of those are there!*

Verse 20: "But the prophet who shall **presume to speak a word...**" That's why if I give any speculation I'll ring my cowbell; there's a good reason for it.

I want all of you to think about the different messages that you have heard that are contrary to the Word of God. I want you also to understand that God's judgment *in this year of visitation* is coming upon them. It's going to happen again, because there is now an organization started by Ron Dart. He's not going to put out a statement of beliefs, because 'after all doctrine divides. We want to unite and provide a nice social atmosphere for everyone to feel comfortable in.'

So, all the dumbed-down are coming together again. Let's talk about the Word of God and what it will do. And let's understand that *if any of us speak anything in the name of Christ, and we presume to do something or say something, which God has not said...*

As I pointed out to this woman who was going to the hospital, 'You'd better be careful not to be presumptuous, because then you're really in trouble. If you want to pray for her, go pray for her. Do that, but don't presume to go up and anoint and lay hands upon, because you're being presumptuous.'

"...**presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak** or who shall speak in the name of other gods..." (v 20). If you're using the name of the true God, but you're bringing in the doctrines of false gods, you're still speaking in the name of another god—are you not? *Yes!*

- a false christ
- a false father
- a false doctrine

"...even that prophet shall die" (v 20). Those are pretty strong words! Does God mean what He says? *Without a doubt!*

This big movement for unity is really not

what God wants. What is God doing with the Church? *He is scattering the Church so that everyone is going to get their attention back on God!* He wants everyone to have that true fellowship with the Father and with Jesus Christ. If He wanted unity He would have kept it together.

How does unity come? *Because you agree with God!* God said that 'two cannot walk together unless they agree.' If you're going to walk with God, you're going to agree with Him, or you're not going to walk with God. It's just that simple!

Let's understand that sincerity is not the test of Truth. If there is a false doctrine, and you know it's a false doctrine, why should you cozy up to them and say you understand, 'we will be broad-minded.' **God is not broad-minded!** Men like to be broad-minded so:

- I'm okay and you're okay
- you live in your sin, I live in my sin
- I accept you; you accept me

and we're all hunky-dory, lovey-dovey. What does God say? *That's entirely a different situation, without a doubt!*

So, for the man who said we're not going to be bothered with doctrine or bogged down in doctrine because that divides, then you're missing the whole point.

God does want a division, between the world and those who believe in Him. Didn't we just read about six different division within the character people: gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay and stubble? *Yes!* God wants to know—with our free moral agency—what are we going to do? That's what he wants to know!

Matthew 10:34: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth..." Peace would imply unity. Unity comes when:

- you love God
- you're at one with Christ
- you all are believing and walking with God in the same direction

unity does not come because you are:

- a nation
- a city
- a family
- a group

Unity comes because of what you believe in the Truth of God! And Christ desired that we all **be one in Him!** Not that we do it ourselves, because:

"...**I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And a man's enemies *shall be those of his own household*. The one who loves father or mother more than Me **is not worthy of Me...**" (vs 34-37). Those are pretty strong words!

"...and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me **is not worthy of Me**. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me **is not worthy of Me**" (vs 37-38).

For all of those who want to go to a place of safety, and you've got it already planned, you have your passport, your suitcase, your Petra box and all the things that you're going to take to Jordan with you, *read*:

Verse 39: "**The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.**" Strong words!

This is all a part of the conversion that we are to have. It's amazing when all these things how we go right back to some of the basic Scriptures over and over again.

Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God..." is smooth, wonderful, pleasing, kind, good, accepting and makes everyone pleasant, nice and sweet. **NO!**

"...*is* living... [whether you know it or not, it's active] ...and powerful... [not mealy-mouthed and squeaky] ...and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (v 12). If someone had a big four-foot sword that was sharp as a razor and was threatening your life with it, you'd say, 'Yes, sir! Whatever you want! Yes, sir!'

He looks at you and puts it right up at your throat and says to you, 'Don't you ever tell me *no, sir*. You got that?' *Yes, sir!*

What about Christ? Deuteronomy 18:20: "**But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak...**"

Hebrews 4:12: "...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart." It does!

So, when you read some of these words, and if it sort of bristles up against your human nature, then you better not say *no Sir* to God; you'd better say *yes Sir* to God, because God is going to require it.

Yes, doctrine does divide! Why? *So that God will know who is following the Truth or not!* Didn't John say that 'if they come and bring not this doctrine, don't receive them into your house, nor bid them Godspeed? And the one who does is partaker of their sins. Does that not tie right in with the

principle in Deut. 18? *Yes, it does!*

Deuteronomy 18:20: "But the prophet who shall **presume to speak a word in My name**, which I have not commanded him to speak or who shall speak in the name of other gods even **that prophet shall die.**" *I will require it of him!*

Those words have been zinging in my head. We'd better be about doing what God wants us to do without a single doubt.

Since there is such a controversy over who is a minister, and some people say that everyone is a minister, that everyone ought to teach, that ordination is not ordination but it is really just raising the hand to vote. *That is not true!*

So, in Heb. 6 it talks about the *doctrine of the laying on of hands*. The laying on of hands becomes very important. In the Greek the word for hands is 'chiros' from which in the English we get the word *chiropractor*, because he is using his hands to adjust you.

We find in Acts 8 where the apostles went down to Samaria and they laid hands on those who had been baptized so they could receive the Holy Spirit, and they received the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands.

We also find that in Acts 19 when people were baptized and Paul laid his hands on them and then they received the Holy Spirit. That's why the laying on of hands is a very important doctrine.

We're going to tie in 1-Tim. 4:14 with another Scripture in 2-Tim. showing the kind of ordination that took place.

1-Timothy 4:14: "Do not neglect the *spiritual gift that is* in you, which was given to you by prophecy with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood." There are two gifts in Greek:

- 'doron'—a gift—Acts 2:38: "...you yourselves shall receive ['doron'] the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- 'charisma'—1-Tim. 4—which means *spiritual gift*

So, the laying on of hands, and this comes from the Greek word: 'epithesis' that means *to lay on of hands*. It does not mean to vote. Was there just a voting? *No!*

We will see that there was a combination of this; not only was it the hands of the presbytery—the hands of the elders—of the Church of Ephesus who laid hands on him. Under whose direction did they do this? *We'll see that it was Paul's direction!*

2-Timothy 1:6: "For this reason, I admonish

you to stir up the gift of God... ['charisma'—the spiritual gift for an elder and teacher] ...that is in you by the laying on of my hands.”

Can an elder and a teacher neglect the gift? *Yes!* Paul warned him not to neglect it. He is to use it, develop it, grow in it. That's what's been a great problem with the Churches of God. Even one evangelist bragged that 'When I taught all these classes at Ambassador College I learned everything I needed to learn. I don't need to study.' Guess what? *The year of visitation/judgment is upon him!*

Notice how the 'gift of God' came: "...by the laying on of my hands" (v 6). It was Paul and all the elders laid hands on Timothy to ordain and place him into the office of an elder. We can say office, but let's say *position of an elder*.

Let's see this even more; we are going to see where we have a *combination of congregational input and the laying on of hands*. We're going to find some very interesting things as we go along.

Let's me just mention that the mistake is made where someone believes that everyone is a minister because of two words:

- noun—'diakonos'—*deacon*
- verb—'diakono'—*to serve*

Everyone can serve; everyone can minister. When Mary and Martha were helping Jesus, they were 'diakono'; they were ministering to Jesus, serving Him!

- Did that make them evangelists?
- Did that make them preachers?
- Did that make them elders?
- *No!*

It's a complete misapplication.

Let's follow along with Acts 6 so we understand exactly what is happening. There's one rule that I always try to follow, which is that many times we get in discussions concerning the Bible, especially when I'm traveling. This happened when I was in Grand Junction and we were all talking and quoting Scriptures and doing this, that and the other. All of a sudden it dawned on me that we were missing the mark because we weren't following along with the Scriptures.

I said, 'Wait a minute, if we're going to talk about the Scriptures, let's open it.' So, we did and that helped us a lot.

(go to the next track)

Acts 6:1: "Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the **daily**

ministration"—'diakonia'—*the service, the ministering*, which then was just eating. Their widows were having that problem.

Verse 2: "And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, 'It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of *the* Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business... [How did they appoint them?] ...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.' And this declaration was pleasing to all the multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and *the* Holy Spirit; and Philip; and Prochorus; and Nicanor; and Timon; and Parmenas; and Nicolas, *who was* a proselyte of Antioch. And they set them before the apostles; and after praying... [the apostles having prayed] ...**they laid their hands on them**" (vs 2-6).

- Did they vote on them?
Voting would imply that you selected some of the seven, but not all seven.
- Was there some kind of consensus that the brethren had? *Yes!*

But it didn't say that the brethren all got together and on the first ballot they had 12 names, on the second ballot they had 9 names and on the third ballot they had 7 names.

No! With the Spirit of God they were able to exercise that and choose men who obviously had 'fruits of the Spirit' to do what was necessary. "And they set them before the apostles; and after praying **they laid their hands on them**" (v 6). That, brethren, is *ordination*.

Here is the whole sequence all together in what needs to be done with ordination. There needs to be the agreement of those who are already the elders, with the congregation and the one who is being selected for it, from the point of view that it is a spiritual service that he's going to do.

But there is input from the congregation, and there is also the unilaterally laying on of hands by the apostles. That's exactly how it was done. Now, the word *appoint* can also mean *ordained*. The word *ordained* can also mean *to ordain*. Let's see the ordination of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas. This was different. The congregation was not involved in this at all; entirely different. So, there's more than one way that it can be done.

Acts 13:1: "Now, there were certain prophets and teachers in the Church that was at Antioch, including Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch),

and Saul. And as they were ministering and fasting to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said... [this was a direct choice from God; He made it known directly]: ...‘Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.’ And when they had fasted and prayed, **they laid hands on them** and sent *them* out” (vs 1-3).

Notice what is involved: **fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands!** For what purpose? *To be separated for the word that they were called to do!*

So, we find one way is the congregational input, bringing it to those who are already elders. In this case the apostles. Then when they prayed they laid hands on them.

In this case—of Saul and Barnabas—God wanted something special done beyond what those men were thinking of, so God impressed it upon them with the Holy Spirit and said, “...Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.” So, Paul (Saul) was ordained.

This ordination is a gift of God, and it is a function of grace. Let’s see what Paul says of his ordination and his apostleship, concerning the different things that he did.

For the reason of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, Ephesians 3:7: “Of which I became a servant... [a minister; a diakonos] ...**according to the gift of the grace of God, which was given to me through the inner working of His power.**”

Was Paul just a deacon? *No! He was an apostle!* But there is the word ‘diakonos.’ We’re going to see later that he was also called *a preacher, a teacher and an apostle.* What was Paul? *All of those!* He was a servant, a teacher, a preacher and an apostle. He had hands laid on him.

We know that Jesus laid hands on the sick to heal them; Luke 4:40: “Now, as the sun was going down, all those who had sick *persons* with various diseases brought them to Him; and **He laid His hands on each one of them and healed them.**”

We find that the disciples were to lay hands on the sick. The disciples in this particular case was not every one of the 120, but it had to be the 12 who would lay hands on them:

Mark 16:18: “...they shall lay hands on *the* sick, and they shall recover.”

We are told in James 5 that if anyone is sick ‘let him call for the elders of the Church and they will anoint him with oil’—which then is to anoint and lay hands on and ‘the prayer of faith shall saved the sick.’

Let’s look at the church leaders. We’re going to see two things in Acts 20. I’m not going to

get into the context of it all, but just cover a couple of things. There has to be leaders and shepherds. Remember what Jesus said to Peter? *If you love Me, feed My sheep! If you love Me, feed My lambs!*

Acts 20:17: “Now, from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus *and* called for the **elders** of the Church”—‘presbuteros’—*an elder.* It can mean an older person, it can mean an elder who is serving as a *spiritual elder.*

One of the mistakes that was made in Worldwide, they too a lot of novices and made them elders and broke the Scripture and caused a lot difficulties.

Verse 28: “Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock, **among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**... [this sounds like it’s coming right from John 21] ...to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.” I want to focus on the word *overseer.* An overseer comes from the Greek word ‘episkopos’—which is translated in some places as *bishop.*

An ‘episkopos’ or overseer is not an overlord, because Jesus said not to *overlord.* How can a person be an overseer and still not be an overlord? *That’s the question we’re involved with here!* I think we will find it’s very simple. You take the instructions to ‘feed My sheep.’

- A shepherd does what?
- How does a shepherd conduct the flock? *He oversees it!*
- How does he do it? *He’s mainly standing on the sidelines watching them!*

In the case of the Church that is a good analogy. For the one who is going to shepherd the sheep to oversee is more on the sidelines like a coach, not an overlord.

But being in that position, anyone who is a elder and teaching, has the full authority of the Scriptures of God. He has to: ‘rightly divide the Word of God’; *rightly use* the Word of God. And if he is teaching them and they are all growing in grace and knowledge, then you don’t need all of the artificial command and control. It will be self-purging.

Don’t we have the promise of Jesus that if something is not producing fruit that it’s going to be purged and cut away? *Yes, indeed we do!*

1-Peter 5:1: “*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder... [‘presbuteros’] ...and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God *that is* among you, exercising oversight...” (vs 1-2). To be an *overseer* to make sure that everything is done properly and in order for the

good, benefit and teaching, but not overlord.

“...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but by being examples to the flock of God” (vs 2-3).

There it is right there! Everything all put together. Not an overlord, but an overseer. One who is going to be teaching, who has been ordained to the capacity to do so.

Acts 14 is where they try to prove that it was by voting, because here a word that is used one time in all the New Testament. It means to ‘raise the hand.’ It does not necessarily mean in this case to raise the hand to vote.

- Who/what makes a person an overseer?
- The vote?
- The one who lays hands on him?
- What if you make a mistake?
- What makes an person an overseer?
- *The Holy Spirit!*

Has to be a teacher and overseer, indeed! And to do it correctly and properly

Acts 14:22: “*Where* they established the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *declaring* that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. And when they had chosen for themselves...” (vs 22-23). Who did the choosing? *The apostles! Barnabas and Paul!*

“...elders in every church, *and* had prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord...” (v 23). Prayed with fasting and to appoint means that *they were ordained!* In that case it means *ordained to be the overseers who are called elders—‘presbuteros.’*

Let’s understand that ‘presbuteros’ could also be an *older man*. A ‘presbutetos’ can be an *older woman*. How are we going to know the difference between an elder who is an elder to teach and an elder who is an elder by age? Right here we have the distinction made for us:

1-Timothy 5:1 “Do not sharply rebuke an older man... [in age] ...but exhort *him* as a father...”

Verse 17: “Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor... [or remuneration] ...especially those who are laboring in *the Word and doctrine.*” Doctrine is important. Doctrine is what makes us what we are, which teaches us what we are with the combination of the Holy Spirit and so forth.

Verse 18: “For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox treading out *the* corn,’ and, ‘The

workman *is* worthy of his hire.’ Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. Those *elders* who sin *should be* corrected in the presence of all...” (vs 18-20).

Paul just said over here not to rebuke an elder. This then is the one who is doing the leading as an elder, not necessarily in age; although they should not be young whippersnappers either.

“...in order that the others also may fear. I charge you before God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you observe these things without prejudice...” (vs 20-21)—earnestly testify, meaning *charge*. We’re going to see some of the charges given to Timothy.

“...*and let* nothing be done by partiality. Do not be quick to lay hands on any man; neither take part in *the* sins of others...” (vs 21-22). That’s a warning that needs to be heeded! That’s why the advice given to me here by our congregation is good: *Fred, go slow!*

We had to learn the lesson, too, when we were in Biblical Church of God. We thought that we had to have elders in every city, let’s make them everywhere. And that was a mistake! We need not have a dictatorship, let’s have committees everywhere. And that was a mistake! So, we have learned.

When I got the constitution and bylaws of the United Church of God I said, ‘Oh oh! They’re in trouble! What was it? *Committees! Committees!* They can’t even get together to decide what they believe, yet! After how long? *Over a year!* I get people all the time writing and calling me saying:

- I’ve been attending United and it just kind of seems flat. *It is!*
- It kind of seems that they’re going back on their word. *They have!*
- It kind of seems like they only organized us for their own paychecks. *They did!*

One man even bragged that he timed his departure from WCG so that he didn’t even miss a paycheck. Guess what? *The hirelings are all going to be judged! Without a doubt!*

So, we have learned a few lessons. What is happening, God is waking up a lot of those so-called dumb sheep. The reason that there are dumb sheep is because they stay dumb. They have been dumbed-down and they stay dumb.

I remember when I heard that one time when it was shouted loud and clear, and it was a terrible, terrible meeting. It was down in Pasadena. Herbert Armstrong said, ‘You’re all a bunch of dumb

sheep!' There was deathly silence in the gymnasium, and everyone was...

The reason he was doing that was because he was trying to cover up all the sins of Garner Ted Armstrong and lie about them and tell us we're dumb sheep and intimidate us and put us down and not tell us the truth.

I was there in that Bible study and the thought entered my mind—not rebelliously—but we may be sheep but God doesn't want us to remain dumb. How are we going to rule with Christ in the world tomorrow if we're a bunch of dumb sheep? We are sheep, but we are not to be dumb! We're to be wise! How? *Wise as serpents and harmless as doves!*

So, those who believe that and go along with it, they're enablers! All you're doing is enabling. Just like someone who is hooked on a drug. You have druggies in the Church—not on drugs—but ministers who have positions of power and money and they want to retain that. So, they're hooked on it. And you have brethren who want to have someone rule over them and tell them what to do, and give every move for them; they're the enablers! You have a combination of addicts on both ends:

- Those who are supposed to be ministers addicted to what they are doing and are not doing the work of God and what they ought to be doing.
- Brethren who are enablers and are addicted to this kind of thing, and they don't know what else to do; they can find God alone.

That's why I wrote the book: *Lord, What Should I Do?* What you might do is read it.

Let's see something concerning overseers—'episkopos'—and let's see who the chief overseer is.

1-Peter 2:25: "For you were as sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian... [bishop: 'episkopos] ...of your souls."

Christ is the Chief Overseer! He is truly the One Who is over all! When we understand that then it will help us with all of the rest of it.

Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with *the* overseers... [episkopoi—plural] ...and deacons." Those who serve. So, those are two distinct functions and positions of leadership.

All of those who are overseers are *elders*. We know that, because we find in Acts 20 that Paul called for all the elders of the Church and he said, 'The Holy Spirit has made you overseers—

'episkopos'—to feed the flock of God.' That's what it's for. To be an elder, a minister, is not to serve the self. It's not a position of power! *It is a position of service!* That's how we got all perverted in the things that we did, because we didn't do it properly; we didn't do it the way that it should have been done, *the way that God wanted it done!*

1-Tim. 1—we are going to go through several places here to understand exactly what it says, what Paul was teaching, because this is an instruction to all of those who are elders or ministers or servants of God.

1-Timothy 1:1: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ according to *the* commandment of God our Savior, and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ, *Who is* our hope." That's how Paul got knocked off his donkey going to Damascus. There was a command of God and God said to the angel, 'Knock him off the horse.' He was knocked up and he stood there blind.

When Paul was ordained, was it not a command of God? Did we not see that when the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul.' So, they fasted and prayed and laid hands on them.

Verse 2: "To Timothy, *my* true son in *the* faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus, in order that you might *solemnly* charge some..." (vs 2-3).

Remember what happened in Acts 20; he called all the elders down to Miletus? Now Timothy is left there to be in charge of the Church at Ephesus. Notice what he did; he said:

"...**charge** some... [a special particular command] ...not to teach other doctrines..." (v 3).

- Is doctrine important? *Yes!*
- Did Paul have trouble with His churches? *Yes, he did!*
- Were all the members tried and tested with all the things that happened? *Yes, they were!*
- Were all the ministers tried and tested? *Yes, they were!*
- Was Timothy tried and tested? *Yes, he was!*
- Did they have those coming up within preaching other doctrines? *Yes!*

He even said at one point to the Church at Corinth that 'there are some of you who don't even have the knowledge of God. There are those of you who are saying that there is no resurrection.' That's something! Let's see what they have here; let's see what they were doing.

Verse 4: “Nor to pay attention to myths... [one of the biggest fables is the trinity] ...and endless genealogies which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith.” All that does is subvert the hearers.

Verse 5: “Now, the purpose of the commandment is love out of a pure heart...” Paul starts right out showing that unless all of this is done with the love of God it doesn't make any difference. Isn't that what Paul said in 1-Cor.?

After Paul got done showing all the problems that they had in 1-Cor. 12, because everyone wanted to be an apostle, prophet, teacher, workers of miracles and healings, he said:

1-Corinthians 12:29: “*Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Do* all perform miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in *different* languages? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the more *edifying* gifts; and yet, I show you a way far surpassing *all these*” (vs 29-30).

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. If I have *the gift of prophecy*...” (vs 1-2). That's what everyone wants: *prophecy*.

- When is it going to happen?
- When is the end going to be?
- When is the beast going to be here?
- Do you believe in a conspiracy?
- Do you know what's happening in the world?

Yes! Tell me!

How many prophecies that you knew 20-30 years ago have happened exactly in the way that they were said? The prophecies of men? *Didn't!*

So, even though you prophesy, “...and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, ***I am nothing***” (v 2).

That's why Paul starts on 1-Tim. 1 that the whole purpose of everything has to be based on the love of God. Otherwise, you're just playing 'religion,' have a social club, or you just get together. Why not just go down the street and just start a 'whatever' club. You open the door and invite people and you give them a little list of rules and say, 'You all come in and be nice and we'll share our punch.' And someone says, 'I want Vodka.' *All right, we'll have Vodka*, or whatever.

Then someone says, 'We need to restrict the membership here, and let's call ourselves something

else. I know, let's call ourselves The Elks or The Moose or the Eastern Star. Let's all get together here because we're good people.'

Listen, if it's not based on the love of God, it isn't worthwhile at all. You may have some knowledge, you may know some Truth, you may do some of these things, but where is it going to end? *Right where the Church of God is today! The big explosion flying everywhere!* The First Church of Corinth.

1-Timothy 1:5: “Now, the purpose of the commandment is **love out of a pure heart**, and a good conscience, and genuine faith.” Now that Paul has laid the groundwork he gives encouragement then throws out something where there's a problem:

Verse 6: “From which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto **vain jangling**.” That's what's happened! People send me sermon tapes and I listen to some of them. Brethren, that's all they are, *vain jangling!*

Verse 7: “**Desiring to be teachers** of the law...” There are people out there saying, 'Since I know more than the minister I knew, I must be a teacher.' *No! You may not be a teacher!* If you want to teach then you'd better read Deut. 18:18-19 and take it to heart.

Notice what happens; I've seen this happen. We had this happen in one of our fellowship groups. A man stood up and said, 'I defy any man to show in the New Testament that we should tithe.' I sent back a sermon and said, 'You're defying God! Here in 1-Tim. 1:7^[transcriber's correction] is what it says. You can say that you defy a man, but you're defying God.'

Because “...neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming” (v 7). I read that Scripture to him and sent him a special sermon with a long study; sent it to the whole congregation so that they would understand. There are going to be people rise up and want to be teachers—'want-a-bees'—someone who wants to be a teacher, but isn't. A 'has-been' is someone who was a teacher but is no longer a teacher.

So, when I say those things, that's what I say, the want-a-be, the could-be, and the has-beens. If you're going to teach you'd better know what you're going to say. I'll guarantee you one thing today, more brethren are educated than ever before. And I'll guarantee you that if you make it public and send it out to different people, they're going to pick up on it and write you back and say, 'Where did you get this? Do you understand this?' There are some publications coming out that look very authentic. But they're all superficial, and they don't know whereof they affirm.

Verse 8: “Now we know that the law *is* good, if anyone uses it lawfully, understanding this: that law is not enacted for a righteous man, but for *the* lawless and disobedient, for *the* ungodly and sinful, for *the* unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnapers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing *that* is opposed to sound doctrine” (vs 8-10). Brethren, is that not an all inclusive sweeping statement? *Yes, it is! It’s amazing!*

Verse 11: “According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.” If you are going to be teaching, you have committed to you a trust that you need to uphold, that you need to follow, that you need to do. This is not a diatribe or an angry assault against those who are teachers. But is that:

- If you are a teacher, **are you one indeed?**
- If you are a teacher, **should you be?**
- If you are teacher, **is it because the Holy Spirit made you so?**

OR

- Is it because you took it to yourself?

These are serious questions! All of those questions need to be asked!

Verse 12: “And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry... [to ‘diakonos’; to serve] ...who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief” (vs 12-13).

Now then, ***are there some of those out there who are doing these things not ignorantly, but still in unbelief?***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15
- 2) Ezekiel 3:17-21
- 3) Jeremiah 23:11-16
- 4) Deuteronomy 18:18-20
- 5) James 3:1
- 6) Deuteronomy 18:20
- 7) Matthew 10:34-39
- 8) Hebrews 4:12
- 9) Deuteronomy 18:20
- 10) Hebrews 4:12
- 11) Deuteronomy 18:20
- 12) 1 Timothy 4:14
- 13) Acts 2:38

- 14) 2 Timothy 1:6
- 15) Acts 6:1-6
- 16) Acts 13:1-3
- 17) Ephesians 3:7
- 18) Luke 4:40
- 19) Mark 16:18
- 20) Acts 20:17, 28
- 21) 1 Peter 5:1-3
- 22) Acts 14:22-23
- 23) 1 Timothy 5:1,17-22
- 24) 1 Peter 2:25
- 25) Philippians 1:1
- 26) 1 Timothy 1:1-5
- 27) 1 Corinthians 12:29-31
- 28) 1 Corinthians 13:1-2
- 29) 1 Timothy 1:5-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 9
- Hebrews 6
- Acts 8; 19
- James 5
- John 21

Also referenced: Book:

Lord, What Should I Do? by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 6-13-16

Church Structure V (The State of the Church Today #2) Fred R. Coulter

I think this is going to be very instructive, because this was motivated because of several calls, letters, and different things I have had recently. Deut. 18 has really been on my mind very heavily. I know a little more now than when I first started thinking on it. There are people that actually believe that every person is a minister, and that there is no such thing as an elder, and that the laying on of hands is raising your hand to vote.

In part one I proved that the laying on of hands is laying on of hands, and is a doctrine as Paul said in Heb. 6. But what we are dealing with is that through the years the people in the Church of God have not really been taught.

- they've not been taught the Scriptures the way that they should
- they've not been taught to think the way that they should with the Scriptures

Everyone has been in the posture and mode of 'get along and go along' and let's be nice, because after all those in charge know what's going on, and after all God will correct them.

It didn't work out that way, did it, brethren? Made it very difficult. Yet, some of the 'true believers' still believe it to this day. They say, 'We know everything they're teaching is wrong, and we hate what they're teaching, and we hate to go to church, but we're waiting for God to correct it.'

Well, the answer is that God has already corrected it in His Word. There is judgment going on in the Church of God today. I feel that this year (1995-6) may very well be the 'year of visitation/judgment' by God upon the Churches of God. Stop and think about all the things that have happened in the year:

- Joseph Tkach Sr. died
- Worldwide went to Sunday-keeping, Christmas and Easter
- Garner Ted Armstrong got caught philandering, which exposed him as a living a double life for 40 years
- the Global Church of God is in a terrible situation

And the reason that it is, is because the brethren are beginning to see that the command and control dictatorship is not what God wants. They also beginning to see that those who are leading Global really don't understand their Bibles the way that they should.

It's creating several different problems because there are a lot of members who have studied faithfully, and who now can look and see that they understand more than what the minister does who's teaching me. So, this has created other problems, and that problem is this:

There are a lot of would-be teachers out there now who think they know a lot, but they don't. They put out a lot of very shallow publications, one of them is called *The Servants News*. Norm Edwards is the one who puts it out. He can put out some things that are fairly good, however, he's the one who says that everyone is a minister. He's not willing to look into the doctrinal issues as to what is right.

So, in one of the issues he has every way that all the different Churches of God keep Passover. 'Isn't that nice and sweet? We're kind and good and we publish this for everybody.' Listen! They can't all be right! He has the book *The Christian Passover*, so that should help clarify it. But too many people want to become teachers. James says, 'Not many of you desire to be teachers, for you will receive the greater judgment.'

We need to review again for the sake of what we're going here. We're going to go through 1st and 2nd Timothy today and cover key Scriptures about who should be a minister, what should be taught, how should it be taught, and so forth. In part one we covered the laying on of hands, etc.

Deuteronomy 18:18—this is a message from the One Who became the Father talking about the One Who would become the Son: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him." Sure enough, what did Jesus say? *I came not to do my will, but the will of Him Who sent Me!*

- Did Jesus fulfill everything that God the Father gave Him to do? *Yes, He did!*
- What did Jesus say in His last prayer? *Father, I've finished the work that You've given me to do!*
 - ✓ Jesus did the Father's will
 - ✓ He spoke the Father's words
 - ✓ He didn't speak His own

He said, 'I speak nothing from Myself.'

John 15:7—this is very important and needs to be for all of us: "If you dwell in Me..."—living and dwelling in Christ. That's how there's unity.

You don't have unity because you get everyone in one room, or everyone in one organization. **We have unity because of God's Spirit!** God said that 'two cannot walk together unless they be agreed.' God is not going to agree with us; we're going to agree with God.

"...and My words dwell in you..." (v 7). What are the words? *Everything that the Father commanded Him to say!*

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). There's where to begin with everything, whether it is answered prayer, a miracle, a healing, to understand the Word of God, whatever it may be.

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. **If** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; **just as**... [exactly as] ...I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love" (vs 8-10). Jesus did that!

John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said to him, '**If** anyone loves Me...'" A lot of these are conditional upon our choice. God wants to know, and that's what's happening the Church. It's like a giant slow motion explosion and everything is falling down.

God is trying and testing everyone! Do you think that you would have been forced to put your nose in the Bible to find the Truth if these events had not happened? It's all the correction of God! Now, Satan is involved in it, too, that's true. But it's all the correction of God! It's kind of like the life of Josiah. He was very young, very tender and he began to seek out God (2-Chron. 34). They were cleaning out the temple and Hilkiah the priest found a book of Moses. Can you imagine how bad it was that they didn't even have the Word of God? They had lost it! So, they found the Book of the Law and came and read it before Josiah, and he repented and sent off to Huldah the prophetess and asked, 'What's going to happen?' A message came back that God is surely going to bring all these things that He's pronounced in His Word, but not in your lifetime, because 'you are tender.' But after your death it is going to come!

I think likewise what happened in Worldwide Church of God, the same thing exactly. There was sufficient repentance there by Herbert W. Armstrong, that the major correction was held off until after he died. Then everything began to come unglued!

What was the first little leaven. Now, 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump'—doesn't it? What was the first leaven to come down after he

died? Not the healing. You would have needed to pay very particular attention to pick up on it. It was **the new day does not begin until dark**. That went over a lot of people's heads, but Lev. 23:32 says, 'You shall observe your Sabbath from sunset to sunset.'

One of the heresies going around in one of the Church of God that the Sabbath Day begins at dawn. We'll compare that with some of the words of Christ. Again, 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump' and now the lump has exploded! There's nothing left!

John 14:23: "...If anyone loves Me, **he will keep My Word**... [all the words] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, **but the Father's, Who sent Me**" (vs 23-24).

Deuteronomy 18:18: "...[I] will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, **whatever man will not hearken**... [to listen attentively to obey] ...to My words, which He shall speak in My name... [Jesus said He came in 'My Father's name.'] ...**I will require it of him**" (vs 18-19). That means there's judgment; and brethren, that's what we are seeing. You can break it down into the simplest terms.

What you are seeing in the Churches of God is the judgment of God based upon these three Scriptures that I just went over: Deut. 18 and John 15 and 14. With all of this, and it is true that there are members and brethren who actually know more than a lot of ministers. But should they be ministers, indeed? That's the question? *We'll find out!*

- anyone who proposes to teach
- anyone who thinks he's a teacher
- anyone who wants to be a teacher

read this:

Verse 20: "But the prophet... [anyone who is going to speak] ...who shall presume to speak a word in My name..."—and the Lord didn't say so. Have you been in situations where it's been brought upon you 'thus says the Lord...' and the Lord didn't say so?

"...which I have not commanded him to speak..." We're going to learn in 2-Tim. what was Timothy charged before God with? **Preach the Word!**

"...or who shall speak in the name of other gods..." (v 20)—which can be if you have a false Jesus and you bring in doctrines of other gods and say that these are nice to do. That's the same thing!

“...even that prophet shall die” (v 20). Do we have a modern example of that? *Yes, indeed!*

Let’s see something that is supposed to be done. Some ministers don’t like this. And all the trouble that Rod Meredith is in—in Global—he’s saying, ‘Now, brethren, you’re just causing us a lot of trouble.’ One time he bragged and told someone—and I know this first person—‘I don’t have to study anymore, I learned everything I needed to learn.’ *Bad news!* Now you know what the problem is.

We just have to be frank in some of these things. If they don’t like it and it upsets them, that’s too bad, I’m sorry. We’re to follow the Word of God.

Revelation 2:2—Christ tells the Ephesians: “I know your works...” Who was in charge of the Church at Ephesus after Paul died? *Timothy!*

“...and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil... [they didn’t put up with them] ...and *that* you did test... [proved, tried] ...those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars” (v 2).

Should you not find when someone is lying and get that corrected? *Yes!* So, it is a lie that there’s no such thing as ministers and elders, and there’s no such thing as the laying on of hands. ***That is a lie!*** It should be tested and proved! Unfortunately, a lot of people go no further than just a shallow, superficial examination of the Scriptures.

- How are you going to find them liars if you don’t test them? *You’re not going to!*
- Have you been lied to and it’s gotten away with because you didn’t test them? *Yes!*

Here’s what we are to do; and this also means that we are to make judgments. Anyone who comes along and says that ‘we are not to judge other people’ be careful! You’re not to judge their heart, that is true, that is God’s judgment alone.

- If you’re going to know them by their fruits, is that not a judgment?
- If you’re going to test what they say, is that not a judgment?
- How do you test it?

Jesus said, ‘*Judge righteous judgment!*’

- What is righteous judgment? *Using the Word of God!*
- Is not the Word of God righteous? *Yes!*

So, if you use the Word of God to make righteous judgment, Whose judgment is it? *God’s judgment!* Very important!

Acts 17:11: “Now, these were more noble

than those in Thessalonica, *for they received the Word with all readiness of mind...* [willing] ...*and* examined the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so.” ***They were proving and testing!*** That’s what has to be in every single one of these things. You prove it and test it.

We have a machinist engineer in our midst and he does precision work, custom precision work. I know that he wouldn’t send anything out unless he tested it, proved it, met the specifications.

Should we not do that with God’s Word? We’re not dealing with machinery; we’re dealing with eternal life. That’s something we should do! So, anyone who is speaking in the name of God, the things that God has not said, God is going to require it, judge it and God is saying that person is doing something presumptuously.

Examples of presumptuousness: The House of Yahweh is Israel Hawkins in Abilene, Texas. He has everyone come down there because they want to build a community of all the Yahwehists. But he’s also required that everyone of the families that come down take the name of Hawkins. He has done presumptuously and he is leading people astray. ***That I not God’s will!*** God is going to give us a new name, but not Israel Hawkins.

Another one who teaches the afternoon 14th Passover—David J. Smith, Church of God Evangelistic Association, Texas—says to move to Texas and into our compound because Texas is going to be the place of safety. ‘Texas is going to secede from the union, and we’re going to avoid this world government.’

Deuteronomy 18:20: “**But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak...**” We’re dealing with serious things. Some of the brethren out there, not knowing all the things that have gone on, are just so confused with all of this they don’t know which end is up. But they do know that their faith is being stolen from them. It’s about all they do know; and it’s very difficult.

This is what we have to do, and another thing that is important is that anyone who is going to be a teacher should constantly be upgrading, improving, studying and learning the Word of God even more thoroughly. Then what he needs to do is in turn teach the brethren that so they can learn.

Jesus gave the example: *It’s sufficient that the disciple become as the teacher.* That means to have the same knowledge. But if you grow in grace and knowledge, and grow in understanding of the Scriptures, then you’ll be able to teach more. We all grow together.

When it says there that ‘the time you ought to be teachers,’ everybody can teach at a certain level. Women are not to be preachers in the Church, but they can sure teach privately. I know some who have even taught ministers things, just like Aquila and Pricilla did to Apollos. Let’s apply Rom. 2:17 to the Church; let’s not just apply it to the Jews:

Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the law” (vs 17-20).

Then Paul says that you’ve got to go beyond just the form and the knowledge.

Verse 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?... [Do you not learn from God’s Word?] ...You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege?” (vs 21-22). Every one of these things have been done in the Church of God!

Verse 23: “You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?” Did that not happen? Is this not happening? They’re dishonoring God!

There was a man who was in the Church of God and who was supposed to be a minister—he long since is in bad trouble—who advocated making bombs and going around and blowing up abortion clinics, taking to himself the judgment of God. He was sentenced to seven years in Federal prison.

Remember what God says about those who take up the sword? *Those who take up the sword die by the sword!* Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world, therefore, my servants will not fight.’ Therefore, that kind of thing should not be done!

Do you dishonor God? Stop and think for a minute, Ruby Ridge, Waco, the Freeman, Israel Hawkins, David J. Smith, this man blowing up: *all Sabbath, Holy Day keeping Churches of God!* Is the world not going to look upon us as strange? When we’re to be ‘the light of the world?’ *Yes, indeed!*

In these cases, with the exception of Weaver (Ruby Ridge), all of them were presumptuous in speaking a word in the name of God, and led off into various sins. So, there it is right there!

Verse 25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits... [baptism, which is the

circumcision without hands] ...if you are observing *the* Law; on the other hand, **if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.** Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?” (vs 25-26). That is in relationship to the Gentiles.

Let’s look at this way: Those who are teachers who don’t teach, is God capable of raising up others? *Yes, He is!* That’s what it’s talking about here. That’s very instructive—isn’t it?

Paul had some difficulties in Ephesus. Timothy was the one in charge in Ephesus: 1-Timothy 1:3: “When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus, in order that you might *solemnly* charge...” We’re going to see that there are charges that God inspired Paul to give to Timothy. What is a charge? *A special commandment! Special instruction!*

What was notable about Abraham? *He obeyed My voice, kept My charge, My commandments, My laws and My statutes!* Charges are very important.

“...that you might *solemnly* charge some not to teach other doctrines” (v 3). As we saw, Christ did not come to bring peace, but a sword! The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. Doctrine is important, brethren! It is the very basis of what we believe, because doctrine means *teaching*.

John said that if ‘any come to you and bring not this doctrine don’t even bid him Godspeed. For the one who bids him Godspeed is partaker of his sins.’

Verse 4: “Nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies... [fables; like the trinity, Christmas, Easter] ...which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith. Now, **the purpose of the commandment...** [this charge] **...is love out of a pure heart...**” (vs 4-5). Again, Paul basis everything that he does starting out on love.

Brethren, if there’s any one thing that we need to learn out of this whole experience that we’ve gone through, is that if there’s not the love of God, what do you have? *Nothing!* You may have a social club, an organization that’s called a church, but are you the Church of God, indeed? How can you be if you don’t love God?

“...and a good conscience, and genuine faith; from which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling” (vs 5-6)—talking. Have you ever hear vain talking, vain sermons, sort of babbling on? I think I heard one called *The Thinker and*

The Thought. One of many!

Verse 7: “Desiring to be teachers of *the* law, **neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming.**”

I can tell you that all of those who get off on this calendar difficulty, that’s what they’re into. {information on the calendar can be found at **cbcg.org**} Remember *a little leaven leavens the whole lump!* If it’s the calendar today, what is it tomorrow? Or whatever you may want to list and name off there.

Verse 8: “Now we know that the law *is* good, if anyone uses it lawfully, understanding this: that law is not enacted for a righteous man...” (vs 8-9). Doesn’t mean it wasn’t made for the righteous man—of course, it was, that’s what righteousness is—‘all Your commandments are righteousness.

If you’re going down the road at the proper speed limit the officer cannot pull you over and give you a ticket for speeding. There was an ad for a red sports car and the camera angle showed all the sleek lines and it’s sort of in the mind, and this was traveling along but he wasn’t in it. The policeman came up and started writing out a ticket. ‘What are you doing that for?’ *This looks like it goes too fast!*

You cannot enact the law upon a righteous person. Very simple! You cannot convict someone of murder who did no murder, or thievery who did no thievery, or a adultery who did no adultery. It’s possible for you to be framed.

The thing is there are a lot out there, and these desiring to be ‘law teachers’ are what I’ve called ‘wannabes.’ They want to be teachers, but are not! If it’s not based on love to begin with, it doesn’t make any difference.

1-Tim. 2—I’m not going to go through all the Scriptures, just those pertaining to the operation of a minister or elder.

1-Timothy 2:5: “For there *is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself *as* a ransom for all, the testimony *of which is to be preached* in its appointed times. For this purpose I was **ordained...**” (vs 5-7).

- ordained means to be *appointed*
- appointed means to be *called and selected*

Acts 13 shows how Paul was called. He was ordained.

“...I was ordained **a preacher and an apostle** (I speak *the* truth in Christ—I do not lie), **a teacher** of *the* Gentiles in faith and truth.” (v 7).

- Was Paul a preacher?
- Was Paul an apostle?
- Was Paul a teacher?
- *All three!*

1-Timothy 3:1: “Faithful *is* the saying, ‘If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.’” The word ‘bishop’ (KJV) is not correct. The Greek is ‘episkopes,’ which is *overseer*. As I have explained, how can a person be an overseer and not an overlord. Just like a shepherd with a flock, he’s off on the sideline watching.

Stop and think for a minute: If everyone is an overseers, a teacher, a minister and an elder, then should not all of you meet these requirements? Who then could be baptized? Think about this! Notice that these are pretty stiff requirements.

Verse 2: “Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless...” We won’t baptize you till you’re perfect—**NO!** You baptize them because they’re *imperfect!* The requirements alone means that it does not apply to everyone.

“...*the* husband of one wife...” (v 2). Is a woman going to be the wife of one wife? *Of course not!* It doesn’t make sense when you try to apply it. One of the best ways to try and catch them in their own argument is take their argument to it’s final conclusion, and you will see that they’re wrong.

“...vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching” (v 2). If he’s going to be an overseer, he should be teaching, be able to teach.

Verse 3: “Not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect; (For if a man does not know *how* to **rule** his own household...” (vs 3-5). Meaning *to shepherd*; the word rule is that *you follow your leaders who teach you persuasively with the Word of God.*

“...how will he take care of *the* Church of God?) Not a novice...” (vs 5-6)—not one newly come to the faith.

That was the greatest mistake that Worldwide ever made. They took all of these young 17-year-olds out of high school and into college and gave three or four years, had them ordained, married, ‘automobiled’ and assigned and set out to pastor a church at age 21-22, and they were ‘green behind the ears’ and presume to tell everyone how to run their lives.

Well, after a while the older people in the congregation really understood what was going on.

Some of them got offended and said, 'I'm not going to let this young whippersnapper tell me what to do.' So, they leave the Church.

What happens if he's a novice, "...lest he become conceited..." (v 6)—puffed up, lifted up; 'I must be important, look at all of these people I'm in charge over. He ought to be very fearful and say, 'O God, how am I going to lead all of these people and teach them Your Word?' Especially if you read Deut. 18. It's a totally different story, isn't it?

"...and fall into the same condemnation as the devil. It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are outside the Church, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil*" (vs 6-7). Satan is going to entrap him.

All you have to do is go back and look at the history; get out the Envoy {former Ambassador College year books} and go through it and look at some of the pictures.

- Where have they all gone? *Very instructive!*
- Have some of them fallen to the trap of the devil?
- What's one of the cleverest traps of the devil?

Not to get you to murder, steal or commit adultery; that's one of his traps.

- What's one of his cleverest traps? ***False doctrine!***

You start believe false doctrine and preaching that!

Verse 8: "In the same way also, the deacons who serve..."

- diakonos—deacon
 - diakonia—deaconess
- those who serve*
- 'diakoneo'—serving, ministering
- everyone can minister, in serving something*

In the Greek it means that if someone brings me a glass of water, he ministered to me. So, it's a very broad term. If someone brings me a glass of water, does that ordain them as a minister? *No, it does not! It just means they're serving!*

When you go to the Word of God and let the Word of God settle the issue:

- it brings peace
- it brings stability
- it brings truth and faith

The deacons "...*must be serious-minded, not hypocritical, not given to much wine, not greedy for selfish gain; holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience*" (vs 8-9). In other words,

understand all the basic doctrines and believe them "...with a pure conscience" ***having proved them!*** Not just accept what has been put out in print, but prove it from the Word of God. That way you can hold it in a clear conscience. You don't have to worry. And you should be able to teach it, too.

Verse 10: "And let those *who meet the qualifications* also ***be proved first...***" Here's how you select someone who is going to be an elder or servant; you let them be *proved*. It should be perfectly fine with the input of the congregation, because those in the congregation may very well know something about the person that those who are the elders and teachers don't know about, because it wasn't allowed to be known. People try to hide things so they can climb the scale of power.

(go to the next track)

"...***then*** let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be blameless*. In the same way also, *their wives must be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober and faithful in all things*. Let the deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own households well" (vs 10-12)—shepherding them; it the same Greek word.

Verse 13: "For those who have served well acquire... [not purchased] ...for themselves a good standing and much confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you shortly; but if I should delay, *you have these things in writing, so that you may know how one is obligated...* [required, behooves, ought; the Greek is 'dei'] ...***to conduct oneself in the house of God***, which is *the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the Truth*" (vs 13-15).

Therefore, what should be taught in the Church of God? ***The Truth of God; the Word of God!***

- Isn't it a shame when you come to a Church of God and you find lies?
- How do you feel? *Pretty miserable!*
- What did it do to your faith?
- *At the very least you may have become a little cynical, wondering:*
 - ✓ Where shall I go?
 - ✓ What should I do?

Verse 16: "And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among the Gentiles, was believed on in the world, was received up in glory."

What happens? *Demon influence of those who are supposed to be teaching!*

1-Timothy 4:1: “Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and **doctrines of demons.**” Are doctrines important? *Yes!*

Verse 6: “If you are teaching these things to the brethren... [bring it all out to the brethren; teach them] ...you will be a good **servant...**”—‘diakonos’

- Was Timothy an elder? *Yes!*
- Was he to do the work of an evangelist? *Yes!*
- Was he an overseer? *Yes!*

Paul is saying here to “...be a good servant...”; a good deacon. You see, you can’t take those words and just interchange them, because a servant here is a ‘diakonos’ “...of Jesus Christ, being nourished by the words of the faith and of the good doctrines that you have closely followed” (v 6).

Ron Dart said, ‘We’re going to do something real nice for all of those of you, we’re going to setup this Christian Educational Ministry, and we’re going to have a nice social club. We’re not going to give you a list of doctrines, because doctrines divide and we’re not going to have that. We’re going to try and provide services for you that no one else can.’

A social club for the Church of God **will not work!** That is like unto saying that ‘we’ve all reached a very great level of immaturity and we’re going to accept everybody’s immaturity here, and I’m okay and you’re okay, so you come to us and we’ll provide you services. We don’t want to discuss doctrine.’

Some people may think I’m being hard on Ron Dart. I’m not being hard on Ron Dart; after all he’s a big boy and he’s been an ‘evangelist’ how many years? If you’re going to teach, *teach the Word of God!*

- Isn’t it strange that the United Church of God and Christian Educational Ministry will not put out a statement of beliefs?
 - How can you be a church when you cannot define what you believe.
- {UCG has since put out a statement of beliefs}
- How can you expect to serve people if you don’t know the Word of God?
 - How can you tell what’s right from wrong?

I know that I’m going to get some flack from this sermon, but if it helps the brethren, fine, that’s what it’s intended to do; to open your eyes:

- that you may know
- that you may see

- that you may prove
- that you may test

I stand corrected: United did put out some tentative statement of belief, but remember what they said, ‘Brethren, let’s all get together and we’ll be united and will solve all of our problems, then we will get to doctrine. And we promise we will do this by Dec. (1995). It is now nearly May (1996).

When they first started, I said that they had a distinct problem, which was that all of those who were ministers in Worldwide—and a lot of the members didn’t know this—were connected on the Internet with each other under pseudonyms, meaning a name that cannot identify themselves. They would send messages back and forth to each other, and they were organizing United for 18 months before the Indianapolis event.

What did they all agree to do? *They all agreed to say that when these false doctrines are coming down—and they **knew** they were coming down...* David Hulme (original leader of United) *knew* that these were false doctrines. ‘We tell the brethren that we know this is not right, but just pray that God will work it out.’

In the mean time, they’re sitting in the seat of God, manipulating everything so they could have their meeting in Indianapolis. When the right time came—according to whatever they were going to do, they said, ‘We’re going to have a meeting in Indianapolis’ and they came back and told all the brethren, ‘this is it, God has answered your prayers.’

I said at that time that re-organization is not repentance, and without repentance there is no change. Those who were the problems within WCG, preaching all those false doctrines, cannot solve the problems unless they repent.

Deuteronomy 18:20: “But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, **even that prophet shall die.**”

I think it was that when they first formed someone asked me, and I said it wasn’t going to work. They got mad at me, but time is telling that it’s not working. One minister who even bragged, for those who now see, that they did this just save their own paycheck. I said, ‘You got it!’

If you truly love God and you’re going to stand for the Truth, it does not matter anything else because God will take care of you.

- When do you stand for Truth?
- Whenever it may be convenient?
- Whenever you can save your paycheck?

You stand for Truth when you know that you're convicted to stand for the Truth! With no consequences whatsoever that are going to come! Whether you live or whether you die, makes no difference. **Truth is Truth and it comes from God!** If you're not willing to stand for the Truth when the Truth comes, then you're going to be in trouble.

One man said, 'I timed my leaving WCG to go to United so I wouldn't even miss a paycheck.' Whose god is their belly! Another minister in the Spokane area said, 'I have to take care of my house and meet my house payments.' *Everybody does! Even the brethren you told to quit their jobs to keep the Sabbath did!*

1-Timothy 4:6: "If you are teaching these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished by the words of the faith and of **the good doctrines that you have closely followed**. But refuse profane and old wives' fables... [all kinds of old fables: Catholic, Protestant, Buddha and all of them] ...rather, **exercise yourself unto Godliness**" (vs 6-7).

- study the Word of God
- know the Word of God
- prepare your sermons
- think about these things
- pray about these things

That's what a minister is to do! That's what he has to do! Be dedicated, and you do it not because it's an obligation, but because you love God. You teach the brethren that. That's what Paul is saying here.

Verse 8: "For physical exercise is profitable for a short time; but Godliness is profitable for everything, having *the* promise of life—of the *life* that now *is*, and of the *life* that *is* coming. This saying *is* faithful and worthy of full acceptance. Now, it is for this *reason that* we are laboring, and we are personally suffering reproach **because we have hope in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men**, especially of those who are believers. These things command and teach" (vs 8-11).

All the way through is charge/command: 1-Tim. 1:3; 4:11 and we will see others. These are charges. What do you think Timothy did with these things? *Teach these things!*

Verse 12: "Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers—in word, in conduct, in love, in Spirit, in faith *and* in purity." Those are some pretty stringent qualifications!

Verse 13: "Until I come, devote *yourself* to reading, to encouragement, *and* to doctrine." This is a charge! What should anyone who is a teacher be doing? *Right here!*

Verse 14: Do not neglect the *spiritual* gift... ['charisma'] ...*that is* in you, which was given to you by prophecy with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood." Paul laid his hands on him (2-Tim. 1); Paul and the whole elderhood—all the elders.

Verse 15: "Meditate on these things; give yourself **wholly** to them..."—completely. Anyone who is going to a minister or teacher should do this.

"...so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all. Be diligent with yourself and with the doctrines; continue in them. For in doing this, **you will save both yourself and those who hear you**" (vs 15-16). Isn't that interesting?

For an elder, as I pointed out, it can mean elder as in age; 1-Timothy 5:1: "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father..."

There are elders in the Church who are different, and you have to handle that by the context. It should not be a novice, but when we come to v 17 we will see the difference:

Verse 17: "Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well... [elders are to *lead*] ...be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who are laboring in *the* Word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox treading out *the* corn,' and, 'The workman *is* worthy of his hire.' Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. **Those elders who sin should be corrected in the presence of all...**" (vs 17-20).

Now, it says sharply to not sharply rebuke an elder (v 1). This is an older man in v 1; in v 20 it is elders who are overseers or teachers.

Don't you think that a lot of problems could have been solved a whole lot better if this would have been handled this way all along? What happened was, that instead of correction *before* all they had another solution: *transfer them!* That's what happened; transfer them and let them go destroy another church. Then after two or three years there and he's destroyed that church and upset everybody else's life, don't rebuke him before all—oh no, you can't speak against him—*transfer him again!*

It says, v 20: "Those *elders* who sin **should be corrected in the presence of all in order that the others also may fear**. I charge you before God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ..." (vs 20-21). This is pretty strong language. Anyone want to be a teacher? Anyone want to be an elder? *Don't go around setting yourself up!*

"...and the elect angels... [That's really something!] ...that you observe these things without

prejudice, *and let* nothing be done by partiality” (v 21). That means that if you go back and you add up everything that this is talking about up to this point, this is what it means.

Look at the charges that are there. If this would have been followed, wouldn't the church congregations be better today? Would God have to judge and destroy the Church of God? *No!* But He's having to because of it.

Verse 22: “Do not be quick to lay hands on any man; neither take part in *the* sins of others.... [I've experienced that, too] ...Keep yourself pure.”

Verse 24: “Some men's sins are open to public view, going before to judgment... [meaning you can discern them] ...and some men's *sins* follow after.” In other words, they come along and the sins catch up with them, because they're not manifest out front.

Verse 25: “In a similar manner also, the good works of *some* are openly seen; and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.”

1-Timothy 6:1: “Let as many slaves as are under the yoke of *servitude* esteem their own masters worthy of all respect, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine be not blasphemed.” Again, *doctrine!* Isn't that something that you blaspheme doctrine? *Speak evil of it!*

- Have you ever heard that happen?
- Have you ever heard doctrine blasphemed?
 - ✓ *God didn't mean this!*
 - ✓ *God didn't mean that!*
 - ✓ *You no longer have to keep the Sabbath!*

That's blaspheming doctrine!

Verse 2: “Do not let those who have believing masters despise *them* because they are brethren; rather, let them serve *them even better*, because they are believing and beloved who are being helped by the good service. **These things teach and exhort.**” All the things of teach and exhort all the way through.

Verse 3: “**If anyone teaches any different doctrine**, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness, he is proud and knows nothing....” (vs 2-3). Tie that right back in the 1-Tim. 1, wanting to be law teachers knowing neither what they affirm or what they're talking about; they are puffed up knowing nothing.

“...Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words...” (v 4). It's a sickness that people get into, always questioning.

Here's what happens: “...from which come

envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the Truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness. **From such withdraw yourself**” (vs 4-5). Should we stay around in a church that is doing that? *No! Of course not!*

Verse 6: “But Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, *and it is* evident that neither do we have the power to carry anything out of *the world*” (vs 6-7). We don't have the ability to do so.

Verse 8: “But having food and clothing, we should be satisfied with these, for those who desire to become rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts... [that is sure true] ...which cause men to sink into destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all evils; by which some, *while* striving after *riches*, were seduced from the faith...” (vs 8-10). Interesting, they were seduced. They were enticed out of it because of the lust.

“...and have impaled themselves with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things...” (vs 10-11). Notice what he is to do; this also is a charge that we will see:

“...and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith! Take hold of eternal life to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses. **I charge you in the sight of God**, Who gives life to every *living* thing, and Jesus Christ, Who *in* testifying before Pontius Pilate gave the exemplary profession of *faith*, that you keep this commandment without fault *and* without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 11-14).

Nothing could be any firmer and clearer than that, what it should be for a church and a ministry.

Verse 15: “Which in His own times the blessed and only Sovereign will make known, the King of kings and Lord of lords; Who alone has immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach; Whom no man has seen, nor has *the* ability to see; to Whom *belong* eternal honor and power. Amen.” (vs 15-16).

That's a pretty powerful epistle! That's something! In 2-Tim. Paul knows he's going to die. This is his pleading. Before he dies he had to set the record straight, he had to let it be known what Timothy needed to do. The Church was in terrible, **terrible, terrible** shape.

There are some very important things that we need to understand. When anyone is a minister or a teacher, their life literally is on the line, continually

on the line.

2-Timothy 1:6: “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift... [‘charisma’—spiritual gift of grace for teaching/preaching] ...of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands. **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness**” (vs 6-7). That’s how the whole ministry needs to be run.

Verse 8: “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of* the Gospel, according to *the* power of God, Who has saved us and called *us* with a Holy calling—not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace...” (vs 8-9).

- that’s how we’re called
- that’s how one is a teacher
- that’s what God is doing

What God is doing is very profound! Very tremendous! If we can help these brethren restore themselves, that’s what we need to do. What a shame that so many brethren are out there not knowing which way to go!

Now, it speaks of the Gospel and immortality, v 11: “Unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles.” There he says it again that he’s all three, plus he’s a servant, which means he’s a deacon.

Verse 12: “For which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed *to Him* for that day. **Hold as the standard for doctrine the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus**” (vs 12-13). That’s the only way that a Church of God is going to be run, in faith and in love.

Verse 14: “Guard the good thing that was committed *to you* by *the* Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us. You know this, that all those who *are* in Asia have rejected me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (vs 14-15). Paul named names, so I can name names. The Church blew apart and turned away. They all forsook Paul!

2-Timothy 2:1: “Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus.” Not only the grace of forgiveness, the grace that you’re standing under with God, but the grace that he has as an elder and teacher.

Verse 2: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these **things commit to faithful men**...” That’s what we need to

do; that’s all part of what we are doing right now.

The things that we are sending out, the things that we are teaching are helping so many people. Right now I’m in contact with about six or seven of ministers of other organization who have called me. What I say to all of them is this:

You may be an elder where you are, but I don’t know if you are, indeed. So, what you need to do is, first of all, find Christ and God the Father and then next you need to devote yourself to the Word of God. Next you need to really understand all the things that you were taught so you can teach the brethren. Then you have to start operating things on the love of God.

If you do that, and we see that you are indeed an elder, then that’s fine. But if not, you need to go consider Deut. 18, make sure you understand that.

They have to be taught. It was commendable that we had Ambassador College, but unfortunately, it got off the track. I hope that God will work out something to where there will be a way to really teach some of those who are teachers. Teachers also need to be taught. That’s why we don’t put out a monthly publication, but rather we wait and put out something that is going to be in-depth. That’s why when I write a letter, I don’t write out and send in money, we desperately need your support. NO! We’ll spend what God sends us.

We don’t want to merchandize the brethren, and besides, if you don’t want to obey God from the heart anyway, what good is a letter going to do to extract it from you? It’s not going to work! So, we need to teach them, and the most important thing is that everyone find the love of God, really experience

- the grace of God
- the love of God
- the Truth of God

Then they will begin having the kind of faith that’s required for today. The faith that’s required for today is awaiting the disaster that is ahead of us down the road. ***Surely it is going to come!*** When it comes, then it’s going to be too late for some people.

Read the parable of the Ten Virgins. Now is the time if you have been delinquent in serving God, to go buy; we’ll sell it to you *free*, because we want you in the Kingdom of God. But if you want other brethren to know, then help participate with us.

Verse 3: “You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Then Paul talks about warring and you don’t do it unless you do it lawfully.

Verse 7: “Give careful consideration... [meditate, think on it and give yourself over to it] ...to the things *that* I am telling you, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”

Verse 12: “If we endure, we shall also reign together with *Him*; if we deny *Him*, He will also deny us.” It think there are some people who need to read that verse and think about it. How do you deny Him?

- in works being abominable
- throwing away His commandments
- speaking evil of God

Verse 13: “If we are unfaithful, He remains faithful—He cannot deny Himself. See that *they* remain mindful of these things, earnestly **charging them in the sight of the Lord...**” (vs 13-14). How much authority did Timothy have? *The full weight of Scriptures, whatever he needed!*

“...not to argue over words that are not profitable in any way, *but which lead to the subverting of those who hear*” (v 14). Doesn’t that subvert them? If you think that’s bad within the Church, look in the world. I’ve got two magazines that I’m getting articles out of:

- *The New Age Jesus that is Coming*
- *Time Magazine*: ‘We are re-evaluating the resurrection, and we don’t think that in this age we need to understand about the resurrection, and we don’t think it happened. But let’s be good people anyway.’

That’s happening in the world, and look what’s happening in the Church. It’s not just here; the SDAs, Church of God Seventh Day, all the Churches of God. This is a thing that is happening everywhere.

Here’s what to do, v 15: “**Diligently study** to show yourself approved unto God... [not brag that you know everything and you don’t need to **study**] ...**a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.**” Tie in 2-Cor. 4:2 where there were those handling the Word of God deceitfully, misapplying it, misquoting it, taking it out of context.

Now, remember that *this is a charge*, v 16: “But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness, and their words will eat away at the body like gangrene...” (vs 16-17). Have you experienced that? Being in a congregation and things just gradually rotted away, just like there were maggots in there crawling around and eating it all gone.

“...of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus...”

[Paul didn’t have any qualms about naming names; and it’s recorded in the Scriptures in perpetuity] ...who have gone astray from the Truth...” (vs 17-18). Can we point out when people err from the Truth? *Yes! We should!*

“...claiming that the resurrection has already taken place, and are destroying the faith of some” (v 18)—preach funerals by saying, ‘Aunt Martha is now in heaven looking down upon us.’

Verse 19: “Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: ‘*The Lord knows those who are His,*’ and, ‘Let everyone who calls upon the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness.’” Remember that this is **a charge!**

I think that these two books that Paul wrote are perhaps the strongest in the whole New Testament.

Verse 23: “But foolish and ignorant speculations reject...” In the Greek this is undisciplined questions. People ask questions that they don’t even know how to think.

“...knowing that they engender arguments. Now, it is obligatory *that* a servant of *the Lord* not be argumentative, but gentle toward all, competent to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting those who set themselves in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance unto acknowledging of *the Truth*” (vs 23-25).

That’s the purpose of these two sermons, to reach out to those people who are opposing themselves, if perhaps God may bring them to repentance and the acknowledging of the Truth.

Verse 26: “And **that they may wake up and escape from the devil’s snare...** [the trap] ...**who have been taken captive by him to do his will.**”

2-Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and...” given by the inspiration of God. That’s something, brethren! The mind of Christ inspired the Word of God. Isn’t that wonderful? Every day I marvel that we have the whole Word of God. Isn’t that a marvelous thing? Think about it! We can have the whole Word of God, shouldn’t we then really ask God to help us understand it, and understand it rightly, and teach it! Is that not the important thing we need to do? *Yes, it is! These are the words of eternal life!*

2-Timothy 4:1: “**I charge you...** [look at all those charges] ...therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the living and the dead* at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word!**...” (vs 1-2). Go back and read Deut. 18 again. What are we to preach? *The Word!*

“...Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves a *great number of teachers*, having ears itching to *hear what satisfies their cravings*; and they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths” (vs 2-4).

- Isn't that what happened to the Church back then?
- Isn't that what's happening the Church today?
- *Yes, it is!*

Verse 5: “But *as for you*, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the work of an evangelist*; fully carry out your ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. From this time forward, a crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day—and not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing” (vs 5-8).

Brethren, in this time of confusion and difficulty that the Churches are going through, and it really is just literally being blown apart. There's a reason for it. *So that everyone, hopefully, can find God!* If you know someone you can help, you reach out and help them anyway that you can.

- it's not get people to come with us
- it's not to get numbers
- *it's so that they can receive eternal life*

That's what it's for. What we're going to do is trust God and have us do what He wants us to do. Not run down the road and create something and then go to God and tell God that this is what you're doing when maybe it isn't what He wants us to do.

God says through Christ that He's the One Who opens the doors. He's the One Who shuts the doors. So, the door will be opened one of these days, but should we shut the door on all the wounded, all the scattered, all the disillusioned, all the brokenhearted in the Churches of God? *No!* Should we reach out and help them with love and understanding, yet, with strength and firmness? *Yes!*

That's what they need. God has not done all of this in vain with all the brethren. When God wants us to be together He'll bring us together. But I think that for our own protection, that the world is going to get so bad, God has said, 'I don't want you out there all in one place. It's to protect us so that we can learn. And with smaller congregations like we have here, we can learn. It's wonderful to sit down

and be able to open the Bible and put them out on a table and study, mark your Bibles, learn and grow.

I try and do my part. I prepare for every sermon. When I get done with a sermon I have the notes, but I hardly ever use them again. What I give today may not be what God wants me to give tomorrow. Everything has to be new and fresh. The Word of God is continually living, new and fresh all the time.

If we can help the brethren, we'll do that. This is why I've done these things. I'm not angry at any of these men. I'm sorry and it's broken my heart to see these things happen, too. To see these men and women, whether they've connected with the ministry or brethren in the Church, they put their trust... *Should have been in God!* Those who haven't, He's now asking them to put it back in His trust again. Not in a man!

I don't want anyone to follow me! I'm not worthy of being followed! But if I can point you to Christ and say, 'Follow Christ' and I follow Christ, then all of us together can follow Christ. *That's what God wants us to do!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 18:18
- 2) John 15:7-10
- 3) John 14:23-24
- 4) Deuteronomy 18:18-20
- 5) Revelation 2:2
- 6) Acts 17:11
- 7) Deuteronomy 18:20
- 8) Romans 2:17-23, 25-26
- 9) 1 Timothy 1:3-9
- 10) 1 Timothy 2:5-7
- 11) 1 Timothy 3:1-16
- 12) 1 Timothy 4:1, 6
- 13) Deuteronomy 18:20
- 14) 1 Timothy 4:6-16
- 15) 1 Timothy 5:1, 17-22, 24-25
- 16) 1 Timothy 6:1-16
- 17) 2 Timothy 1:6-9, 11-15
- 18) 2 Timothy 2:1-3, 7, 12-19, 23-26
- 19) 2 Timothy 3:16
- 20) 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 6
- 2 Chronicles 34
- Leviticus 23:32
- Acts 13
- 2 Corinthians 4:2

Also referenced: Book: *The Christian Passover*
by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 6/13/16

What is the Government of God? I

Fred R. Coulter

A lot of people claim that it is church government. If it is church government:

- What kind of government is church government?
- How should it be run?
- How should it be done?
- How does that affect each individual person within a congregation?

We live in a time when different people have been taken advantage of in extreme, excruciating, painful and sometimes very financially devastating ways, even to the pain of their own life.

We all know the whole account of Jim Jones and Jones Town, Guyana. When Jim Jones first started, he was noted because he was feeding the poor, helping those who needed help, and he was actually teaching out of the Bible. But a change took place with Jim Jones and his followers, and that change was most pronouncedly manifest when in a Bible study he said:

I am your teacher. I will tell you what God says. Furthermore, not only that, I will demonstrate that I have precedence over the Bible; I will stand on it. And if God does not strike me dead, then what I've told you is true.

They had that recorded on television. It may not be the exact words, but that is an overall review of what he said.

- What Jim Jones struck dead?
- Did people believe Him?
- Did people follow Him?
- Did people give up their homes?
- Did people give up their families?
- Did people follow Jones to the jungle in Guyana in Jones Town?
- Did they willingly take of the 'kool aid' laced with strychnine?
- *Yes! All in the name of God!*

I've also heard an extreme that was given by a man who said—and I'm going to make some references to the Worldwide Church of God, because many of the people who will be listening to or reading this sermon will have come out of or had been associated with the WCG. They had a government, a church hierarchy that got so extreme that it was even said that 'if you as a lay member were 95% correct that and the leader of the Church—Herbert W. Armstrong at that particular time—were 95% wrong, that God would backup Mr.

Armstrong, and that you would be headed to the Lake of Fire.'

We've seen other extremes of church government where ministers command and order people to do things that are not contained in the Bible. We have found where church government has been abused—almost literally—to browbeat, to intimidate and to destroy the lives of people, *to hold them in fear!*

- Do you fear your minister?
- Have you been in fear of a minister?
- Have you been in fear of church government?
- Has it been that you have been intimidated by this kind of thing?
- Are you currently sitting in a church right now to where your conscience and the Holy Spirit of God is telling you what they are doing is wrong?

But because you believe a misapplied Scripture or Scriptures that God won't let the ministers do anything wrong, so therefore, we should trust the ministers, because after all they are in authority from God.

- Is that correct?
- Is that what you've been told?
- Do you believe that?

You're going to find that there have been an awful lot of things that you have been deceived about. Let's look at some of the things in the Bible concerning church authority. Let's look at some of things that have happened to the New Testament Church in the past.

This is very important for us to understand. Let's see what Jesus said the limits of the authority of the ministry and church hierarchy should be. I remember a time when Herbert W. Armstrong—who was supposed to be an apostle, but I would have to say that he was a self-appointed apostle; there was a time when he didn't claim to be an apostle—said, 'If there's one thing that the Catholic Church has right, it is that they have government from the top down.'

I remember thinking about that, after hearing that, and I went over that and prayed about it. The thought came into my mind:

- Why would God use a system and government that is like Satan's?
- Why would the Church of God use Satan's system of authority where the pope is sitting supreme?

When the pope sits in his chair and pronounces dogma, it is ‘ex-cathedra’—what he says is law! What he says is ‘the voice of God.’ What he says is to be followed and obeyed by everyone. Then right on down the line with the authority. I thought to myself:

- Why does God need that system?
- If God had that system, why then does He allow us to make choices and to make mistakes?
- If it’s all authoritarian, and if it’s all from the top down, then why does God allow choices?

Let’s begin with what Jesus said, and I think we’re going to find something very interesting. This little incident gives us an awful lot to learn from:

Matthew 20:20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [James and John, both of them were chosen to be original apostles with the other ten] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your kingdom” (vs 20-21).

Let’s think about this for just a minute. Here’s a mother trying to do a good deed. Here’s a mother trying to get the inside track with here two sons; a *political inside job* as it were, trying to get a governmental authority, a governmental seat—the two most important ones—for her sons.

- Would you say that there’s a little bit of human vanity in that?
- Would you say that there’s a little bit of desire that shouldn’t be?
- Would you say that this is not a misunderstanding of what Jesus was going to do, what He was representing?

We have to answer in the affirmative with every one of those questions.

Verse 22: “But Jesus answered *and* said, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’” So, they were desiring it.

But James and John did not want to have to come up to Jesus and ask that themselves, so they discussed it with their mother. ‘Mom, look, we know Jesus likes you and cares for you. If you just ask Him...’ And Jesus probably knew all about it.

Verse 23: “And He said to them, ‘You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My

right hand and at My left *hand is not Mine to give*, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”

Let’s think about this for just a minute, also. Jesus was Lord, Master, the Son of God. Did He not have all authority and all power to do what He needed to do to get the job done that He needed to get done? *Yes, He did!* What did He say? *He said*, “...[It] is not Mine to give...” He’s also telling them that it’s not because of political things, not because of a family thing, not because of an inside track by anyone. He told them on the Passover night that ‘I’ve chosen you, you have not chosen Me.’

Verse 24: “And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers....” Notice what inside politics does. It causes friction! And I can just say very categorically here right now, any time a church or congregation is run by politics, *who you know*:

- you’re going to have division
- you’re going to have dissension
- you’re going to have fights

Jesus began to answer them by giving them an object lesson, v 25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship... [dominion] ...over them...’”—a dictatorial type thing, like the emperors and the dictators that we have known:

- Hitler
- Stalin
- Mussolini
- Mao tse Tung
- Castro
- Ortega

Whoever you want to name; they are dictators. What does a dictator do? *He gives edicts and his rule, and his word is law regardless of what anyone thinks!*

Jesus said that ‘the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion.’ They rule with a heavy hand.

“...and **the great ones** exercise authority over them” (v 25). Who are the great ones? Isn’t that what happens within a church? *Everyone looks to the minister! Everyone defers to the minister!* They take titles of ‘reverend, holy, mister’ and all this sort of thing. Look through the whole New Testament and I defy you find *Mr. Paul, Mr. Tarsus, Mr. James, Mr. John or Mr. Matthew*. It would only be wrong to call someone ‘elder’ but then they would do the same thing, and that becomes a sycophant-type of thing toward ministers.

The *great ones* we find in Acts 8. The great ones were the ‘religious leaders’ who exercised authority over them; who tell them ‘if you don’t do this, then you are going to hell. If you don’t do this

and follow this Catholic Church, then your soul is going to burn forever in hell'; that your life is going to be snuffed out because you didn't follow the pope. It got to such an extreme that they killed people for not following the pope.

We don't quite kill them today, we just disfellowship them, and there's been a total misuse of disfellowshipment, too.

Let's see a *great one* who gave us a warning, that was recorded so that we can understand from Matt. 20 exactly what this means, that the ministers within the Church of God are not going to take to themselves doing these kinds of things.

Acts 8:9: "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, **proclaiming himself to be some great one**.... [notice what the people said]: ...To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'" (vs 9-10).

Today we've had it: *This man is God's apostle!* All that was just a cloak to cover all of his miserable sins, same thing here.

What did Peter tell Simon [Magus]? You can read where he tried to *buy* an apostleship! Peter said, 'You be annihilated with your money! You don't have part or lot in this matter or this ministry!' We're going to see what kind of religious authority this developed into.

Matthew 20:26: "However, it shall not be this way among you... [the disciples] ...but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant"—*one who serves!* The truth of the matter is that there is no greatness in any man worthy of any kind of recognition in such a way that he is a 'great whatever.' How can a man be great? Jesus said exactly how:

- you don't do it by self-proclamation
- you don't do it by self-exaltation
- you don't do it by exercising authority and fear over the flock of God

That is not the Government of God. If you have been subjected to that, then you've had the wrong kind of government brought upon you.

Verse 26: "However, it shall not be this way among you, but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave... [here is the example that we need to look to continuously]: ...just as the Son of man did not come to be served, **but to serve**, and to give His life *as* a ransom for many" (vs 26-28).

Who is the head of the Church? There used to be in WCG: God the Father, under Him Jesus Christ—they put a corporate structure with chain of authority—Herbert Armstrong, and then the evangelists, the pastors and it trickled on down where the member had to go through all of this to get to God. It even has been claimed that the only one to whom new doctrine would be revealed to be only the *man* in charge. That's not true! A lot of you have suffered from all that kind of thing.

Let's see some things about the improper conduct of ministers. I would have to say that looking at Ezek. 34 that every minister needs to ask himself... I heard a man preach these very same words who was supposed to be the 'leading' so-called minister in what is called the so-called 'Philadelphia' Church of God. He read these very Scriptures, yet, he disfellowships people right and left if they disagree with him. He says, 'You brethren who have left the Worldwide Church of God, and you brethren who do not accept Herbert W. Armstrong as the Elijah of God, you are going to have to give an account to Herbert W. Armstrong yourself at the resurrection.' I want to tell you:

- that is a lie
- that is heresy
- that is not true
- that is not Scriptural
- that is not right

By doing that, even in reading these same words in Ezek. 34, he's doing exactly what this says while he's reading those words! Just think on that for a minute.

How can a person or persons get so exalted in their own self-righteousness and vanity, from the appearance of what they are doing, that they can read the Word of God that condemns the very thing that they are doing and not even understand that they are condemning the very thing that they are doing? *That's incredible!*

Ezekiel 34:8: "'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food to every beast of the field because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search *for* My flock, **but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock.**'"

We're going to tie that in with the Gospel of John in just a little bit. What is the key duty of anyone who is a minister? *You have to feed the flock!* How do you feed the flock?

There's something very interesting about a flock: *a flock cannot be driven.* Cattle you can herd them, *drive them;* there's such a thing as a cattle drive. But a flock cannot be driven. You can't get a group of men on horses and say go out here and herd

these sheep into a corral. *Never happen!* What you have is a sheep dog, a shepherd and you have the lead sheep with a bell and they will go wherever and follow and will do and accomplish.

But when the sheep are not fed or when the sheep are considered the ownership and property of the ministry—because of their governance over the people—then that is wrong!

Verse 9: “Therefore, O shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Nor shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth that they may not be food for them” (vs 9-10).

The flock of God belongs to Christ. I’m going to talk to ministers directly, very directly. I want you to ask yourself, and I hope you’re not offended from I said previously. I hope that if you have found yourself in a situation where you have been abusive to people, your church, your congregation...

I remember one time when I was in WCG that the Director of the Ministry was at that time Roderick C. Meredith. He said in his speech class, ‘All of you ministers once a year have to give an *attack* sermon. That was my second year in the ministry. So, I said, ‘I suppose so,’ and I gave an attack sermon. I tell you, it took me a whole year to win back the congregation. I attacked everything under the sun. All the sins and faults of the people, and all that sort of thing.

We need to say what sin is. We need to tell people what sin is. But attacking it is not going to accomplish anything.

James says that ‘the wrath of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God’ (James 1). That was the first *and last* attack sermon that I ever gave to a congregation. There are ministers out there who do that.

Jesus wanted to make an absolute lasting impression upon Peter. Of course, to all the apostles. This is what Christ tells every minister. This is what Jesus says to everyone who presumes to preach the Word of God. To anyone who would presume to lead people in the name of God.

John 21:15: “Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?’ *And* he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’....” The first word that Jesus used for *love* is from the Greek ‘agape.’

‘Do you love Me, Peter, with Godly love,

more than these?’ If that’s the case then there’s no room for politics at all, absolutely none! Peter was really not understanding what Jesus said, because he had to learn this lesson—and he did; he really learned it—said, “...Yes, Lord, You know that I love you....” this word for love is ‘phileo’ which means a *friendship love, a close brotherly love.*

“...He [Jesus] said to him [Peter], ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love [‘agape’] Me?’ *And* he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love [‘phileo’] ...You.’ He said to him, ‘Shepherd My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’....” (vs 15-17). In this case, Jesus stepped down to level of Peter and used ‘phileo’: *are you loving Me?*

“...Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ *And* he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep’” (v 17).

What is the sole job and duty of any minister anywhere under all circumstances in relationship to the people whom God has called. *Feed My sheep!* That’s what Jesus said.

We also need to understand that Jesus said, ‘No one can come to Me except the Father draw him.’ Who calls the people?

- I don’t care what sermon you may preach
- I don’t care what Scriptures you may read
- I don’t care how involved or uninvolved you may be
- Who does the calling? *God the Father!*
- In which way are we to lead them? *Jesus said that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life!*

Let’s see what else Jesus said about the shepherd. Church government and authority all breaks down when the ministers presume to take to themselves something God never gave them. That is to *rule over* the people, to abuse the people of God, to treat them like possessions. God never intended that kind of government to be. Absolutely never intended that kind of church structure to be. We’ll see what will be the proper one in a little bit.

Jesus said concerning Himself, concerning the way, John 10:1: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a robber.” That also applies also to church government and structure.

I call your attention to Rev. 2; let’s look at that. Let’s see exactly what the thief and the robber tries to do; what kind of government that they set

up—what kind of authority that they set up—and we will see what Jesus says about it. This is quite revealing, and we will see where it comes from. We will see that what I'm going to read to you is what has developed in the whole hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church. When you really understand it, you will understand what an absolutely rotten thing that it is to say that the Church of God should have the same kind of hierarchical structure that the Catholic Church has. We're going to see that Jesus says that that's something *He hates*. We will see what that leads to.

Revelation 2:12: "And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos, write: 'These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword.'" That's really something to start out that way. In other words, whatever they are doing sets them up with a fight with God.

If you want to take that authority to yourself, you're going to find yourself fighting God. Do you want to fight God? Is that what you want to do? As a minister, we all have to ask ourselves:

- What is it that I'm really doing?

Down deep inside when you come before God on your knees in prayer:

- What is *really* that you are doing?
- Are you *really* feeding the flock?
- Are you *really* teaching the brethren?
- Are you *really* helping them to draw close to God?

or

- Do you have the organization as the paramount important thing that there is?

God could care less about organization. That's why the flock of God has been scattered, because of the wrong organization. He'll regroup it in the way the He wants.

Verse 13: "I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is...*" When you get too much satanic doctrine in, that's exactly what you get.

"...but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the **teaching of Balaam...**" (vs 13-14)—the pope at Pethor. This bring in that whole system.

"...who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans..." (vs 14-15).

- *Nicolas* is the oppressor

- *laitans* are the people

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is the oppression of the people from a religious seat of authority! That's what it is! You have there all the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, a hierarchical structure of Church government, which then is burdened upon the people.

Notice what Jesus said. "...**which thing I hate**" (v 15). Why? Why does God hate that? *Because when you put men in positions of absolute authority over other men, then you have a dictatorship and oppression!* Then you have it that the word of the minister is 'like the command of God!' If it isn't according to the Word of God, you don't have to do it. But because we've been told that 'to please God, we have to submit to the Government of God.'

I'll tell you right here right now, brethren, that kind of government *is not* the Government of God. That is the structure of Satan the devil, which has been superimposed upon the Church of God. Now you know why the Worldwide Church of God did not continue to exist, because God was not going to have it!

God says that He hates that, and hates that with any minister who would dare set himself up in a congregation and make himself the central focal point to exercise authority over people, to extort money from them—first, second, third and fourth tithes; however many you want to have.

One thing you have to understand: ***rule, authority and law will never convert anyone!*** What converts a person? *The Spirit of God!* That comes by repentance, by baptism, by humility and by choice. You can exercise authority and put people in fear and you can get them to do certain things. But unless they choose to do so, and unless you're showing them to follow Christ, *all that authority is just so much great self-vanity and ego!*

- I don't care if you have the best voice in the world
- I don't care how many radio stations you may be on
- I don't care how many TV stations they may be on

All you have to is look at the fall of Jimmy Swaggart, and then the other one Jim Baker. I mean, how many do we have to go down the line to really get the lesson ***that God hates that kind of thing!***

Christ says, v 16: "Repent! For if *you* do not repent, **I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.**"

While you're preaching Christ, maybe Christ is against you, because you're not preaching

the *true Christ*. You're preaching *your version* of it, and you're preaching *your version* of authority.

- Are you ministering?
- Are you helping?
- Are you teaching the Word of God?

Then you can talk about authority!

Now let me tell you a little bit about our little church here, the Christian Biblical Church of God. We call ourselves *the no hassle church*. The reason we call ourselves *the no hassle church* is we don't have any hassles. The reason we don't have any hassles is because we're all trying to follow God. No one is trying to exercise authority over anyone.

On the other hand, there isn't heresy. There is not any of this wildness going on. Why? *Because the most important thing for any minister is to teach people to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and being*, and for a minister to do the same thing themselves. There can't be any other way. That is the true Government of God. Did not Jesus say, 'If you love Me, feed My flock.' He said it three times to make sure that it was understood.

John 10:2: "But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep." That's something we really need to understand. Who is the Shepherd? *Jesus! Yes, He is!*

Verse 3: "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice..." If you are preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the grace of God and the love of God you're not preaching the voice of Christ.

"...and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (v 3).

- He doesn't drive them
- He doesn't intimidate them
- He doesn't beat them
- He doesn't cause them fear
- ***He leads them!***

Verse 4: "When he brings the sheep out, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger... [too many people have followed someone they shouldn't] ...for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers" (vs 4-5).

Verse 7: Therefore, Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.'" Jesus is the top authority. What did Jesus do?

- He came to die!
- He came to serve!

- He came to give His very life as a ransom!
- He came to call the people He wants!

Then to have ministers turn around and use them as merchandize! That is not the Government of God by any stretch of the imagination!

(go to the next track)

Verse 8: "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. ***If anyone enters through Me***, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy...." (vs 8-10). I've been victimized by that! I've been victimized myself by those who are thieves and robbers:

- stealing authority
- taking money
- wanting to rule over
- wanting to take

And exactly what happens here: *the sheep don't hear that voice and don't follow him!* This is a clear lesson.

"...I have come so that they may have life, and may have *it* more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. But the one who is a hireling, and who is not *the* shepherd..." (vs 10-12). Even if you have your own congregation—if I can put it in that terminology, because no minister has his *his own* congregation—it belongs to God; the first lesson of any minister: ***the Church belongs to God!***

So, if you're looking for money, looking for prestige, looking for power, looking for recognition, *you've gone to the wrong place! You're a hireling!*

"...whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees. And the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters them. Now, the hireling flees because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep" (vs 12-15).

That's what Jesus has done; He's laid His life down for the sheep! That's what we need to realize, know, understand and really keep in mind!

Let's see some other Scriptures so we can see what happens when authority gets carried away. This surely happened in the Worldwide Church of God. Go back and look at it when they had zeal and it was the Radio Church of God, they were preaching that Christ was going to return soon, and they put out the booklet *1975 in Prophecy*, and we're all going to the place of safety in 1972, and all this sort of thing. Well, it never happened they way

they said. But what happened when it became evident that those things weren't going to work out that way? *Just exactly what we have here:*

Matthew 24:42: Watch, therefore, because you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready. For the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think. **Who then is the faithful and wise servant...** (vs 42-45).

- to feed the sheep
- to love Christ
- to love the brethren
- to do things in a way that is going to inspire the brethren

I need to ask every minister:

- since Jesus Christ died for our sins
- since His grace covers our lives
- since we are to help the brethren grow in grace and knowledge, and overcome

why is that so many ministers stand up and:

- instead of point the people to Christ
- instead of pointing them to love God the way that they ought to

all they do is harangue on their sins?

Everyone knows their sins! You know your sins, I know my sins; everybody in the Church knows their own sins *because the Spirit of God will convict them of it!* So, we don't need to harangue on the sins. ***We need to point people to Christ!*** We need to point them to Christ so they are going to repent. Your haranguing on sin is not going to make them repent; nor my haranguing on sin.

But if you constantly show people to love God, to repent, and that God is there Who is ready to forgive, willing to forgive, and that's the whole purpose of why Christ came, *that's the whole purpose!* Then we don't have this exercise in futility.

Verse 47: "Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his property. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My lord delays *his* coming,' And shall begin to beat *his* fellow servants..." (vs 47-49).

Take advantage of them, rule over them, misapply the Government of God. We're going to see two important things concerning the Government of God in just a little bit.

"...and to eat and drink with the drunken" (v 49). What is the greatest drunken binge that there is *spiritually?* *The false doctrines of Babylon!* The false doctrines of the 'Christianity' of this world, which so many people are embracing:

- the trinity
- a day and a half for three days and three nights
- Sunday-keeping

Can you believe that even in the Church of God Seventh-Day that there is a Sunday-keeping movement? They don't want to seem strange to their neighbors and relatives, so we want to have Church services on Sunday as well as on Sabbath 'so we can invite our neighbors in.' That's ***eating and drinking with the drunken!***

Here's what's going to happen; ties this in with Rev. 2 that we read earlier; v 50: "The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder..." (vs 50-51)—with *His two-edged sword*, with which He is going to fight against any minister or church that exercises that control and authority over the brethren of God.

"...and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v 51). Why?

Let's see the reason why; let's see how important the Church of God is to Christ and let's see what He did for it. He didn't create a church so that we can walking in as little Hitlers who rule over the 'zikehilers.' *No way! Not at all!* This is the Apostle Paul talking to the elders now:

Acts 20: "Take heed therefore, to yourselves... [watch out, be on guard against yourselves] ...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers... [not overlords] ...to feed the Church of God..." Is that not consistent with what Jesus said? ***Feed the flock! If you love Me, feed the flock!*** Why?

"...**which He purchased with His own blood**" (v 28). So, when it gets right down to the misapplication of church government within a Church of God, what they are doing is turning their back upon and despising the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus Christ, because He ***purchased the Church with His blood!***

For everyone in the Church of God, wherever they are, they need to think on that. It's going to make some people mad, because there's a minister who said, 'I've been around Herbert Armstrong for 30 years and I know what is the way that it should be done.' The Word of God is worth more than all of Herbert Armstrong and what He taught. When He taught what was in the Bible, that's fine, but he had no corner on the market. The Truth of God is the *Truth of God* and it's always been in the Bible. It's there and it should be preached! If it isn't, like the Apostle Paul said, 'If I don't preach the Gospel *woe is me!*' That's just the way it is.

The Church of God was purchased by the very blood of Jesus Christ! So, if you love Jesus more, you're going to feed the sheep, you're going to feed the flock, and the flock are going to know. All the members are going to know, *because they're being fed!*

- they're growing in grace
- they're growing in knowledge
- they're growing closer to Jesus Christ and God the Father

Verse 29: "For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock"—to take advantage, to take, to lute, steal, to exalt themselves in mini, little potentate offices.

Verse 30: "**And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves.**"

- Is that what's happened to many people? *Yes, it is!*
- Have people been led astray? *Yes, indeed!*
- Are those who have been led astray responsible for being led astray by having someone lead them astray? *Yes, they are!*
- Who has the greatest responsibility?

Just like Jesus said when He was talking to Pilate, and Pilate wanted to know why Jesus was delivered to be crucified, ***'They who delivered Me to you have the greater sin.'*** Likewise, the minister who is doing this thing has a greater sin before God in doing it than the people who followed him. ***Because the minister ought to know better!***

Verse 30: "And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Watch, therefore, remembering that *for three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears*" (vs 30-31). Quite a situation!

Now we'll look at some other things and see what it is with the Government of God and how it should be and how it should be run. Let's see where the Government of God resides. The Government of God does not reside in the ministry; I will tell you that right now. That is a complete, total misapplication and misnomer. ***It does not reside in the ministry!***

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and **the government shall be upon His shoulders...**" *Nowhere do we find the statement in the New Testament whatsoever, under any circumstances at all that Jesus Christ subordinated that to the ministers! NOWHERE!*

The true Government of God in the New

Testament—the book of Jude—and that becomes very important. Here we have another brother of Jesus Christ. We know that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22-23). *Christ is the Head!* Everyone is to point to Christ. It is not that Christ is the Head and then below we have all these other categories.

Let's see the true Government of God; let's see what that is and what we're talking about after comparing Sodom and Gomorrah and their destruction and what they were doing:

Jude 8: "In the same way also, these dreamers of filthy dreams are defiling the flesh, and **are declaring as invalid the Lordship of God, and are blaspheming the Divine powers.**"

This has been used many times that they despise government and speak evil of dignitaries; the true Government of God, this dominion. It really means that *the Lordship of Jesus Christ* in the individual's own life.

- Does not every person who is baptized have the Holy Spirit of God? *Yes! It comes from God the Father as a begetting!*
- Who is the Head of the Church? *Jesus Christ is!*
- Who is to rule over that person by God's Spirit? *Jesus is! To lead them!*
- What is the hope of every Christian?

Not the fear of corporate structure; not that they are there and there's going to be mass salvation because now you belong to this church or that church and you're submissive to the Government of God. 'God can't let anything go wrong.'

Listen! God allowed the Catholic Church. So, for anyone who says, 'God is in charge and nothing wrong is going to happen'; you're going right down the path, *because you are not allowing the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your life!* You're letting the Lordship of the substitute government coming from men into your life. Here's the whole hope of glory:

Colossians 1:27: "To whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" That's the whole hope of life.

So, the whole dominion, the whole Government of God comes down to the Lordship of Christ in your life. And dare any man to take advantage of that and leverage that to himself! That is not the Government of God and if you've been victimized by it, you've been following the wrong way, just plain and simple. Now, it doesn't mean, on the other hand, that the brethren are to be mean and hateful and beat up on the minister either. That's not

to be that way.

Let's see what is absolutely important. The whole reason, the whole purpose for the ministry is stated in Eph. 4. too many times they zero in on verse 11 so they can get the structure of their titles and offices and all of that sort of thing to make themselves feel justified in the good that they're doing right with their dictatorship.

Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave some as apostles..." You don't appoint yourself as an apostle. It might an interesting study sometime to find out what the New Testament defines as an apostle. We are warned of false apostles who handle the Word of God deceitfully, claiming that they have the right way, but they don't. If they're not preaching according to this Word, there's no light in them; it's that simple.

"...and some prophets..." (v 11). Oh my, you have to be careful of that, because how many false prophets have gone around? I tell you, I could spend hours and hours just talking about that. I won't belabor the point.

"...and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers... [For what?] ...**for the perfecting of the saints...**" (vs 11-12). Feed the flock! 'Do you love Me?' Jesus asked. 'Feed My sheep! Feed My lambs!' ...**for the perfecting of the saints...**" How do you perfect the saints?

- Do you perfect them by correcting them for all their sins?
 - Do you correct them by browbeating them?
 - Do you correct them by making them pay one, two, three and four tithes?
 - Do you perfect them in the flesh?
- or*
- Do you perfect them in the *spirit*?
 - *They have to be perfected in the spirit!*

Christ *in* you! That's the whole sole absolute purpose of the ministry toward the brethren. Not to have a government and bureaucratic hierarchy that is used to expedite the goals of a corporate organization. Let God give the blessing and time to do what **He** wants! That's a lesson that everyone has to learn, and every minister needs to learn. Don't go running down the road and say, 'O God, I'm doing this great work for You, and because I'm doing this great work for you, by the way bless me in it.' Any minister who thinks he's doing the work of God better back up and ask: **Are they perfecting the saints?**

"...for *the* work of *the* ministry... [there's a lot of work] ...for *the* edifying of the Body of Christ" (v 12). Edifying is not ruling over. Edifying is not having a hierarchy over.

- edifying is *feeding*

- edifying is *up-building*
- edifying is *helping them draw closer to God*
- edifying is *to teach the brethren to really draw close to God*

I remember a minister came down with great authority; could he ever speak! He came down and said, 'Brethren, I want to give you 14 points on why your prayers aren't answered! I sat there and thought: WOW! He didn't even tell them once *how* their prayer could be answered. If you tell them how their prayers can be answered, then the 14 points of why they're not answered becomes not relevant at all. Do they? *No, they don't!* That's not perfecting the saints. That is not up-building and edifying them.

Part of the Passover Ceremony that we read is John 14 and 15. Part of the very words that Jesus Christ told His disciples before He went out and was arrested.

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments." You don't teach people to keep the commandments because they're going into the Lake of Fire if they don't. You teach them to keep the commandments because they *love God!*

- that is feeding the flock
- that is edifying the Body of Christ
- that is how the Government of God should work

John 15:7: If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..."—abiding/living in you; that's what it has to be. As ministers what should we dispense? Authority? ***or*** Should we dispense how to have the words of God living and abiding in the people? The answer is obvious:

Verse 7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you." That's how you get your prayers answered.

If a person comes to God in a truly repentant and humble attitude, seeking to do the will of God, wanting to love God, wanting to love Jesus, it becomes a really dastardly thing that ministers would take that kind authority to themselves and grind the faces of the brethren into the muck, mud and dirt and stomp all over them and take advantage of them. That is not so!

- For the perfecting of the saints!
- For the work of the ministry!
- For the edifying of the Body of Christ!

Ephesians 4:13: "**Until we all...**" I want you to understand, it's not saying 'till the brethren come...'; 'till the ministers come...'

I remember Herbert Armstrong said one time, ‘You know, brethren, I don’t think any of you are ever going to make it into the Kingdom of God; and I don’t know about some of these ministers over here.’

That is just a plain haughty self-serving dictatorial miscarriage statement, which is not true. Even the true Elijah—and there’s one man who is saying that Herbert Armstrong is Elijah... That isn’t true. All you have to do is compare the two lives. No comparison whatsoever! Armstrong was never the Elijah. Compare the true Elijah and he said, ‘God, I’m the only one left.’ God said, ‘No, I’ve got 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal,’ and Elijah didn’t know anything about them.

So, how dare a minister come along and take that upon himself to say that. That is absolute nonsense! “**Until we all...**” The ministers are in the same boat. The ministers aren’t guaranteed to be in the Kingdom of God. But we *all* have to... What did Apostle Paul tell the Jews?

- you who have the form and word and knowledge of God and Truth (Rom. 2)
- you who teach the people they shouldn’t commit adultery
- you who teach them that they shouldn’t bow down to idols
- you who do the same thing

Don’t you teach yourselves?

And if you happen to be the only minister in your congregation, do you not let the Word of God teach you?

Verse 13: “**Until we all** come into the unity of the faith ... [notice the goal] ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God... [that’s what needs to be preached] ...unto a perfect man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**”

- that is how the Government of God is to be given.
- that is how the Government of God needs to be taught

Because that’s what the Bible says! We can go through all the things, the qualifications, for a minister, but I want you to understand something. Let’s see what the Apostle Peter said and see whether he learned the lesson.

I tell you one thing, the true Government of God is exercised in love, in patience and in understanding with the Spirit of God from Jesus Christ to each individual, to each minister. He had better preach

- Christ
- the grace of God
- the love of God

If he’s not, then he’s misusing the overseership that he has been given. So, a minister’s authority is really very slight indeed. His authority really is the Word of God. But to rule over people’s lives? *No! Christ is the One to rule over people’s lives!* To dictate to people what they should and should not do?

I talked to a man who said that ‘it’s a matter of salvation that a woman cannot enter into the Kingdom of God if she wears makeup.’ What are you going to do with Rahab? *Rahab the harlot is going to be in the Kingdom of God!* ‘Oh yes, but there was Jezebel, she had on makeup. We shouldn’t put it on because she had it on.’ Well, before she put on her makeup she also took a bath and put on perfume. Should we not take a bath?

You see, it’s because of the heart. If we teach people to have the right heart before God, because of Christ in them, you don’t have to worry about makeup. If they want to put a little on, they’re not going to make themselves look like clowns and fools. If they don’t want to wear any at all, that doesn’t make them anymore righteous than anybody else, *because it’s of the heart!*

Again, the same lesson comes through all the way, so if you want to know what kind of government that God has given to the Church, here it is:

1-Peter 5:1: “*The elders who are among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder...*” This is not a 21-year-old who has had hands laid on him and now he is what is called ‘the local’ elder or maybe even a ‘local, local, local elder.’ It has nothing to do with elders in the sense of an office. This has to do with older people who are elders, speaking with experience.

I can tell you know that I’ve learned a lot of things since I was 30-years-old. I can see right now that one of the greatest mistakes the WCG ever did was take high school graduates and put them into Ambassador College and send them out after four years and ordain them in the fifth or sixth year, and they’ve had absolutely no experience in life. They have had no knowledge or understanding on how to live. They haven’t even barely gotten ‘wet behind the ears,’ and were put in a position of a minor little dictator in their congregation. This has caused great harm! Great hurt! God is going to take account of that.

Rather than people giving account to Herbert Armstrong at the resurrection, Herbert Armstrong is going to give an account to Jesus Christ what he did with the flock of God.

“...and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be

revealed: Feed the flock of God *that is* among you...” (vs 1-2).

- Did Peter learn the lesson? *Yes, he did!*
- Did Peter love Jesus Christ? *Yes, he did!*
- Is Peter not teaching this to the ministers and people? *Yes, he is!*

“...exercising oversight not by compulsion...” (v 2). *Not to be forced!* Also, the ministry is not to exercise compulsory/obligatory things upon people. In the final analysis, if anyone does not want to do what God says, because they love God, can your authority do greater things than God? Can your depravation to them do anything greater than what God is going to do?

I mean, when we really put it in the perspective of what the Bible says, how far astray have the different churches and the Churches of God gotten because of the wrong kind of government? Rather than teaching the people that ***the true government is from Christ into you, to lead you, and together Christ leading all of us!*** Then we can do what God wants.

“...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain...” (v 2)—because there’s going to be money involved. Whenever the minister starts setting his heart on the money, starts taking advantage of those things, ***your headed for a fall!*** It’s just going to happen.

There have been people who have been extorted from in the WCG who have given up to 30% of their income, and even more, and even when they themselves were nearly destitute. Even when they themselves had nothing to eat, the ministers ***ruled over them with an iron fist*** and said, ‘You tithe even if you have to borrow money.’ That’s a ministry for ‘filthy lucre.’ That is not God’s way!

Yes, people are to give, that’s true! But God doesn’t take what people do not have. God is not the ‘sheriff of Nottingham.’

“...but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions...” (vs 2-3)—***God’s*** heritage. It’s interesting the way this is in the Greek. It means *do not lord it over the brethren as you would exercise lordship over possessions*. The people of God ***are the people of God!*** They’re not the possessions of the minister.

- he has no right to them
- they are not *his* flock
- they are not *his* church
- ***They belong to Jesus Christ!***

That has to be the restoration of the Government of God within the Churches of God; *it can’t be any other way!* Notice that it is God’s heritage.

“...but by being examples to the flock of *the brethren!*”

God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory. In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all *of you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble” (vs 3-5).

- What happens?
- What happens when there’s not that love and humility?
- What happens when there’s arrogance in the minister and Government of God?
- *Same thing that happens when there’s arrogance among the brethren!*

God may let it go on for a while, but if you don’t humble yourself—like it says here:

Verse 6: “Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time.”

I just need to say right here, the mighty hand of God is not there to crush and to hurt. The mighty hand of God is not the authoritarian tongue of a minister. ***The mighty hand of God is the powerful hand of God,*** that when you have humility toward God and repenting with all your heart, mind, soul and being before God, ***His mighty hand is going to lift you up!***

Verse 7: “Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [Look out! Right around the corner it says]: ...Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling... [stalking] ...about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour” (vs 7-8).

What he likes to do is get all these ‘little lord Fauntleroy’s’ as ministers to exercise authority over the brethren. Oh yes, Satan can get his finger in there and disturb things that way.

Verse 9: “Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world.”

So, that is how the Government of God ought to work. I’m going to close this with one of the places in the Bible, which is my favorite part in all of the Bible. The reason is because

- it is the goal
- this is where we are all headed
- this gives us the hope
- this give us the love
- this gives us what we need to constantly strive for
 - ✓ to lead
 - ✓ to feed
 - ✓ to serve

It can't be any other way! It's not going to be done by authority, because it says, 'If you be willing.'

- everyone has to make the choice to be willing
- every minister has to make the choice to be willing
- every person is going to come before the judgment seat of God

Ephesians 3:14: "For this cause... [here is what the Apostle Paul's ministry was directed to]: ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (vs 14-15).

If you want to understand something real clearly, not only is it the *flock of God*, but they also have the name of the Father *written in their hearts and minds* because of the begetting of the Holy Spirit!

Verse 16: "That He may grant you, according to the **riches of His glory...**" That's what it has to be, the riches of the glory of God, that we can teach all the brethren to come to this. That all the ministers and all the brethren, regardless of where the congregation is or who the minister is, this is where it needs to be. *It's not going to be a matter of:*

- how much money
- how many people
- how many radio stations
- how many television stations
- how long you've been in the ministry
- how many you have baptized

All of that is *nothing* if you don't accomplish what this is here.

"...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man" (v 16). That's the whole goal, purpose and reason that God is doing what He is doing. He didn't give us a hierarchy and a bureaucracy. *NO!* But "...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man."

Verse 17: "**That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.**" Now you know why Paul said, 'I preach Christ and Him crucified.'

Verse 18: "*And that being rooted and grounded in love...*"

- not authority
- not dictatorship
- not hierarchy
- not prestige

But "...being rooted and grounded in love..." where every minister can love God with all his heart, mind, soul and being. And that every one of the brethren, every member in the Church of God, can love God with their heart, mind, soul and being. I

tell you that the minister who

- drive away the people of God
- drive them away from keeping the Sabbath
- drive them away from serving God
- drive them to despair
- drive them to drink
- drive them to give up on God because of their own self-serving vanity and authority

I tell you, God is going to have words with you! If there are any brethren out there who have been hurt because of that, you can hear this and listen to this and come back to Christ.

- **Don't let any man take your crown!**
- **Don't let anyone exercise that over you!**

"...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height" (v 18). That's the whole purpose of it. Otherwise, we're just

- playing religion
- playing lordship
- playing authority

NO! There is so much in God's plan we can't have time for that. "...to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height."

Verse 19: "And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge..." Any knowledge we know:

- that God loves you
- that the Father loves you
- that Christ loves you
- that we can love each other, love the brethren and feed the flock

Fantastic! That's what it needs to be! That's the *true Government of God* exercised in love! What kind of authority is that? ***The right kind of authority, which comes from God!***

"...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (v 19). That's what it has to be; that's what the true Government of God really is all about. Let Christ dwell in you richly

- grow in that grace
- grow in that knowledge
- grow in that love of God

Let the true Government of God be exercised in your life by Jesus Christ Himself!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 20:20-25
- 2) Acts 8:9-10
- 3) Matthew 20:26-28
- 4) Ezekiel 34:8-10
- 5) John 21:15-17
- 6) John 10:1
- 7) Revelation 2:12-16
- 8) John 10:2-5, 7-15
- 9) Matthew 24:42-45, 47-51
- 10) Acts 20:28-31
- 11) Isaiah 9:6
- 12) Jude 8
- 13) Colossians 1:27
- 14) Ephesians 4:11-12
- 15) John 14:15
- 16) John 15:7
- 17) Ephesians 4:13
- 18) 1 Peter 5:1-9
- 19) Ephesians 3:14-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 1
- Ephesians 1:22-23
- Romans 2

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What is the Government of God? II

Fred R. Coulter

A lot of people are confused today about what is the Government of God. People have gone through an awful lot of things at the hands of the ministers, who come and are beating up on them and brethren beating up on the ministers, sometimes literally, verbally, and all this sort of thing.

Then the exercise of authority of ministers over people. There's a great controversy about makeup or no makeup. Of course, that is a great and tremendous spiritual problem! *I'm joking, of course!*

It is not a great and tremendous spiritual problem. There are a whole lot of other problems associated with what is the Government of God, and how it is that the Government of God should really work. Is it the structure within the Church? Is the minister supposed to be taking all of that to himself, to run peoples lives, in the first place?

A lot of people have told a lot of sad and sorry stories about how the ministers treated them, how they disfellowshipped them, excommunicated them, kicked them out, didn't serve them, didn't help them, didn't preach the Word of God, are all part of: **What is the Government of God?**

I think today we're going to learn some very interesting things concerning the Government of God, the church ministry and how it should be done. Let's start with the first and foremost and basic, fundamental thing that is important in learning and understanding what the Government of God really is.

I'll say right out here that the Government of God rests upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ. ***The ministry is not the Government of God!*** We're going to see certain things that ministers should do and ought to do, *but there are certain things that they ought not do!* There are certain things that the ministers have done to create a lot of work for themselves, create a lot of problems and difficulties for themselves.

I know that when I was in Worldwide we had to go out and visit people and help them with everything under the sun. A lot of that was really not our business to do, but in order to keep control of the Church and congregation we had to go out and do all of these visits. We were told that if you had only 15 visits a week that you were a no good minister. But if you had 30 visits a week, you're really a great minister. What happened? *The ministers went out and they had 30 half-hour visits.* What did that accomplish? *Really not very much!* They used to have a thing on visiting that you write up a little visit card: who you visited, the name and address, what

you talk about and then you'd send that into Pasadena. Then someone would sit there and work this up on a report, and then you'd get a ministerial report coming out every week, which would list the major problems with the people.

That's how so many things got into many negative things and negative sermons, because the head of church administration would write out and say that these are the problems of the brethren, you'd better preach on these things.

This was the Government of God! Then it worked out to where people would come along and they would talk to the minister, and the minister would operate on that and go visit people and say, 'I heard...'" Then it really got to be kind of wild and difficult that way.

What we need to do is back away from all that sort of thing, and we need to understand what it is about the Church. Let's begin with the Head of the Church, Who is Jesus Christ. We need to go along so that we understand that one of the most important functions of a minister is to teach people to look to Jesus Christ. Rather than having faith in the ministers to do things, everyone is to look to Jesus Christ. The ministers and the people!

I think we're going to see some very interesting things in relationship to the Government of God in our lives and how it ought to really work.

Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him."

Too many times churches like to create in people a spirit of dependency, that you depend upon the minister and that your life revolves around *his* counsel, what *he* says. You can't make decisions for yourself, you must check with the minister.

It got down, in some cases, that if you wanted to buy a car you had to check with the minister. It was even said—jokingly, but kind taken seriously—that God chose Plymouths because that's what all the ministers got. They got us all Fury 3 Plymouths because God would come in His fury. Well, it ended up that the ministers would come in *their* fury. All of these silly little things! Think about it!

- Do you take vitamin C?
- Do you eat white flour?
- Do you use brown sugar?
- Do you use honey?
- Do you take aspirin?

All of those things are not even relevant in the government or ministry of Christ! Have not relevance whatsoever; yet, all of those things took place.

Needless to say, I don't think I got into doing that very much, I had too much traveling to do seeing people way out in the boonies. We're supposed to have "...*the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of **Him**."

What happens in too many churches, the structure of the corporation becomes the thing that is important and is worshipped.

Verse 18: "And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling..." If we're constantly pointing toward that, then we're going to eliminate a lot of difficulties and problems that people would have.

"...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the *Church*, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all" (vs 18-23).

Christ is the Head of the Church. Too many times *a man* is put as the head of the Church. That should never be! To do administrative things; to be in charge of an office or something, that's fine. But he is not the head over spiritual matters to the people; **Christ is!**

Let's look at a couple of other Scriptures that goes right along with that so that we understand.

1-Cor. 12 talks about Christ being the Body of the Church; He is the Head. We're all a part of the Body of Christ! What church era are we? It's kind of like you go down the road or wake up in the morning, or you're thinking of something and all of a sudden DING! the light goes on! This morning the light went on! I was thinking, because a lot of people ask which church era they are in. But I think if you look at the state of the Church and all the literature that I get from the Church, the Church is in the Corinthian era.

- one is speaking in tongues
- one has a prophecy
- one is living in adultery
- women are preaching in some others

- one is following Apollos
- one is following Paul

All that sort of thing!

It dawned on me that the Church today is more like the Church at Corinth than anything I can think of. So, put that in your 'church era pipe and smoke it' if you will, because that pretty much destroys it.

So, we have here that it's talking about the Church; 1-Corinthians 12:4: "Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit." I think we need to take a broader look at this than we have in the past. When this was read when we were in Worldwide it was that within WCG there were these different things. But within the Church of God—everywhere in the different congregations—there are different things. That's what it's talking about.

Verse 5: "And there are differences of administrations... [ministries]...but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all" (vs 5-6).

If there's any one thing maybe we can come to understand with the Church being scattered as much as it is, that maybe finally there will be some ministers with a like mind who will be able to work together *without*:

- beating each other up
- getting jealous
- taking power
- stealing tithes
- trying to enrich themselves

Maybe through it all something like that can finally be worked out. I have hopes that it may be. Very possible, if we're all looking to God and realize that God is the One Who is doing it.

Verse 7: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the* benefit of *all*. For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit; and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit" (vs 7-8). The whole Church is to grow in grace and knowledge! So, these things can all be put together by the Spirit of God.

Paul is making the very important thing here is that these spiritual gifts that are there, unless you have the love of God **none of them are worth anything!** That's why we all need to keep looking to Christ, Who is the Head. *Let Him give the wisdom! Let Him give the knowledge!*

Verse 9: "And to a different one, faith by the same Spirit... [it all has to come from God] ...and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another, *the* working of miracles; and to another, prophecy; and to another, discerning of spirits; and

to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the* interpretation of languages. But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God* Himself desires. For even as the body is one and has many members, yet, all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; so also *is* Christ” (vs 9-12).

This covers an awful lot! There’s a directory of Sabbath-keeping organizations. In there are many, *many*, **many** different Churches of God. I was talking to a man from Detroit who said, ‘All these Protestants and denominations...’ I said, ‘Yeah, but who would have ever thought that we would have had all these Churches of God?’ Now we have hundreds of them. Why? Why is that happening? We’ll answer that question, because it is very relevant to our faith.

- What is it that God says He’s going to do with our faith?
- What is going to happen to our faith?
- *Increase it, yes!*
- How is our faith going to be increased?
- *We grow and increase by the power of the Holy Spirit!*
- What circumstances are we going to be in to try it?
- *The trials we go through test our faith!*

None of us have really ever had a trial that we have really anticipated. Almost all of mine are those I’ve never anticipated. It’s very important that it be tried. We don’t like the trials when they come, sometimes they’re difficult. But why? *That’s the whole purpose, whether we’re going to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being*, so therefore, all the circumstances that we go through are going to put us through whatever is necessary that we know that we’re going to.

God has given free choice. Here’s the whole key thing, and it begins with the Spirit of God! A lot of people doubt whether they’re converted or not. I got a letter one time that said, ‘I’ve been in the Church a long time and I really don’t know whether I knew or understood,’ and all this sort of thing. The way you understand is that you start out basically and you receive the Spirit of God. You’re to grow in grace and knowledge and to go forward.

Verse 13: “For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body of *Christ* is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body? And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body?” (vs 14-16).

Paul draws this analogy and he says, v 18: “But now has God Himself placed each one of the *members* in the body according to His own will.”

Are there those parts of the body—we can say different Churches of God in this case—who have different degrees of knowledge, conversion and understanding? *Yes!* God calls them and places them where *He pleases!*

Let God work it out! That’s what it has to be! God has got to work it out. He’s got to bring it all together. He has got to make it fit. He has got to make it work. God is the One Who can do it, *if everyone is looking to Christ!* Then it can be worked out; it can’t be worked out any other way.

- there are going to be difficulties along the way
- there are going to be some things where it is going to be difficult to make it work

But as long as we’re looking to Christ *it is going to work!*

There are people way out in the middle of nowhere, and the only thing that they have are the CDs they receive. Are they still part of the Body of Christ way out there? *Sure they are! Because whoever has the Spirit of Christ is part of the Body of Christ!* If we can help them with it, which we have been able to do—and recently a whole lot more than we have in the past; God is giving us growth and increase that way—and we’re very happy about that with some of the things we’re able to do to help these people.

Remember, you go back when you felt cutoff, to when you were way down at the bottom of the rung and felt as though there was nothing left in the world, then God was able to help you. If we can help them at this time, then we can help and serve and bring them along, too.

Here’s the whole thing concerning the Church. I want you to listen to this in relationship to access to God. I think this is the most important thing in writing *The Christian Passover* book, about having access direct to God the Father.

- *no one* is between you and God
- no minister
- no church organization
- no corporation
- nothing
 - you’re as close to God as your knees.
 - you’re as close to God as your next prayer

No one is between you and God! No one is going up to the judgment seat of God for you, and you’re not going up to the judgment seat of God for anyone else. That’s why this becomes important:

Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him **we both have direct access by one Spirit to the Father.**” No one can take that from you. No one can deny that from you, even in your own sin and misery and rottenness that you may have to go through to really come to full conversion. Through the trials and difficulties that you go through, you all have access to “...by one Spirit to the Father.”

That is the Government of God ***between you and God!*** Collectively altogether if Christ is ruling in our lives, through the power of God’s Holy Spirit from the Father, can we not then all get along? We ought to be able to. What if we have some little difficulties that come along? Can we handle them? *We ought to be able to!* That’s why we have nicknamed ourselves *The No Hassle Church*; we’ve been able to do that.

Remember that the key most important thing concerning the Government of God is ***we all have access to God the Father!***

Verse 19: “So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God. You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone” (vs 19-20).

God’s work is magnificent, because whatever it is with whatever little group, God is going to give them the choice: Are they going to follow God or not? Then it all comes down to each individual in whatever group or Church of God that they are”

- Is that individual going to follow God?
- Are you going to follow God?
- Am I going to follow God?

We all have human nature and weaknesses enough that there are times that you have great difficulty with your own human nature, that is true.

- Does that mean you’re rejecting God? *No! You’re not rejecting God!*
- So you lose your temper; do you feel bad about it after a while? *Sure you do!*
- Do you want to change it? *Yes, you do!*
- Does that mean it’s going to be easy? *Not necessarily!*
- Does that mean you’re rejecting God? *No, you’re not! It just means you’re overcoming!*

Verse 21: “In Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together **for a habitation of God in the Spirit**” (vs 21-22).

1-Cor. 11 talks a little bit about the Church,

a little bit on how to follow a minister, and what a minister ought to be doing and should be doing constantly.

1-Corinthians 11:1: “Be imitators of me [Paul], exactly as I also *am* of Christ.” What is the emphasis on? *One following Christ!* That’s what it is; the emphasis is not on ‘follow me.’ The emphasis is toward Christ.

Verse 2: “Now I praise you, brethren, because you have remembered me in all things, and you are keeping the ordinances in the way that I delivered *them* to you. But I want you to understand that the Head of every man is Christ...” (vs 2-3). No man is the head of anybody in the Church.

- What is a minister to be? *An overseer!*
- Is it not so much better to emphasize that the Head of every man is Christ? *Yes, it is!*

For those who are married, “...and *the* head of *the* woman *is* the man...” (v 3). That’s about all there is to the Government of God.

The next statement is not one that has been preached very much, but it’s very profound, “...and *the* Head of Christ *is* God” (v 3). So, it goes:

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- to the man who is married
- to his wife
- then all the way back to Christ and God the Father

That is the sum totality of the Government of God with a Christian’s life. That is it!

The ministers fit in there to help, teach, inspire, uplift, direct, correct and all this sort of thing. But *not* to run, *not* to govern, *not* to dictate in people’s lives. That’s quite a bit different than most people thought.

Let’s see how this operates; let’s see that it can be very powerful. Yes, it can, by the Spirit of God. This doesn’t take from preaching or from the power of preaching. This actually adds to the power of preaching. This actually adds to the faith and belief, because another basic principle is that God’s government functions at the simplest level, which *everyone is responsible to God for himself!*

Therefore, all these things that have happened to brethren in the past, ministers prying in their lives, kicking them out of the Church and checking up on them. Go back years ago in WCG when people first decided that they would go here, another man who left WCG, they sent a van over there with a camera in it, with a man from the Church—a deacon—to take photographs of the license plates and pictures of people who went to the meeting so that they could go back and correct them and talk to them about it.

That is not the Government of God!

What they're trying to do is be Gestapos; they're trying to spy! That's not the Government of God. And some people are still going through those things, believe it or not. God wants it to function at the simplest level. There are times, in power, God did certain things.

Acts 4:33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

What is going to help solve a lot of those problems and difficulties is everyone looking to Christ, loving God and receiving the grace of God then everyone is like-minded. If you're all going to be like-minded, isn't that going to solve a lot of problems? *Automatically!*

They decided for the temporary emergency to go ahead and pool all their money, but we need to notice the emphasis of what's going on here:

Acts 5:1: "Now, a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price *for* himself, his wife also being aware of *it*; and he brought a certain portion *and* laid *it* at the apostles' feet" (vs 1-2). They said, 'We're going to do this, that and the other thing.' It turned out that they lied.

Verse 3_[transcriber's correction]: "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why did **Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit**... [he didn't say 'to lie to me'] ...and to keep back *part* of the price of the estate? Before it was sold, was it not yours? And after you sold it, was it *not* in your own authority?... [you didn't have to do any of this] ...Why did you contrive this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.' And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and great fear came upon all those who heard these things" (vs 3-5).

- Who was it that did the authority?
- Who was it that did the executing?
- *God did!*

He doesn't do it all the time; He does it when there was a foundational thing that was beginning, which at this time it was. So, we're looking at the extreme at the other end.

Just think of what would have happened in WCG if God would have acted this way with the different ones who lied to us. WOW! There would be dead men all over the place.

Verse 6: "Then the young men wound him up, and carried *him* out *and* buried *him*." Same thing happened to his wife:

Verse 10: "And she immediately fell down at his feet and expired. And the young men came in

and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things. And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and **they were all with one accord** in Solomon's porch)" (vs 10-12). Why? *Because they were looking to Christ and filled with the Spirit of God!*

That's how a church is able to have peace and harmony, by being of one accord. You don't beat them into it, you don't force them into it. You don't make anything happen; you all trust in God. He'll take care of it.

Verse 14: "And believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were **all** healed" (vs 14-16).

Then comes a very funny part: the apostles were arrested and thrown in prison to be tried the next morning. An angel came and let them out and said to go early in the morning and preach in the temple. They came to get them out and guard said that they're gone and not there. Someone came running in and said that they were out preaching.

So, they brought them in and said, 'What are you doing here? You're turning Jerusalem upside down. You're going to bring the wrath of God upon us by preaching in His name; don't preach in His name.'

Verse 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, '**We are obligated to obey God rather than men.**'" That's the principle on which the whole structure of the Church ought to be based upon, *obeying God rather than men!*

Verse 30: "Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him" (vs 30-31).

Through all of this, did Peter at any time say that he had powers near like unto the pope? *No!* Every time what did he say? *We ought to obey God, we ought to follow the Spirit of Christ, we ought to do the things that God said!*

Let's look at some other things concerning the way the Church ought to work.

Acts 11:20—talking about the Church being raised up in Antioch: "But certain men among them

who were Cypriots and Cyrenians came to Antioch *and* spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with them, and a great number believed *and* turned to the Lord. Now, the report concerning them was heard in the ears of the Church that *was* in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced; and he exhorted *them* all **to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart...**" (vs 20-23).

Notice that the whole emphasis all of the time is to Christ. Why? *Because He's the Head! Because you have direct access to Christ and God the Father, directly, continuously all the time!*

Verse 24: "For he was a good man, and was filled with *the* Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large multitude was added to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul; and after finding him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass *that for* a whole year they assembled together with the Church and taught a great multitude. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (vs 24-26).

Again, all the way through they were pointing to Christ, pointing to the Lord, pointing to God the Father!

Then Paul goes out and he starts preaching (Acts 12-14). He went around and raised up churches and different congregations, preached in the synagogues and all of that sort of thing.

Not once in all of this did anything come about that we experienced in WCG where it was made a corporation. *Not once!* So, I think God scattered the Church and doing things to the Church because He's going to try every person whether they're going to love Him, follow Him, really seek out His way *or not!*

- What better way to do it than to test them with false doctrine?
- How are you going to know what you believe unless you can tell right from wrong?
- How are you going to know who to follow?
- How are you going to know what the doctrines are?

When they raised up the Churches, we find in Acts 14:22: "*Where* they established the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *declaring* that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." Paul can preach that with conviction here, because he just nearly got stoned to death.

Verse 23: "And when they had chosen for themselves elders in every church, *and* had prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord, on

Whom they had believed." Again, what is a minister/elder supposed to do? *Constantly point the people to Christ!*

We have a little better opportunity to do it now, because we have the full New Testament. Back then they were struggling along until it was written.

Acts 15—what many people call the 'ministerial conference.' We'll cover just a little bit there to understand one thing that is very important: **church congregations, church boards, church members did not vote on doctrine!** Even the apostles *did not vote* on doctrine. They had a great difficulty to try and resolve, which is should the disciples be forced to be circumcised or not.

Acts 15:1: "Now, certain men who had come down from Judea were teaching the brethren, *saying*, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" We know the whole background of it; what was decided on the Word of God.

Verse 4: "And when they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all the things that God had done with them."

(go to the next track)

Notice that there were troublemakers there. Same ones bothering the Church of God today, which is really amazing when you come to understand it.

Verse 5: "But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, saying, 'It is obligatory to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses.'"

There are people going around who have been in the WCG saying that Jesus was an Orthodox Pharisee; that we have to follow the authority of the Pharisees; that we ought to follow the oral tradition of the Pharisees. *There's nothing new under the sun;* it's all recycled back!

Verse 6: "Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter." The elders here are the older ones in the Church, not elders who have been ordained as ministers but are very young men. Elder has to do with age because of wisdom, of experience, of knowledge, because hopefully, by the time we get a little older we can think!

Guess who was left of this? *The Pharisees!* I'll bet that rubbed them the wrong way. They weren't there.

Verse 7: "And after much discussion..."—heated discussion. Not where someone stood up and proclaimed everything and said this is the way it's going to be. They were talking back and forth, discussing it, a heated discussion.

“...had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Men, brethren...’” (v 7). You know the whole story there, so I won’t go back and rehearse it all.

After Peter and Paul both gave what they gave, telling what God was doing and so forth. Let’s notice how James—the brother of the Lord—answered them, and what he based the agreement on:

Verse 13: “And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, ‘Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name” (vs 13-14). Who did the calling? *God did the calling!*

Verse 15: “And with this the words of the prophets agree...” What was it based upon? *The Word of God!*

- it wasn’t based upon voting
- it wasn’t based upon a committee
- it wasn’t based upon numbers

It was based upon *the Word of God!* So therefore, we can learn from this that all doctrine must agree with the Word of God. Is that simple enough? *Yes, it is!*

For those of us here, we’ve done it for so long that it seems self-evident. But there are many people out there who are just coming in contact with what we are doing, and they don’t know, because they’ve been put through the meat grinder. What we’re trying to do is help them pick up the pieces of their life that is left from the meat grinder and put it back together.

“...as it is written. ‘after these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen; and its ruins I will build again, and will set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says *the* Lord, Who does all these things.’ Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Therefore, my judgment is *that* we do not trouble those of the Gentiles who have turned to God” (vs 15-19). They had to keep all the Ten Commandments. How did the Gentiles even know about God? *They went to the synagogues!*

Verse 20: “But *that* we write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols... [Where is that contained? *Ten Commandments!*] ...and *from* sexual immorality... [Where is that contained? *Ten Commandments!*] ...and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood.... [those are contained in the lesser commandments] ...For from *the* generations of old, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day” (vs 20-21).

What we are talking about is all the Ten

Commandments, the clean and unclean foods that they were following. What we have is nearly the same doctrine as what we are doing today. How are you going to know what was being read in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day unless you went there on the Sabbath Day. It shows that they were keeping the Sabbath, without a doubt!

Once you have a congregation, a minister, elders and so forth, how then do you handle the difficulties between brethren and the church? How do you handle heresies and so forth as they come along? ***First of all, you handle it at the lowest level possible!*** That’s how you handle it.

Matthew 18:15: “So then, if your brother sins against you...” First basic lesson on how to handle it. One of the great and primary violations of a hierarchical ministry were that people go tell the minister and then the minister go tend the offending person. That is completely wrong.

The first question a minister ought to ask if someone comes with a problem is: “...if your brother sins against **you go and show him his fault between you and him alone...**” (v 15). That’s handling the problem at the lowest level possible first, face-to-face. That’s how you solve the problems.

If they’re constantly being taught to look to Christ, they’re constantly being taught to overlook things—you may have your ups and down, your problems and faults—but given all the way through that you’re going to resolve them. They don’t have to become a public thing. If you solve it at that level, nobody else in the whole congregation even needs to know.

Isn’t that nice? *Yes! That’s the way God wants it to be!* That’s how the Government of God is to function. Between you and God, and between you and the individual who may be offended. You go to him *alone*.

“...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not listen, **take with you one or two others...**” (vs 15-16)—*not go to the minister, yet!* We’re going to see that you’re not to go to the minister really at all! It doesn’t exclude him, but we’ll see in what context this comes.

“...so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he fails to listen to them, **tell it to the Church...**” (vs 16-17).

Why does He say “...to tell *it* to the Church...”? *Because if it has to become public knowledge, the whole church should know*, not just a little group over here so that you can build a little power base and gossip against this little group over here. You “...tell *it* to the Church...”!

“...But if he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector” (v 17). So, the whole Church decides.

They had something in Michigan where this man was coming in preaching and trying to bring in doctrine secretly unawares. So, finally, one may went to him face-to-face and said, ‘Look! I believe you are doing this...’ And he finally got the minister to admit that, yes, he was doing it. The minister did not quit doing it, so the man brought someone else with him and they established everything and the minister said, ‘yes, I’m doing this.’ Then had to bring it before the whole congregation, and the they decided that they didn’t want him preaching anymore.

- Solved the problem!
- Stopped the power play!
- Stopped the behind the scenes movement!

This is solving at a basic level! That’s where all the problems need to be solved. They can’t be solved way off in a city a thousand miles away by someone reading a memo. *Never happen!* Let’s see how that is applied. The disputes within the Church—with difficulties and problems—once it becomes so notorious, then the whole Church has to get involved. You sit down and say, ‘All right, brethren, we’ve got a problem to solve. Here it is...’

- How many people want all of their problems brought before the whole Church? *Not very many!*
- Do you think they’re be willing to listen—if they have Christ in them—at the first level? *Yes! Sure!*

They didn’t in here, Paul says because of the problem that they had, 1-Corinthians 5:3: “For I indeed, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged...” So, there are certain judgments that ministers must make based on the Word of God, as Paul did.

“...concerning him who has so *shamelessly* committed this *evil deed* as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together... [the whole Church] ...and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (vs 3-5).

Whatever is done is to help bring repentance and bring that person so that He can be saved. He was committing a pretty dastardly deed; either incest or adultery, one or the two and openly bragging of it.

1-Cor. 6 shows how the function and structure of the Church—the whole Church—body in relationship to solving problems. That doesn’t

take away from what a minister ought to do. A minister is to oversee. Sometimes if the whole church is so bad and gone so far astray—which is possible—the minister will just have to say, ‘Here’s what the Word of God is. This is it.’ If a minister has gone so far astray the congregation needs to come to the minister and say, ‘Here’s what the Word of God says...’

1-Corinthians 6:1: “Does anyone among you who has a matter against another dare to go to a *court of law* before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Don’t you know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you unworthy of the most trivial of judgments?” (vs 1-2).

Here they were not taking people at the lowest level possible. That’s precisely what’s the matter with the whole welfare problem in the United States. They collect all this money to help the poor and about \$2 out \$10 gets back to help the poor. Why? *Because they set up a whole bureaucracy, a whole hierarchy to administer it! All the money is gobbled up!*

Solve it at the lowest level possible. That’s the Godly way and the Godly principle to do. That’s what they’re doing here, the smallest matter.

Paul says, v 3: “Don’t you know that we shall judge angels?...” Don’t ask me about that because I don’t know how it’s going to be. You can ask me about it when we’re spirit beings and God tells us about it, then I can answer the question; *not now!*

“...*How much more* than *the things* of this life? So then, if you have judgments *concerning the things* of this life, *why* do you appoint *as judges* those who have no standing in the Church?” (vs 3-4).

In other words, don’t set up your favorite political person. Set up someone you consider the least esteemed. Why? *Because you’re probably going to get a pretty good judgment out of that person!* They can see things from a different perspective.

That’s why when we talk about things everybody has some input, no problem. Sometimes we have to compromise and do things one way or another way. But as long as we’re all serving Christ and looking to Him, we can work it all out.

Then Paul says, v 5: “Now I say *this* to your shame. *Is it* because there is not a wise *man* among you, not even one, who is able to decide between his brothers? Instead, brother goes to a *court of law* with brother, and this before unbelievers” (vs 5-6). Hauling them off to the lawyers and courts of this world! Sound like something that we’ve heard of in

the past? *Yes!*

That's how the Government of God should function within the Church! Every member of the congregation is responsible to God and to the congregation. What about the ministers?

Now we'll look at some of the qualification for a minister and what he is to do.

1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be an overseer*... [not bishop, not overlord] ...he desires a good work.'" Why? *Because:*

- he's to lead people to Christ
- he's to teach them about God
- he's to keep peace within the congregation
- he's to lead them always in the Word of God

Verse 2: "Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching." Teaching is perhaps the most important thing in relationship to bringing people to the knowledge and understanding of God's Word; *being able to teach!*

- a minister is not there for his own vain benefit
- a minister is not there for his own reputation
- a minister is not there to have people waiting on him hand and foot

I remember one time after we left Salt Lake City, we went back the following Pentecost and that whole Church had been turned around into a service organization for the ministers and deacons. They had a feast, and they had the ministers and deacons setup on the stage; all the brethren had their tables setup down on the floor. They sent deacons to get the best of the food, the best of the desert, the best of everything, and put it up on the table for the minister. All of his haughty vanity and everything...

Needless to say, he ran it like an iron fist, and that man is no longer a minister, he ran off and committed adultery and two-timed his wife and re-married someone else. All of that was just carnal vanity.

It felt so bad about it I stayed down in the line and chatted with the brethren and made sure not to make myself better, but so that the brethren would know that I didn't agree with any of that sitting up there in the great august and 'we're going to rule over everybody and take the best of everything.' I made sure that I got toward the end of the line and stayed with the brethren and sat down and ate with them. I didn't want to visit with him, because there

was nothing to visit about. I wanted to visit with the brethren. Boy, did I get my little 'fanny in the ringer' over that! Woowee! So, all of that's a bunch of carnality.

Verse 6: "Not a novice, lest he become conceited *and* fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil"—because the devil has many little things that he can do to a man to make him 'little lord Fauntleroy.] That's part of the problem with the Government of God.

Verse 7: "It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside *the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the* snare of the devil." So, there are two kinds here: It talks about the devil in relationship to coming after a minister. You might want to ask: How many want to become ministers? *Think about it first!* We can tell you some harried stories, but we have to put all of that in the past.

- our faith is going to be tested
- the minister's faith is going to be tested
- everybody's faith is going to be tested

Then it talks about deacons, who are there to help and serve. We see in Acts 6 that the whole congregation had input as to who the ones are who should be the deacons.

In WCG what happened? *One day you spring it on this poor guy that you're going to ordain him a deacon!* He's been a good little political whatever. I had one man that we ordained that way, as a deacon, and he just begged off and just said, 'No, no, no! because he really didn't want to be a deacon. Can a man not want to be a deacon? *Sure he can!*

So, you take all of this stupidity out and you get down to what God really wants in a congregation.

Let's see some other things concerning the ministers and so forth. You're not to despise them! You're not to hate them!

1-Timothy 5:17: "Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor... [double remuneration. I don't know what they were paying them, that's neither here nor there] ...**especially those who are laboring in the Word and doctrine.**" There's a special responsibility for doing that. It says in other places about not being greedy of filthy lucre.

This doesn't mean, on the other hand, because a minister is not supposed to torment the brethren, that the brethren come along and torment the minister either.

Hebrews 13:7: "Remember your leaders who have spoken the Word of God to you..." This

has been misapplied by saying to remember them that have the ‘rule’ over you. *No!* This means the ones who are leading you; the leaders among you, not to *rule* over you.

“...considering the outcome of *their* conduct; *and imitate their faith*” (v 7).

Verse 17: “Follow your leaders...” Certainly there’s to be peace, order and leadership, but how is that leadership going to be done, and how is it going to be followed. What is the example going to be of it, and what is going to be required.

A minister cannot come along and ask you to do anything contrary to the Word of God. A minister does not need people waiting on him hand and foot as if they are his private servants. But they are to teach the Word of God; they are to be leading the congregation. There are things that have to be followed and obeyed.

“...and be submissive, because they are looking out for your spiritual well-being, as *those who must be* ready to give an account *to God* in order that they may do this with joy, and not *with* groaning because that *would be* unprofitable for you” (v 17). That is if they do it with grief.

So, there’s the other hand. You don’t setup a lay board of people that just meat-grinds the minister through every little thing. The minister is not to setup and be the dictator and meat-grind the brethren through every little thing either. There has to be peace and order.

2-Peter 2:1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” That has happened in the Worldwide Church of God! It happened! It happened in other churches and it will happen again.

Verse 2: “And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed.” It talks about these people again over here:

Verse 10: “But particularly those who walk after *the* flesh in corrupting lust, and hold in utter contempt *the* lordship of God...”—and despise government. You’ve probably heard this thundered from the pulpit about those who despise the government, and the ministers are the Government of God, and you’re despising the ministry.

That is not what it means! This word means *the lordship*. Of whom? *Of Christ in their lives!* ***That’s what the Government of God means; God ruling in your life.***

- you’re following God

- you’re following Christ
- the minister is pointing you to Christ
- Christ is ruling in your life

That is the Government of God! That solves a lot of problems. Again, it brings it down to the lowest level possible between you and God.

- the minister is here to help
- the minister is here to counsel
- the minister is here—*mostly*—to teach you to follow Christ

That is the Government of God!

Jude 4 talks about the same thing: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But I myself want to remind you, though you once understood this, that the Lord, after saving a people out of *the* land of Egypt, the second time destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their own original domain, but deserted their habitation, He is holding in eternal bonds under darkness unto the judgment of *the* Great Day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah—and the cities surrounding them, in the same manner as them—having given themselves over to sexual debaucheries, and having gone after different flesh, are themselves exhibited as a *perpetual* example of undergoing *the* punishment of eternal fire, in the same way also, ***these dreamers of filthy dreams are defiling the flesh, and are declaring as invalid the Lordship of God, and are blaspheming the Divine powers***” (vs 4-8).

They despised dominion, the Lordship of God! That’s why they’re rebelling! That’s why they take unto themselves all these things and call it *the Government of God* when it’s not the Government of God at all! The Government of God is

- ruling in your life
- ruling in mind
- ruling in your heart
- ruling in your soul

You’re going to make choices. Some of your choices aren’t going to be too ‘kool.’ Some of them are not going to be too great. You’re going to have your ups and downs, but ***you’re going to be looking to Christ in everything!***

Here is the rule of God; here is the Government of God most fully and completely applied:

Colossians 3:15: “And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts...**” That’s the most important

thing to do; let God rule in your heart and in your mind.

- Do you have the Spirit of God? *Yes, you do!*
- Is God dealing with you directly? *Yes, He is!*

“...**let the peace of God rule in your hearts...**”

- to guide you
- to lead you
- to go forward

“...to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...” (vs 15-16). That’s why you need to study the Word of God:

- so you *think* with the Word of God
- so you *act* with the Word of God
- *your whole mind functions* with the Word of God

Why? Because it is Christ in you! (Col. 1:27). ***This is the Government of God!***

This makes each on responsible to God. Then we’re all responsible to each other. That keeps it simple. That keeps it peaceful. That keeps the whole Church from being disrupted by some person running around claiming this, that or the other thing.

Colossians 1:27: “To whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**”

- Can Christ rule in your mind? *Yes!*
- Can Christ rule in your life? *Yes!*
- Can Christ in you keep the commandments of God? *Yes!*

That is the Government of God!

It’s not a church hierarchy by any stretch of the imagination. When we all come together, the larger the group the more we need to have order and things pertaining to just the physical necessities of getting together. The more people there are the more chances there is going to be a difficult or conflict between one person and another.

But how is it be solved? *At the lowest level possible!* Go to the brother *alone*, and speak to him *alone*, and let the problem be solved *alone!* Then you win a brother and you love each other more and you know you haven’t broken a confidence by bringing it to the whole congregation. Or you’ve gone to the minister and he comes and says, ‘I heard...’ You say, ‘How did you hear?’ *Someone told me.* ‘Who told you?’ *I can’t tell you.*

That doesn’t work! That’s not the way of God! Notice what the Apostle Paul said, some of he very closing words to demonstrate this:

Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, **rejoice!**.... [Constantly pointing the people to Christ!] ...Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord *is* near. Do not be anxious about anything...” (4-6).

Don’t get nervous and upset. It’s hard to say not to be nervous and upset in a trial. I try and tell myself that, but it doesn’t work. Afterward it yields the ‘peaceable fruits of righteousness,’ but going through it is turmoil. It doesn’t help for someone to come along—and I do this and my wife gets mad at me for doing it—and tell you not to worry. I tell her, ‘Don’t worry.’ *We haven’t got it solved.* Does she have a right to worry? *If she wants to, yes!*

Then she comes to me when I’m going through a trial and says, ‘Don’t worry, everything is fine.’ I came home with my wrecked car the other night, and the only thing she could do was laugh when she saw me. I mean, what else are you going to do? Here’s this white dust all over and I get out of the car and it’s all smashed up and looks miserable. I get out and she just laughs and said, ‘You look like the ghost of Christmas past from Scrooge.’ Just all covered with this white dirt.

That’s one way of telling me not to worry. I was all worried. What am I going to do? I just got my Isuzu ready for the next 300,000 miles, and I went and cracked it up; I’m stupid! She tells me not to worry!

That’s what the Apostle Paul says here after it’s over and done okay. Here’s how to handle the problems, instead of being nervous and anxious:

“...but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything” (v 6).

When you first come into the Church, you pray because you’re told to. Then after a while, you pray because you ought to. Then after a while you find yourself repeating your prayers all the time, then you wonder if our ought to pray. Then you come to the time when you don’t pray at all.

Then you go through some trials and you know you need to pray. Then it comes around the other way, once you really understand that you have to pray to God everyday

1. because He loves you
2. because you can’t run your day without God

Therefore, *you are going to pray because you want to!* Is that not what God wants you to do, because you desire to. Do you pray a half-hour a day by the clock because you heard the minister say to pray a half-hour a day. You set your little clock and run in and pray and have your little list. ‘Bye, God!’ Click off the alarm and leave.

Now, once you've gone through enough trials and experience you go to God and say, 'O God, I don't know. God, help me! God, I'm a miserable mess of a person!' It's entirely different!

- God, give me Your love
- God, grant me Your understanding

I would have to say that you're going to end up praying—just like I end up praying—more because I want to, more effectively than I did when I first started because I had to.

Verse 7: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

That is the true Government of God! Christ in you, the hope of glory!

Let God rule in your life! I know just as sure as anything that I'm going to go out and do something this week where I'm going to forget what I preached here today. I know that maybe you are. But that doesn't mean the words of God are not true and that we can't come back to God.

That's the whole purpose in it! So, let's let Christ rule in our lives and in our hearts and minds, and ***let the Government of God have it's free and loving exercise between you and Christ and God the Father!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 1:17-23
- 2) 1 Corinthians 12:4-16, 18
- 3) Ephesians 2:18-22
- 4) 1 Corinthians 11:1-3
- 5) Acts 4:33
- 6) Acts 5:1-6, 10-16, 29-31
- 7) Acts 11:20-26
- 8) Acts 14:22-23
- 9) Acts 15:1, 47, 13-21
- 10) Matthew 18:15-17
- 11) 1 Corinthians 5:3-5
- 12) 1 Corinthians 6:1-6
- 13) 1 Timothy 3:1-2, 6-7
- 14) 1 Timothy 5:17
- 15) Hebrews 13:7,17
- 16) 2 Peter 2:1-2, 10
- 17) Jude 4-8
- 18) Colossians 3:15-16
- 19) Colossians 1:27
- 20) Philippians 4:4-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Acts 12-14; 6

Also referenced: Book:

The Christian Passover by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
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Should You Follow a Man? I

Fred R. Coulter

After I was going through with the sermon, working on it and trying to compile everything, this thought hit me: *All of mankind's grief started with false teaching!* You think about that for a minute. Isn't that true? *All of humankind's grief*—sin, sorrows and war, all their difficulties—*started with false teaching.* I don't need to tell you which Scriptures in the Bible tell us that, because it goes clear back to Gen. 2 and 3 and how mankind has listened to Satan ever since.

In that, and living in this evil world with all the 'religious' confusion in the world, how should you or should you, follow a man? Some people will say, 'I'm going to follow God.' All right, we're stuck with a problem there: We can't see God, we haven't talked to God, so how is it that you're going to follow God? We're kind of stuck with that problem.

Then we have the situation that there has to be a teacher, there has to be a preacher, but then, since all of mankind's problems came because of false teachings, you need to be careful of the person whose doing the teaching—right? *Sure you do!*

We read part of it with this special meeting between Gorbachev and Chree Chin Chamoi^[unsure of spelling] and the New Age Spiritualism. As I mentioned before, we've seen this develop and the religions are all going to get together and New Ageism is going to take over the world. It's just going to happen. It's all part of it.

Then we have a situation where you have ministers who say that they preach by the Bible. They end up like Jim Jones who ended up *not* preaching by the Bible. In our experiences that we have gone through and many of the things that we have gone through, we have learned that we are to follow Christ.

- What is one of the **first** things that Jesus said to beware of? *Beware of false prophets that come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves and they are going to devour the flock.*
- What was one of the **last** things that He said in Matt. 24? *Many shall come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and shall by this means, deceive many!*

Then He said that there'll be **many** false prophets and **many** antichrists.

Given this climate, and given what we have today, it's strange that in this world when we have more Bibles in more languages available to more

people than ever before in the history of mankind, ***we have more religious deception, more confusion and more problems*** from two points of view:

1. Who are you going to follow?
2. What are the people going to do?

Let's look at those and let's see what the Bible teaches us on how we are to follow Christ and what a minister should be doing. There are certain things that a minister needs to be gauged on, or a teacher, we'll leave it at a teacher.

Let's begin in 2-John so we can kind of get our bearings and know where we're headed:

- this describes the world as it is today
- this describes the problems that we are faced with
- this also describes what we need to be doing

It's giving to us in very simple terms how it needs to be. Here is one of the keys that gives us the instruction, the guidepost and the Word of God on how we need to be looking at this.

2-John 6^[transcriber's correction]: "And **this is the love of God...**" Everybody says they love. Even people in their most perverted notion say that they love.

Just like this fellow who was arrested for all this cannibalizing and dismembering of bodies, which is gruesome enough even to think of. The defense attorney says that he has shown remorse. What are we supposed to take this as? Love? *He ought to show remorse!* Don't you think he ought to show remorse? It's not great deal that he does.

The Bible says that if you're punished for your own sins, don't think that that is any great thing. Everyone's got this thing of love. You have to be concerned for the criminal. You have to be concerned for different people's thoughts and feelings, but love is this, here's the key:

"...that we walk according to His commandments.... [Christ's commandments] ...This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from the beginning, that you might walk in it because **many deceivers** have entered into the world..." (vs 6-7). That's more true than ever before! It kind of follows the parallel that we have with the supposed counterfeiting of money.

They're rearranging the current currency by having much finer engraving because the counterfeiters are getting better. They're able to deceive more. It's the same way in the world with

religion. The deceivers are getting better and better and sounding better and better. You've really got to be on your guard. This puts the brethren, the people and the ones who have to learn from the teachers, in a very difficult position. How do we all 'be right with God?'

"...those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is *the spirit of the deceiver* and the antichrist. **Watch out for yourselves...** [we have to be on guard for ourselves] ...in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished, but *that* we may receive a full reward. Anyone who transgresses and **does not continue in the doctrine of Christ does not have God...**" (vs 7-9). This gives us some pretty clear guideposts to go by, and we're going to see some others.

This begins to set the stage for all of us. How do we find our way out of this mess of all of this deception? It's kind of like being in a room with all of these nearly perfect counterfeit bills. How are you going to find the real one? You've got to have the right equipment to know. The right equipment here is the proper understanding of the Bible, not *some* Bible knowledge. *Some* Bible knowledge, wrongly applied, can lead to a greater disaster than no Bible knowledge at all.

As we go through this, some of these things will be kind of a repetition of some basic things, but it's of paramount importance that we cover it so that we can understand that it happens in both ways. Just as there are ministers who will be doing this, we are going to also see that there are people in the congregation who are also doing things that are going to cause some difficulties for the ministers; because if they don't do what certain people say, they're going to be fired.

Someone sent me a sermon—I just have to digress here for a little bit—the funniest thing I have heard in a long time and that is someone who preaches sacred names. The basis of sacred names is that you have to pronounce the sacred name of YHVH [Yahweh] correctly, otherwise you can never have access to God. Jesus is not *Jesus*, He's *Yeshua*. The minister who was preaching this was from Texas and he had a full-blown Texas accent. I thought, 'You're trapped in your own scheme. How can a Texan ever say 'Yahweh' correctly; it was really funny. Then he condemns all the rest of the world because they don't say Yahweh. That's just one of those little things where a *little* Bible knowledge gets you in trouble.

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel."

- Who called them into the grace of Christ?
- Who does the calling?

- Who is the One Who does the calling?

So we get our perspective straight: ***God the Father is the One Who does the calling!***

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..." God the Father is the One Who does the calling "...into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel."

Verse 7: "Which *in reality* is not another *Gospel...* [there's only one True Gospel] ...but **there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.**" That happens little by little, *by little, by little*. We will see not only do they pervert the doctrine, they also have perverted ministerial authority. When both of them meet together you've got a lot of problems.

Verse 8: "But if **we, or even an angel from heaven**, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" (vs 8-9).

When you're writing a letter or when you're writing something, you really got to be steamed about it, really upset, or convicted in order to repeat exactly the same thing. Paul was really upset.

Verse 10: "Now then, **am I striving to please men, or God?**..." That becomes a very key in church relationships. I'll just say church relationships from the point of view that it involves brethren and it involves ministers.

If the minister seeks to please people because of what they want, then he's going to get himself in trouble with God. If the people seek to please the minister, then they're going to get themselves in trouble with God. Maybe the both of them seeking to please each other are going to jointly get themselves all in trouble. I'm speaking to those who have been through it and know. You're well experienced in some of these difficulties.

We have just defined here in Gal. 1 what happens when a minister does not preach the things that he ought to because he has different motives in mind. We will talk a little bit about the motives that a minister ought to have or a teacher ought to have. This shows both sides of the coin:

2-Timothy 4:1: "**I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God...**" Which gives us a good indication of the priorities that a minister ought to have.

"...even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke,**

encourage, with all patience and doctrine” (vs 1-2). We’re going to have a little bit to say about doctrine a little later on as we go: How are we going to *know* what is proper Biblical doctrine?

Every perverted change that has ever been preached under the sun has been preached under the guise of new doctrine and new understanding. ‘Brethren, if you don’t accept this new understanding,’ you are damned. There you are, caught in a vice. We’ve all lived through that!

Verse 3: “For there shall come a time when **they will not tolerate sound doctrine...**” Doctrine merely means teaching of the Bible. They won’t endure it. They won’t be able to take it because the requirements of God are a little more than they are willing to put out.

“...but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers...*” (v 3). ‘We’re going to get a minister whose going to teach what we want.’ You can get that, just pay him enough money. Why?

Because they “...having ears itching...” (v 3). Why do they have itching ears? *Not because they have ear mites!*

Verse 4: “And they shall turn away their own ears **from the Truth**; and they shall be **turned aside unto myths.**” We could list, at this late stage—1900 years from the original Gospel, thereabouts—how many fables have people gotten to and how many fables are in their ‘religions.’ Are these all false doctrines which lead people down the tube to destruction? *Yes it is!* We couldn’t take the time to list them.

You have these two problems interacting. Then we have this warning; we are warned! I’m not going to get into any explanation on a prophetic basis at all whatsoever, because this is not the sermon for that. The first part is the key important thing that I want to get to, which is the responsibility for all lay members and responsibility for all ministers.

2-Thessalonians 2:3: “**Do not let anyone deceive you by any means...**” Very important! As I mentioned, all of humankind’s problems have come because of false teachings. Here’s the warning! How are they going to deceive you? *It says that it going to get to the point that after the workings of Satan:*

Verse 10: “And **with all deceivableness of unrighteousness** in those who are perishing because **they did not receive the love of the Truth...**” Which is also related to what we just covered in 2-Tim. 4, that they won’t be able to ‘endure sound doctrine.’

It’s gets down to just like Henry VIII. A good example, not that the Catholic Church was

right; in this, I’m not upholding the Catholic Church. What did Henry VIII say? He was right in this: ‘*Who is the pope to tell me, a king, what to do?*’ Then He made the mistake by saying, ‘I’m going to divorce my wife and I’m going to get the one I want.’ So, you have the two at loggerheads. It’s a very good example right there, Henry VIII and what happened.

Let’s see how this is going to be accomplished. Of course, they had some of these problems right in the New Testament Church.

Romans 16:17: “Now I exhort you, brethren, to take note of those... [pay attention to them; beware of them] ...who are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and shun them; because these are the sort who are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, and...” (vs 17-18). How do they do it? They don’t say:

- I’m standing before you as a false prophet
- I’m here to serve my own belly
- I’m here to merchandise you

No! They don’t do that! They:

“...are deceiving the hearts of the innocent by smooth talking and flattery” (v 18). That’s not a put down to anybody to say to anyone that you’re simple-minded. That really means the ones who are trusting in simplicity, *their leaders*. So, they are trusting and that’s a big thing that we have seen different ‘religious leaders’ take advantage of.

Note these following chapters, which have to do with prophesies of false preachers:

- Jeremiah 23
- Ezekiel 13; 33

Those are just three major chapters that have to do with false teachers, but they are very poignant, they are very direct and they are very powerful.

Isaiah 30:8: “Now go, write it before them in a tablet, and note it in a book, so that it may be for the time to come forever and ever”—the latter days. As we’ll see a little later on, the Apostle Peter in writing about false prophets, referred to this particular section by saying that it was written about them long ago.

Verse 9: “That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children. They are children who will not hear the Law of the LORD; who say to the seers, ‘See not,’ and to the prophets, ‘**Do not prophesy to us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions; go out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.**’” (vs 9-11).

The ultimate end of this kind of thing is what we see in the (former) Soviet Union: *A whole society predicated and dedicated to the extinction of*

God in people's lives! I know that we're all used to condemning the Nazis, which they ought to be condemned, but believe me, the Nazis were 'pikers' compared to what the communists have done wherever they have gone in the Soviet Union, in China, etc.

It was in the paper about a man who died. He was 92-years-old, a Kiserian Jew who was the executioner for Stalin. They said that he was an avowed atheist and that He literally killed, executed, murdered tens of millions of people at his command, even if he suspected them of having an ideology different than the communists. So, I use that as an example of what happens in the ultimate extreme, when you take this and say, 'We want God completely out of the picture.' That's the ultimate of what happens with the thing that we're studying today. Everything goes in varying degrees from that.

Jer. 23. is in reference to all of those who say, 'The Lord talked to me; I had a dream.' Jeremiah 23:25: "I have heard what the prophets said, who prophesy lies in My name, saying, '**I have dreamed, I have dreamed.**' How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies and who are prophets of the deceit of their own heart? They scheme to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams which they tell, each one to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal. **The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream. And he who has My Word...**" (vs 25-28).

This is the key, brethren. This is the guidepost for every teacher that you're going to follow, that I'm going to follow, or whatever it may be. Here is the key, the absolute burden of proof on any minister:

"...**let him speak My Word faithfully....**" (v 28). That's the whole key right there!

2-Cor. 4 shows another obligation of a minister, which we will cover pretty heavily today, because the weight is going to be on the minister.

2-Corinthians 4:1: "Therefore, having this ministry, according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted."

After all, stop and think about what a fantastic and marvelous thing that it is of telling people that *they can come to God and have all of their sins forgiven!* Isn't that fantastic that *God has called you to be His very own son in His very own Kingdom, and to share glory and eternity with you forever!* If we all, as ministers, keep that in mind, then I'm sure we will have a greater perspective of what we need to be doing in teaching, preaching, our relationship with brethren, our relationship with each other.

Verse 2: "For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain, not walking in

cunning craftiness, nor **handling the Word of God deceitfully...**" Isn't that something?

There can be many ways that a person can handle the Word of God deceitfully. We won't get into all of those, but apparently there were some of those who were using the Word of God deceitfully. Otherwise, why mention it? Isn't it something that you take the Word of God, which is the Truth, and then you manipulate it in such a way that you cause a lie to prosper? That's why God said to the Laodiceans, 'I would you were hot or cold.'

"...but by manifestation of the Truth, we are commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God. But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them. **For we do not preach our own selves...**" (vs 2-5). *Very important!*

One of the first things that you can get an inkling that something is amiss—in whatever degree of perception you're able to see it—is when the minister is always talking about himself. Why talk about ourselves if we have Christ to talk about?

Let's look at it from this point of view as a minister: What on earth does a minister have to offer people that he should speak about himself so much? We have been in a situation where the head minister was preached more than Christ. There were times when the name of the head minister was mentioned over one hundred times in a sermon and Christ was mentioned six times. Is that not preaching self? Of course, what happens? *Everyone sits there and says, 'Yes!'* They're not armed with the Truth enough to really see what's going on, or they've already submitted to and been intimidated by it.

It's kind of shabby to preach yourself when you can preach about Christ. That's the 'shabby gospel,' if you preach about yourself. I say that because I recently heard a well renowned minister, that all he did for two hours was talk about himself, what he's done, how he's preached and what he's this, that and the other thing. It was just more than I could bear. That's a good lesson for me. Don't do that! Here's what we ought to preach about ourselves:

"...but Christ Jesus *the* Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (v 5). That's what it needs to be. That's what a minister is, a servant. However, because he is that doesn't mean that he's congregational canon fodder, on the other hand. So, it works both ways.

It's kind of like this one joke they had about the mines. There's a land-mine that the army puts out and it's a personnel mine. They have coming up out of this mine shooting forward the things that will knock down the enemy. They have for the intelligent

soldiers that they have there to make sure they do it right: ‘front; point toward the enemy.’ They were actually having problems with them putting it in backwards and they were killing themselves.

Whenever I speak about something it’s going to be the two-edged sword. We all have a perspective that we need to keep in mind and we have seen both ends of it.

How should a minister be? I’ll just relate here that one of the things that helped bring me into the Church of God, was the saying, ‘*Do not believe me, believe your Bible.*’ What was the other saying? ‘*Follow me as I follow Christ! If I’m not following Christ, God doesn’t require you to follow me.*’ Therefore, that’s what got me out of that particular Church of God. The same thing that brought me in got me out, because the doctrine was changed later on.

I’m going to give you several things so we’ll number them as we go along.

I. A Ministers has to be Called of God

This is the responsibility of ministers if you’re going to follow him. I’m going to focus more on ministers rather than the brethren. The minister is the one who is responsible. If the minister didn’t have people who would follow him, there would be any church to preach to. Therefore, he would have nothing to do. So, the weight and the burden lies upon the minister.

Romans 10:13: “For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved”—a general overall statement. That’s generally how God begins to call every one of us. One day in your life, whatever your circumstances are, you realize that:

- you’re helpless
- you’re worthless
- you’re no good
- you’re overwhelmed with sin
- you need God

Somehow, in your own way, you say, ‘God help me!’ That’s the way it began with me, it began with you—everyone.

Verse 14: “How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed?....” How are they going to know God? I didn’t know God. I didn’t believe God. I didn’t understand God. It wasn’t that I was against Him, *I just didn’t know*. The same way with every one of us.

“...And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?.... [you’ve got to have a preacher or a teacher] ...And **how shall they preach, unless they be sent?**....” (vs 14-15).

Sent by whom? *Obviously by God!* There’s a whole process involved in all of this and at this stage of the game in the history of the Church, we come to where there are already Churches that have been established, through this process. Is that not true? *Yes!* We won’t get into any particular ones.

“...Accordingly, it is written, ‘How beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the Gospel of Peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!’” (v 15).

The long and short of it is that, there has to be a preacher. The preacher has got to be called. We could go through all the things where Paul says that I am called an apostle, called by God to preach the Gospel.

Let’s look at the next thing after the calling. We’re going to see the most fundamental attitude that is absolutely, imperatively, important and is a total obligation upon the one who is a minister, teacher and preacher. He can truly not be the kind of preacher that he ought to be, unless he is doing this. What we’re going to see is that, in degree, as a minister does this, he’s going to be effective.

This is the conscience of the minister that he has to have directly between God, Christ and himself, when everything else is stripped aside:

- when buildings are stripped aside
- when membership of brethren is stripped aside
- when personal belongings are stripped aside
- when his own personal things are stripped aside

This is what must be in the heart and the mind of a minister. If it is not, then in degree all the other problems are going to come.

This does not mean that the person is perfect. This does not mean that a minister will not have his own difficulties and problems. Any minister who would indicate otherwise is a fool and is going to be entrapped by something along the way. He’s going to learn the lesson that he better watch unto himself, also. I’m speaking to people who have experience in seeing this happen.

II. A Minister is Loving God and Feeding the Sheep

In John 21 this is reiterated three times. There’s an emphasis, there’s a meaning and there’s an effect for it in every way.

John 21:15: “Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas...’” This is like a formal declaration. This is almost like standing in court, ‘and for the

record, what is your full name and where do you live?"

"...do you **love Me** more than these?"... [all the other apostles there with Him] ...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. **You know that I love You.**'..." (v 15).

It is true that there are two different Greek words here. The word that Jesus uses means: 'Are you loving Me?' The word in the Greek is 'agape,' which is defined in most instances as **Godly love, love originating from God.**

However, Peter answers and says, "...Yes, Lord. You know that I **love** You.'..." which comes from the other Greek word for love, which is 'phileo,' which is *deep love of a friend*. It also is the root word for the Church called Philadelphian, which means, *the lover of the brethren*. Jesus said to him in answering that:

"...He said to him, '**Feed My lambs**'" (v 15). A direct command! What is a minister to do? *Feed the lambs. Feed the sheep!* So He repeats it again:

Verse 16: "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonas, **do you love Me?**'..."

It's not like this song that we find in *The Fiddler on the Roof*. The husband of the house, he's finally looking at everything and all the years and suffering that he's gone through and he starts this little song.

(go to the next track)

So, she answers back. His wife says, 'Twenty-five years I've been cooking your food, washing your underwear and socks, and he says, 'But, do you love me?' Then, she says something else. Then he said again, 'But do you love me?'

It's the same thing here, v 16: "He [Christ] said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonas, **do you love Me?**'..." The difference in the two words, 'agape': *are you loving Me with Godly love?* and Peter answers back:

"...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I **love** You.'..." (v 16)—with friendship love. Peter had not yet gotten the point. We'll see a little later that after he was converted, he did get the point.

"...He said to him, '**Shepherd My sheep.**'..." [this becomes most important] ...He said to him **the third time...**" (vs 16-17),

- When God says something three times, do you suppose that He means it?
- Do you suppose that this is to be a lesson to every minister to put him under obligation where his first priority ought to be?

- *I would say yes, absolutely!*

This is where any teacher, minister, preacher, evangelist, whatever, has to be in relationship to God, in a relationship to a church. How can you truly say—"follow me as I follow Christ"—that you are going to follow that person and know that you're going to be following Christ *if he is not loving God?*

In the deep recesses of his own heart and his own personal life and is shut up in the closet while he's praying by himself to God, this is where any ministry really starts. It doesn't matter how good he can speak. It doesn't matter how many things he has spoken. Anything else does not matter if this is not first. I'm also preaching to me while I'm preaching to you. 'You that teach the Law don't you also teach yourselves?' (Rom. 2). *Yes!*

Verse 17: "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonas, do you **love Me?**' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time... [he was upset] ...'Do you **love Me?**' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things...'." Isn't that true? Doesn't God know all things? *Yes, He does!*

"...You know that I **love** You.' Jesus said to him, '**Feed My sheep**'" (v 17). That is the key thing.

1. they have to be called
2. they have to be dedicated to loving God and feeding the sheep

Let's see something important here in relationship to that. There are many lessons in there for us, but we will just cover this one.

III. A Minister Knows the Church Belongs to Christ

The Church is the people. That's why the Bible talks about stewardship. Do you know what a steward is? *Someone who watches over the property while the owner is not there! A representative, but how? In charge, but how? A little better word for that would be a trustee.*

What does a trustee do? Yes, *he protects, but a trustee is a person who has no personal will in the affairs he's given charge over by someone else!* He is only committed to doing what the *trustor* grants him to do. **God is the Trustor!** The minister is the *trustee*. The brethren should be the *beneficiaries*, if I could use a little bit of real estate language in here. Then that beneficiary comes back to God. It all fits in one package: trustor, trustee. A trustee acts on behalf of the trustor *for the benefit of the beneficiary* being the people of God and God Himself. Here is what the trustor says to the trustee. Read all the other verses up to it, which I want you to do.

John 10:11: "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

Every minister needs to be aware to the very depths of his being, that Christ died for the Church.

If God is so involved in it and so intricately giving of Himself to the point of death, that He died for the Church, then this gives us a good perspective in which we need to see, as ministers, our trustee relationship toward the Church and toward God. Therefore, this means that a minister had better not play church. If he's playing church, he's only kidding himself and the people who follow him.

Verse 12: "But the one who is a hireling... [somebody just paid to do the job] ...and who is not *the* shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees.... [runs away] ...And the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters them. Now, the hireling flees **because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep**" (vs 12-13). We've seen that happen, too.

It also works this way and I've seen it happen this way: there have been wolves in the congregation who beat up on the minister; it works both ways. It also says that there are going to be the 'tares sown by the wicked one, in among the wheat' (Matt. 13). That has happened; we've all experienced that.

Verse 14: "I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep" (vs 14-15). ***The Church belongs to Christ!*** It is *His!* It is not the minister's.

I know that some of these we've covered before, but not necessarily in this way. This will also tell us some of the problems that ministers have. ***The minister has to know that the Church is Christ's and He gave His life for it!***

Before you begin fiddling around with the Church, belief, doctrine, and preaching your own thing or yourself, you'd better realize that one of these days, Christ is going to hold you in account as to what you do. I'm talking to myself as well as anyone who would hear this.

Acts 20:28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves..." This is all the elders and ministers that Paul was talking to. He came to the town of Miletus. He called all the elders over there and he was giving his final testimony and farewell sermon to them. Quite a sermon! **"Take heed, therefore, to yourselves..."**

A minister is in a most difficult position. Not only must he take care of the Church of God, which is the Church of Christ purchased with His own blood. Not only is he to watch over the Church and teach proper doctrine and all these sort of things, which he is. But who is going to police the minister,

especially when there's only one? He's telling him, right here, 'You watch out for yourselves, *yourselves.*'

In other words, the minister in his obligation before God had better make sure that *he watches out for himself.* How? *By using the Word of God to live his life!* By letting the Spirit of God be in him to lead him and direct him so that he's going to do what Christ wants him to do. When I was a minister with lots of other ministers, though some of these things were mouthed, they were never really applied.

I'm preaching to myself right here now. I have to watch out for myself just like you have to watch out for yourself. I'll say this for everyone who's on the mailing list, we have a lot of well versed members here, which means that, over the years they've learned what they're to do and they know what they know. Therefore, if anyone else came in here and tried to do something other than what we have been doing, I would guarantee you that you would not last long.

I'll jump ahead to the last goal that a minister ought to have. I'll just mentioned it here because we'll cover it in detail when we come to it.

- What is the goal of a minister, anyhow?
- To have a following, great numbers of people?

Jesus said, 'What good is it if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?' That takes care of numbers.

- Is it to build buildings and greater barns, or whatever it may be?

That's all coming in time, nothing wrong with that.

- But is that it? *No!*
- What is the personal goal that every minister should set for himself?

It's a two phase goal:

1. to constantly be in the Word of God to learn, know and grow in grace in knowledge constantly
2. to do as Jesus said that the disciple, the learner, the brethren become as the teacher

What on earth good is it for a teacher to stuff his head with all kinds of knowledge and never teach the ones he's supposed to be teaching?

I dare say that with this small congregation here, I have done things that have been unthinkable with other ministers. I've talked to some occasionally and they are absolutely amazed that I talk an awful lot about Greek just to the brethren.

Should I not try and impart as much learnable knowledge to you as I can? *Yes!* That

doesn't mean that I'm trying to teach you Greek. I know at time it can be difficult, but you know nothing comes easy. With it, have you not gained more understanding of God's Word? *Yes! That should be the goal of every minister, to bring every person in his congregation, that God has given him responsibility to teach, to come to the knowledge of God's Word to be as the teacher!*

Verse 28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers... [we'll talk about the function of overseeing vs the function the function of over-lording] ...to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood."

Let's stop here for just a minute and just think about this. We know that the Apostle Paul was taught directly by Jesus Christ in the wilderness of the Arabian desert. That's a good place to go learn because you're not going to be distracted by anything, there is nothing there but heat and sand:

- Don't you suppose that Jesus also told Paul the same thing that he told Peter?
- Don't you think He asked him the same question that He asked Peter, 'Do love Me, then feed My flock?'

He says here that you 'feed the Church of God which He's purchased with His own blood.' *Yes, absolutely*, Paul was taught that lesson.

Verse 29: "For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock." This is what causes the problems for the brethren, especially if the brethren have not been taught *in detail to really know their Bibles!* Then it causes all kinds of problems.

Verse 30: "And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves." Why? *Because:*

- they're looking for numbers
- they're looking for money
- they're looking for tithe
- they're looking for adulation

Therefore, it becomes a movement. All of these are called 'a work for God.'

Write a nice little letter to any televangelist and ask him: 'Dear Sir, We know that you look like a really nice man, but please tell us, are you doing a work for God? We would like to know. RSVP.' Of course, he would write back that he's doing a work for God. That has been so over-used so many times, that I really disdain to even use the words, 'work of God.' Not only have I heard it in the Church of God, but I have heard it in every other church and minister that I have ever listened to anywhere. If you don't

believe me, turn on your Trinity Channel and find out. You'll find that that's so.

Verse 31: "Watch, therefore..." These are tremendous warnings. This is really telling everyone that ministers have human nature and they need to be on top of it and watching it real sharply all the time.

"...remembering that *for* three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears" (v 31). Paul knew and understood what was going to happen. Can you imagine that at the end of Paul's life, every one of his churches left him. That is astonishing—isn't it?

I wonder what the Church would have been like if they would have had television, if they would have had like we're using here: audio cassettes, CDs, etc.? I wonder how fiery some of those sermons would sound that recorded what the Apostle Paul was saying? That would be fantastic to have those today, but we can't. You talk about where it says there in Rom. 10, the latter part, beyond where we read earlier, that the Gospel was preached into all the world. Can you imagine what it would have been like if the twelve apostles would have been here today? And they had for themselves all the means that are here today? *I stagger to think of that!*

It got so bad and because they didn't have things like we have today, Paul was given the prophecy that he knew the Church was going to be absolutely riddled to shreds when he died. So, he's warning the ones who are responsible. He says to the ministers, *'I have warned you day and night with tears.'*

Verse 32: "And now I commit you, brethren, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. Rather, you yourselves know that these hands did minister to my needs and to those who were with me. *In* all things, I have showed you that you are obligated to so labor to support those who are weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (vs 32-35). That's what the whole ministry of a minister is about, *giving!*

Let's see how Paul viewed himself as a minister and other ministers in relationship to God and the Church. Therefore, this is a tremendous Scripture which a minister should use as a checkpoint, a mechanism or a checklist to make sure that he is not lifted up in vanity by people coming to 'stroke' him. We all know what has happened to ministers who have been *stroked*. 'You are the greatest! You are the best!'

I remember one time a minister gave a sermon and someone came up afterwards and said, 'Oh, that was a wonderful sermon.' The minister was a little bit chagrined at that. He thought: I'm going to test this

out. He turned to the person and said, ‘What was it I spoke on?’ The person went blank! You know, this blank stare, all the blood runs out of the head. The answer was, ‘I can’t remember.’ This was only 20 minutes after the sermon. ‘But it sure was good.’

This is so that a minister is not going to be stroked by the congregation or other ministers so that he gets an inflated opinion about himself.

- Who cares?
- Before God, who cares?
- What difference does it make?

If it doesn’t make any difference, just read the whole book of Job. Job didn’t make any difference compared to God.

1-Corinthians 3:3: “For you are still carnal. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal? And *are you not* walking according to human *ways*? When someone says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another one *says*, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” (vs 3-4). Notice Paul’s opinion of himself, written in Scripture.

Verse 5: “Who then is Paul?....” You should all rally around and say, ‘Hurray! I’m going to follow Paul!’

“...And who *is* Apollos? **They are but ministers through whom you believed...**” (v 5). Paul wasn’t going to have any movement started here in his name, or Apollos’ name, or Peter’s name.

Look at what Paul did to Peter in front of everyone (Gal. 2), when Peter and the other ones of the circumcision party started getting ‘hotty-toddy’ against the rest of the Gentiles, and not wanting to eat with them. He told him in front of everyone, ‘You’re wrong Peter!’ Because of that, he wasn’t afraid to speak up when things weren’t right. Because he was right, that didn’t make him any great thing. If he is right, what makes him right? Because he is who he is? *No! Because God is Who God is!* That’s what’s important.

“...even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase**” (vs 5-6). Why? *Because it’s the Church of God that has been purchased with the blood of Christ!* It is *God’s* work. I suppose in reading this, that a lot of ministers are going to be held accountable because:

- they gave rotten water to the congregation
- they gave rotten food to the congregation
- they gave warmed over, half-baked, sloppy things to the brethren

when they came to be taught of God’s Word! This means: What is a minister’s responsibility in even preaching God’s Word? *He’s speaking the Words of*

God! This keeps it all in perspective—doesn’t it? *Sure does!*

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for **it is God Who gives the increase**. Now, he who plants and he who waters are one... [they’re doing one in the same work] ...but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor” (vs 7-8). There is an indication that this means that it’s referring to ministers, their reward, their labor, and so forth; that is true.

Verse 9: “For we are God’s fellow workers; **and you are God’s husbandry, even God’s building**.” Again, I draw to your attention the analogy of the trustee.

- **if** you’re sent to work in someone else’s pasture to watch the sheep
- **if** you’re sent to work in some else’s vineyard to tend the vine

—‘I am the True Vine and My Father is the Husbandman’ John 15)—what is the mister supposed to do? *He’s supposed to be the trustee and take care of this to present it to Christ as the very best of his labor for Him!* That’s what it’s to be, and Paul is saying so right here: “**...you are God’s husbandry, even God’s building.**”

We can put it another way. *All the brethren that are sitting before any minister, anywhere, belong to God, and you’re only a trustee to teach and serve them God’s Word!* Everything else has to come behind that.

Verse 10: “As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But **let each one take heed how he builds upon it**.” Now it comes down to the responsibility of not only the minister, but also of the congregation.

Verse 11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble” (vs 11-12). It’s all going to be tested. We’re all going to have fiery trials to reveal it, not only of members but also of ministers.

IV. **Ministers are to Preach God’s Word**

A minister who is a minister of God will be preaching the Word of God. That’s what he’s going to be preaching and that’s what a minister needs to do. He needs to be well grounded in the Word of God and well grounded in the Bible. He needs to take it upon himself as a personal responsibility—which I do before God, myself—that he *thinks* with the Scriptures of God *because he has them in his mind*. Then he is to teach the brethren to do the same thing, so that we all have the Word of God in every

fiber of our mind, heart and being. That's the only way to overcome the flesh; there isn't going to be any other way.

It doesn't matter how many sermons, evangelistic campaigns or any of these things. I just heard a minister and all he was doing was:

- telling about the great work that he was doing
- nothing about the brethren
- very little about God
- only what *he* was doing for God

So, you'll have to excuse me for belaboring the point a little bit, here.

Today, in so many things, ministers are bringing in psychology, bringing in theological theories. Ministers are going back and looking at all of the old Catholic doctrines, Protestant doctrines and saying to themselves, 'You know, some of the things might not be so wrong after all.' That's not the way to study doctrine for any minister or anybody. The way to study it is to *get in the Bible*.

Don't make up your mind, draw any conclusion, or leap to any impetuous decisions until you put all the Scriptures together to know what the Scriptures say. Then if there are some changes and corrections to be made—because you're wrong, your understanding is not complete—make the changes. If there are not changes to be made, don't make them because someone is beating upon you to change a doctrine because they don't like it. I'm not going to list all the doctrines. I'm just saying this in general terminology.

The Apostle John was writing what John the Baptist said of Jesus; John 3:31: "He Who comes from above is above all..."—everything! He's above all human beings, all people, all things, He's above everything.

"...The one who is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all; and what He has seen and heard, this *is what He testifies*; but no one receives His testimony. **The one who has received His testimony has set his seal that God is true**" (vs 31-33).

- Why is this so important that a minister has got to "...set his seal that God is true"?
- Why is this so important especially for brethren to know and understand?
- Why is this so important especially for brethren from the point of view of looking up at a minister or following a minister?
- Why is that so important?
- *Because the minister sits to teach the Truth of God!*

False doctrines that come from ministers are those doctrines that say, 'The Bible says...but God didn't mean.' Have you heard that before? *Yes, 'indeedy!'*

When caught in a bunch of sex sins, a minister said, 'Well, you know, God doesn't look as severely upon those sins as He does murder or something like that.' ***Not so! You have to set the seal that God's Word is true!***

- If we ourselves are found sinners as ministers, what are we to do? *Repent!*
- Just like anyone else who finds themselves sinners, what are they to do? *Repent!*

So, he has to "**...set his seal that God is true.**"

Verse 34: "For He Whom God has sent..." Aha! Here's then how you test and know whether the minister has been sent from God or not.

- he may use the name of God
- he may say the name of God
- he may preach the name of God

But it doesn't mean that God has sent him! Here's the true test.

Verse 34: "For He Whom God has sent speaks... [is speaking] ...the words of God..." (v 34). That ties right in with:

2-Corinthians 4:5^[transcriber's correction]: "**For we do not preach our own selves**, but Christ..." *and Him crucified*. Those are preaching the Words of God.

John 3:34: "...and God gives not the Spirit by measure *unto Him*." This is referring to Christ; it's actually talking about Christ.

- What did Christ say of the things that He said and that He did?
- Is a minister above Christ? *No! A minister is not above Christ!*

Verse 35: "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life..." (vs 35-36).

Again, I reiterate, if you're truly believing and believing the Word of God, then this puts you in a special custodial relationship with God, the Word of God and the people of God.

"...but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him" (v 36).

John 5 will reflect and tie in with point #3 of knowing that ***the Church belongs to God and not to the minister!*** Here's what Jesus said of His own self.

John 5:30: “I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me.” That’s what it has to be with every minister.

- Is he seeking the will of God?
- How is he seeking the will of God?
- Is he doing it:
 - ✓ by prayer?
 - ✓ by study?
 - ✓ by fasting?
 - ✓ by diligently getting into the Word of God?
- Is he seeking that?

That’s what it has to be. Christ did! That’s what Christ did! Let’s notice what Jesus Christ did.

Every minister needs to know this and understand this. I’ve seen these Scriptures perverted from the pulpit by ministers who get up there and read these exact same words and twist and turn these to tell the brethren, ‘Since Jesus didn’t do anything on His own, you’re not to do anything on your own. Don’t you do anything without counseling with a minister first.’

- Have you not heard that?
- Is that not a perversion of it?
- Is the minister Christ?

Think how far away from God that statement is!

John 6:38: “For I did not come down from heaven to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me.” We need to ask every minister. I hope there will be ministers who will listen to this.

Now, because my name is Fred Coulter and a lot of people may not necessarily like me, you may not necessarily want to listen to it. That’s up to you. It’s a free world, free choice. You can do that. They say, ‘Who is Fred Coulter that he is making a translation?’ *They can ask it. I’ll tell them nobody.* I’m just trying to bring the clearest rendition possible to the brethren, so they can understand the Word of God more deeply. As a minister, ought not I do that? *Yes!* I’m not trying to supplant the preserved Greek texts that we have, obviously, because that’s where the Word of God was inspired for us. Every minister needs to ask himself:

- Am I doing the will of God for the brethren in the Church ***or*** am I doing my own will?
- Am I preaching the Words of Christ and of God ***or*** am I preaching my own words?

Based upon those, the brethren need to make a decision of how they’re going to follow God. You can’t follow God without following some teacher, because no one lives in a vacuum.

Someone will surely say, ‘What about you, Fred Coulter?’ ***I follow what’s in the Bible, brethren, the best that I can! That’s where it has to be!***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-John 6-9
- 2) Galatians 1:6
- 3) John 6:44
- 4) Galatians 1:7-10
- 5) 2-Timothy 4:1-4
- 6) 2-Thessolonians 2:3, 10
- 7) Romans 16:17-18
- 8) Isaiah 30:8-11
- 9) Jeremiah 23:25-28
- 10) 2-Corinthians 4:1-5
- 11) Romans 10:13-15
- 12) John 21:15-17
- 13) John 10:11-15
- 14) Acts 20:28-35
- 15) 1-Corinthians 3:3-12
- 16) John 3:31-34
- 17) 2-Corinthians 4:5
- 18) John 3:34-36
- 19) John 5:30
- 20) John 6:38

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 2; 3
- Matthew 24
- John 6:44
- Ezekiel 13; 33
- Romans 2
- Matthew 13
- Galatians 2
- John 15

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Should You Follow A Man? II

Fred R. Coulter

If we're stuck in following a man, what should we do? *and* what is it that God wants us to do? All of those things are certainly very realistic in our lives and it can be a blessing or it can be a curse just depending on several factors: how the minister is, how the people are and all of the other things that are involved there.

Let me just mention one thing that I discovered when I was doing some translating of Jude. One thing that is brought out in this book *The Original Bible Restored* by Ernest L. Martin, which is a very good point, is that the seven general epistles of James, 1st-2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd John, and Jude should be placed right after the book of Acts. If they were placed right after the book of Acts, just by being there, I'm sure they would have been read much more.

How many of you have really studied James, 1st-2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd John, and Jude? Outside of 1-John, I would have to say for myself, not very much. I would assume that would be very similar with your situation.

Jude 16: "These are complainers *and* critics..."—mockers (*KJV*). I'm reading the English in the Interlinear so I can have the Greek in front of me.

"...who are walking after their own personal lusts, *while* their mouths are speaking great swelling words, flattering persons for the sake of advantage" (v 16).

Haven't you heard that before? seen that done? We've seen that happen with ministers. A minister gets his own little select circle of people and they're all the little sycophants; *how great you are!* We've all seen that, too. That's part of it.

Verse 17: "But you, beloved, remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; because they said to you that in *the* last time there would be mockers, who would be selfishly walking according to their own ungodly lusts. **These are the ones who cause division...**" (vs 17-19). How do they cause division?

Verse 19 (*KJV*): "These are they who separate themselves, **sensual...**" What does *sensual* mean? The Greek for *sensual* is 'psuchiko' or however it would be pronounced, because there are several different ways to pronounce the Greek. That comes from the word *psyche*, meaning that these people are *psychic* or they are using the *powers of psychic* or *psychic powers*. It's interesting that in the definition of this, it says very clearly that this is what has been applied to the Gnostics. When you use your

psyche, what are you not using? *The Spirit!* There's really a message here, for us.

- these are the ones who have been 'creeping in unawares'
- these are the ones who are causing divisions
- these are the ones who are using psychic
 - ✓ fortune teller
 - ✓ using psychic powers
 - ✓ demonic powers of psychic
 - ✓ psychology

Haven't we heard a lot of psychology coming into the Church? A right psychology based on God's Word is supposed to mean the understanding or study of human behavior. But this has to do with psychic power. Notice the verse that comes after that. The rest of it says:

"...*they are* psychic, not having *the Spirit of God*" (v 19). That really means something, because if they don't have the Spirit of God, but they appear spiritual, then by whose spiritual power are they operating? *Satan's!*

This gets back to what we have talked about many times in the past. There is good, which is true good that comes from God; there is evil, which is true evil that comes from Satan: the depths, the pits, the worst kind of evil. Then there is evil that comes from God, which we termed 'good evil'—not that evil is ever any good—but that is the power of God, Who is good, Who is bringing evil upon the children of disobedience.

Then there is 'evil-good,' which means there is the good that appears good, but it's source is not God, but it's Satan and it's evil. That's where this thing of psychic fits in. Then you have:

- good/good, good/evil, which is God's punishment using evil against the wicked
- evil/good, which originates with Satan, but it looks good
- evil/evil, which is the depths of it.

That's just a summary about the way of human nature, and so forth.

I thought it was absolutely stunning. You go along and every once in a while something just leaps right out of the page. This just leaped right out of the page right at me. You go back and look at all of our experiences that we've had in the Church.

- How many of the problems with the Church came when those people started relying upon psychic or natural powers so called, instead of the Spirit of God?

- How many of those did we run into? *All kinds of them!*
- What happens when you run into something like that?

If you have the Spirit of God, and then you get around someone who is operating on psychic power:

- What happens over a period of time?
They make evil good!
- How do you feel around those people?
First of all, you feel uncomfortable!
- Why do you feel uncomfortable?
- Is it that you don't like them?
You can't exactly put your finger on it!

What they're doing and saying, though there is some good to it and sounds good, *it is missing the mark of the Bible!*

Just like we discussed before about this man who is supposed to be a minister of God who says that abortion is good based upon one little phrase in the Scripture, which is totally been taken out of context. When you get around people like that, when you first hear them and see them, they sound pretty good. It is true in many cases that it's almost planned.

I heard one man say of his wife—who was a minister who left one of the Churches of God who overtook and did some of these things that we're talking about here—that he worked on his wife carefully for five years, that she would be sure and follow him.

- See how sinister that is?
- What does that do to the Church?
- What does that do to the brethren?

That gets us right down to what we're talking about here today. Brethren should not have to come into a Church of God and expect to have all of those evil problems be within the Church. Unfortunately, they have been. That's what causes a lot of problems and difficulties. That's why we're going through this.

How should you follow a minister? Let's review just a little bit. First of all, let's cover the first three points that we ended up with last time. A minister:

- I. **Has to be called (Rom. 10)**
- II. **Has to be dedicated to loving God, first and foremost and then feeding the sheep**
- III. **Has to know and understand that the Church is Christ's and it belongs to Christ**

- members do not belong to the minister
- members do not belong to an organization
- members belong to Christ
- ✓ He's the One Who has called them
- ✓ He's the One Who brought them to repentance

- ✓ He's the One Who has given the Holy Spirit
- ✓ He's the One Who is bringing them into His Kingdom

We likened that to someone who is going to be a trustee, or a steward, and to do only what the trustor or the owner wants him to do. He has no personal will in it in as much as that he is not going exercise *his own personal will* on the people.

When we understand this, we begin to understand some very important things on requirements for church people, if I could put it this way. How many lived through the whole thing of:

- makeup/no makeup
- long skirts/short skirts
- long hair/short hair
- bell bottom trousers/non-bell bottom trousers
- tight trousers

When you come right down to it, if you're preaching the Truth, those will take care of themselves in the long run. Those are minor, little problems when compared to:

- conversion
- loving God
- preaching the Truth
- faith to be healed
- growing in grace and knowledge
- making it to the Kingdom of God

Aren't those little, trivial things? *Yes they are!* Yet, there have been churches that have had guards—they're called deacons—posted at the door to measure all of the women's skirts when they walk in, because they are dirty, nasty, just terrible creatures if it is too short. *No they're not!*

The same way with hair length. Now, the Bible says long hair is given to a woman for her covering. Fine! Every woman that I know has experienced a butcher for a haircutter. The great thing about hair is *it grows*. Nowhere does the Bible say that short hair is going to keep a woman out of the Kingdom of God. *It doesn't say that!* We don't make that a major issue because, compared to what we're covering here, those are really not the things that ought to be.

IV. Preach the Word of God

That's what they're to do. Preach the Word of God and not themselves.

V. A Minister has to Follow Christ

That doesn't mean he's perfect. It does not mean that he is not without his faults and mistakes.

I think that Matt. 16 is very instructive for us the way this happened and the way it occurred. We

have several things here that are very important for us to understand. There are several things here, very instructive lessons for us. When the question was asked, ‘Who am I?’:

Matthew 16:16: “Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered *and* said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona... [son of Jona] ...for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven. And I say also to you, that **you are Peter**...’” (vs 16-18). You know what it means about ‘petros’ and ‘petra,’ and so forth.

The name for Peter the man is ‘petros,’ which means *small, little stone*. “...‘You are Simon, the son of Jona. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is, *being* interpreted, ‘a stone’).” (John 1:43^[transcriber’s correction]). This is where we go to in the Bible to know and understand that Christ did not build His Church upon the pope, who is supposed to be Peter’s successor.

“...**you are Peter**...” (v 18). He’s getting everything in perspective. Who are you, Peter? *You’re a little rock!*

“...but upon **this Rock**... [‘petra’—a *huge, great, mammoth, gargantuan cliff*] ...I will build My Church...” (v 18). He didn’t say He would build His Church on Peter. We’re going to see what Peter did over here in a little bit.

When we go through this, we understand Who owns it—“...I will build **My** Church...” It belongs to God! It is His! As you see, all of these points tie together.

“...and *the* gates of **the grave** shall not prevail against it” (v 18)—hell; ‘hades’—which is a way of saying that the Church would never die out.

The very basic principle of Mormonism is that the Church died out. When I was up in Mormon-land I got accosted by the Mormons quite regularly about their beliefs, and I would always say that I’m stuck with a problem. The basic tenant of Mormonism is that the Church died out. Jesus said that it wouldn’t die out, so I’m stuck with a problem: *either I believe Jesus, Who’s telling the Truth, or I believe Joseph Smith, who’s supposed to be telling the Truth, but isn’t!* I would have to say that **I’ll believe what Jesus said**, that He would build His Church and it wouldn’t die out. It would be there somewhere.

Verse 19: “I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatever you may bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven; and whatever you may loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven.” We won’t get into a technical study of the ‘binding or loosing’ or what that means in

the Greek at this point, except to say that nothing can be bound that God won’t bind and nothing can be loosed that God won’t loose. It’s that simple! God is not going to bind the name of Christ on pagan holidays, as the Catholics have it. That’s the way it is.

Just because a man sits in a chair *ex-cathedra*, does not mean he’s necessarily speaking the truth. **Truth only comes from God’s Word!** You might decide in a room on the side that you’re going to bring on this doctrine, then you go sit in a chair and proclaim it as authentic, whether it’s true or not. So, that can’t work.

Verse 20: “Then He charged His disciples not to tell anyone that He was Jesus the Christ.” Isn’t that rather strange, but He did—didn’t He? It wasn’t time for everything to be known.

I get literature on that ‘Jesus was only a human being. He couldn’t have been any more than a human being impregnated in Mary by God the Father.’ They completely throw out all the things and the teachings that John has. Somehow men don’t like to accept the Scripture. Here’s one of the Scriptures that it wasn’t time to reveal everything to everybody. That’s why He was saying to don’t tell anyone Who He was at that time.

Verse 21: “From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day. But after taking *Him* aside, Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘*God will be* favorable to you, Lord. In no way shall this *happen* to You.’ Then He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan!...’” (vs 21-23). Peter was trying to serve his own.

Here are several examples. Doesn’t it sound nice that Peter would be so concerned of Jesus that, ‘It won’t happen to You. We won’t let it happen to You Lord. We’re going to protect you, Lord.’ Just before that the Father revealed to Peter Who Christ really was. If He was Who He really was, and said He was, then this really becomes a satanic and an absurd statement under the guise of ‘good.’

This is how most liberals get all of the wrong laws on the books. The end result is, for those of us living here in California, the Peoples Park in Berkley, it becomes an entangled mess. When you try and do ‘good,’ but the origin of your good *is evil*, it’s going to end up in a mess.

This is what Peter was saying: “...In no way shall this *happen* to You.’ Then He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan!...’” (vs 22-23). Jesus didn’t say to Peter, ‘Now, Peter, that’s a nice thought. I appreciate it. I know you’re well intentioned. But let me tell you, that’s not what God wants.’ **NO!** He turned around and said, “...‘Get

behind Me Satan!....” Put yourself in Peter’s shoes for a little bit and think about it. If someone turned to you and just pointblank, after you tried to do ‘good’ said, “...Get behind Me Satan!....” *How dare He... I can just hear it. I only intended...*

“...You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men” (v 23). There’s another good indication about all of these ‘do-gooding’ projects. When it violates the Word of God *it’s savoring the things of men* rather than the things of God.

Verse 24: “And Jesus said to His disciples...” Of course, this is to His disciples. Let’s say Jesus is saying this to His ministers, because these were the first 12 who became apostles, were ordained as apostles. Here’s what Jesus says to the ministers:

“...‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow Me’” (v 24). In other words, regardless of what your circumstances may be, as a minister you better follow God under all circumstances. Sometimes that may not be pleasant. Sometimes it may be difficult, but He said, “...take up his cross and follow Me.”

Verse 25: “For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.” That’s what a minister needs to do. Anyone who is going to stand up and say, ‘Follow me because I’m going to lead you to Christ,’ needs to realize that before he does that his life had better be lost in Christ.

Verse 26: “For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” These are some pretty strong and straightforward words. That’s how we are to follow Christ.

Here’s a command, 1-Corinthians 11:1: “**Be imitators of me, exactly as I also am of Christ.**” Though it is a very small verse, it becomes a very significant one. This is protection for every one of us, protection for all the members who are in the Church of God.

- this gives the limit on where the minister can exert his authority
- this gives a standard of conduct
- a member is not required to follow anything that is not following Christ
- it’s a governing factor for the minister that **he** make sure that **he** is following Christ

so that he can be teaching people to also follow Christ!

This puts everything on what you would call ‘a level playing field.’ In other words, it doesn’t put the minister way up here on some pinnacle and put

the members way down here in some lowly position that they are now the surfs and vassals of the minister. It puts everything in proper prospective and with this it gives a constant governing guide on what a minister should do.

Therefore, you have a situation that is much like this: *this is a guarantee to the minister and to the members, that what is going to be done is, going to be following Christ!* When we have all of the other things first, this helps clarify a lot for us. As I mentioned, that’s one of the things that brought me into the Church and got me out of the Church. We won’t go through that.

Eph. 5 comes along and amplifies it a little bit more and gives us the basis of our relationship. It’s just like anything else. *Everything that there is in life has a relationship!* It doesn’t matter what it is.

- we are all born of our parents
there’s a relationship one way or the other
- we have a relationship one with another within the Church which should be *based on love*
- we have a relationship with God the Father which should be *based on love* and Jesus Christ, which should be *based on love*
- we have marriages which should be *based on love*
- we have a relationship with people in the world *based on loving your neighbor as yourself*

Everything that there is, that you come in contact with, has a relationship and has a function. We have a relationship with people that we have at work:

- good or bad
- stressed or not
- happy or sad
- so much an hour
 - ✓ if you belong to a union there’s a contract
 - ✓ if you don’t belong to a union, then there’s an understanding with your boss
 - ✓ if there’s not an understanding with your boss, then your relationship can deteriorate

because:

- he may not do what you think he should
- you may not do what he thinks you should

Then you have difficulties! We all understand there are relationships. The ultimate relationship in following, should be this:

Ephesians 5:1: “**Therefore, be imitators of God...** [How?]: ...as **beloved** children... [that means *loved of God*; we are to follow God] ...and

walk in love..." (vs 1-2). Of course, that's the biggest challenge that there is. I'm sure all of us fall short on this every single day. That's all a part of growing and overcoming.

"...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (v 2). Comparing the fulfillment of His sacrifice.

Here is another thing that we all need to be doing; 1-Thessalonians 5:21: "**Prove all things. Hold fast to that which is good.**" This means very clearly that if you prove all things, this means what? If you're following God, and you're following Christ, then this should mean that you're not going to have to endure and suffer things based solely on the proscription or the subscription of authority.

I don't recall as long as we've all been together here that I've ever had to use authority for anything. I don't recall that I've ever, from the pulpit had to say, 'You're going to do this by authority. Something you don't want to do, but you'd better well 'blankity-blank' do it.' *No! No!* Why?

Let's just stop and think: Why? *Because we've been following v 21: "Prove all things...."* Isn't that true? We've been open in everything that there is. If you have a question, we answer it. If we don't know the answer, we search out until we find the answer. What happens if we're wrong? What happens if I'm wrong? ***Got to change!***

In personal relations, sometimes it's awfully hard to do that. What if a person 'loses face'? That's kind of a statement that if you are a foreigner and trying to understand English: 'loose your face.' What'd it do, fall off? Left it in the closet? Or as women would say, 'I have to put on my face.' I hung it up that night and it didn't come out just right. Whatever!

'Face' doesn't count, brethren. The only thing that counts is Christ. That's why proving things is so helpful for us to constantly understand. That doesn't mean that on the other hand, to go the other way and be suspicious. There's a time when you need to be suspicious, especially if you're dealing with these psychic-power individuals. Then we have to do as the Bereans did; they 'searched the Scriptures with readiness of mind whether these things were so' (Acts 17). When this is really practiced in a congregation and in a Church:

- it brings a lot of peace
- it brings a lot of love because God's Spirit can flow
- it brings a lot of understanding because we realize that we're all headed together in the same direction

That doesn't mean that anybody's perfect. No one's pretending to be. I think we can build an awful lot more of the love of God without beating up on everybody's faults and mistakes.

- Would you want to keep all your own private, personal, sins and have them publicly beaten every week? *Of course not!*
- When you sin, do you like it? *No!*
- When you do something that's wrong, are you pleased? *No!*

Remember, I said I would be a good boy and not get at ticket. Well, I'm a bad boy; I got one coming here today.

- Was I happy? *No!*
- Am I going to pay for it? *Yes!*

So, as I was signing the ticket, being angry with myself, I just kind of grimaced and the lady officer looked at me and said, 'Sir, is everything all right?' I said, 'Fine. I'm just mad at myself for getting a ticket. You don't mind that do you?' That's not the end of the earth. It may put a hole in my pocketbook, but it's not the end of the earth.

- Am I happy with it? *No, I'm not happy with it!*
- Did I deserve it? *Undoubtedly, I did!*

I'll just have to take care of it the way I have to take care of it, and that's the way it is.

It's the same way with people in the congregation. No one wants to come to Church every Sabbath and get beat up with sin, yours or anybody else's. You might even have a fight with your wife or your son or you daughter:

- How do you feel about that? *Miserable!*
- Did you have a pleasant week? *No!*
- What if you fought with your boss and it's just absolutely incredible, and maybe you might even get fired?
- Do you feel good? *No!*

So, we come to Church to get a little comfort. That's why we need to, as it says here to '*walk in love, prove all things*' and then we can help each other along.

VI. Oversight in the Church

The Bible word is 'oversight.' A modern word would be 'administration.' A word, I think, that has gotten too micromanaged, is 'management.' Things are really getting micromanaged.

I went down to the title company the other day and they're putting in a brand new computer system. I mean, it is fantastic! They're going to know:

- every transaction
- who did what
- who paid for what
- how much
- when

Everything about you on a central computer down in the Los Angeles area! This is through Chicago Title Company. They're going to know how much your property is worth and how much taxes you have. Did you know that the IRS can sit down and plug into all these public records and they can know everything about you in an instant? They're not supposed to do that. Naughty, naughty! Federal law says, 'Can't do it,' but they do. You can see how it's going to come with *the mark of the beast. It is going to come! It's coming!* That's an example of micromanagement. That's what it is; every little detail.

I go to the store and they say, 'Do you want your receipt?' I might take it if I don't know what it is and I need to return it. If you kept every little receipt of every little thing you ever bought anywhere, anytime, you'd have to have half a house just to hold all those receipts.

So, oversight in the Church, let's look at a couple of things concerning that and then we'll survey 1st & 2nd-Tim. and Titus and see what needs to be.

What is the foundation for any minister? *Loving Christ and feeding the flock!* Based on that, let's go to Matt. 20. This becomes important especially for ministers, but members in the Church need to know this, too.

Matthew 20:25: "But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, 'You know that the rulers of the nations **exercise lordship over them...**'" The Church of God that we were in took a lot to themselves to 'exercise dominion' over the brethren.

They micromanaged people's lives and put them in such a situation that this micromanagement brought a lot of emotions, feelings, loyalties—how ever you could describe it—to the fore in such a way that in many cases a guilt trip was laid on the brethren over and over and **over** again by this 'exercising dominion' over them. Who is to have dominion over a person's life? *God! Christ is!*

Let's see who the rule or the dominion, the control, belongs to. Dominion means *control*. If you have dominion over something, you say everything about it—don't you? *Sure you do!* That's yours! If it's your sandbox, that's fine, that's *your* sandbox. As a minister it's not his sandbox, it's not *his* flock and it's not *his* people. *The dominion does not go to the minister!* This needs to be taught. You know, this takes away a lot of micromanagement that is really harassing to a minister.

What do I mean? *When we put people in such a posture that everything that they do must be counseled*, what happens? *A minister is harassed by every little problem that comes along, which he has made his domain, which is not his domain!* Here's what it needs to be:

Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts... [that is the dominion; *God*] ...to which you were called into **one body**, and be thankful.... [the Church, which is what we are called into] ...Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly..." (vs 15-16). That is what is to govern us. That's why the preaching of the Word of God becomes so important.

- God is directing your life
- you're following Christ
- you're being led of the Holy Spirit

All of these things give you the assurance that *Christ* is doing the salvation.

You need to stop and think about it, a church can't save. That's why no minister can ever say 'on the authority of Jesus Christ if you leave this organization, you are lost forever.' *Nonsense!* God just may take that challenge and cause a lot of people to leave to prove that that person was wrong:

- Is God going to follow the command of any man? *Of course not!*
- Isn't that what the Pharisees said of Jesus?

Who is He? He didn't go to any of our schools! How did He learn? These men over here are from Galilee. That's why God started the Church at the temple, did all the miracles and gave the Holy Spirit: *to show that it does not have to be within that corporation of the Pharisees and Sadducees*—likewise, today.

You take it on the other hand, you look at the other side of the coin: not everyone who says that they're following Christ *are following Christ*. Not everyone who claims what they're claiming are necessarily doing so.

Matthew 20:25: "... You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them..."

(go to the next track)

"...and the great ones exercise authority over them" (v 25). That is, they who were accounted great of the Gentiles, exercised authority upon them.

- Can you think of a 'great one' who exercised authority? *The pope!*
- Who was the first pope? *Simon Magus!*
- What did he say about himself?

That's why it's brought out here. We've covered this before so I'm not going to dwell on it and go through a whole historical dissertation on Simon Magus. However, it says:

Acts 8:9: “But *there was* a certain man... [a particular individual man] ...**named Simon**, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself **to be some great one.**”

- What do we have involved here?
- What does sorcery come from? *Witchcraft!*
- What did we start out with? *Those who use psychic powers!*
- Isn't that what Simon Magus was using?
- Did he have the Holy Spirit of God? *No, he didn't have the Holy Spirit of God, absolutely didn't!*
- Did he get it? *No!*

Peter warned him, ‘You better repent of trying to buy the Holy Spirit or you’re going to perish in bitterness and gall’—just summarizing a couple of verses ahead. He was giving out propaganda, spin control—all of these modern terminologies—building up of the image and all of these things that we have today, that he himself was “...some great one.”

Haven't we seen how a person falls victim to that, who started out, ‘I'm just a minister.’? Someone said, ‘You're an apostle.’ Then he said, ‘No, I'm not an apostle and don't ever call me an apostle.’ What happened in the final analysis? *Not only did he become an apostle, he became **the** apostle!* Then he became **the only apostle on earth representing God!** That's what you call giving out that you are “...some great one.”

- Was that authority used? *Yes!*
- Did it cause problems? *Yes, indeed!*
- Was it contrary exactly to what Jesus said? *Diametrically contrary to that!*

Notice what happened:

Verse 10: “To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’” So, he had a following.

- Did he have numbers? *Yes!*
- Did he have a hierarchy? *Yes!*

He had all of these things!

Verse 11: “Now, they were giving heed to him because *he had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries.*” That kind of overseership, or that kind of dominion or dictatorship, is contrasted to what we are told in 1-Pet. 5. We could reference this back to the incident of Jesus and Peter in John 21.

1-Pet. 5 is a command to every minister. I would think that Peter certainly learned a lesson. You stop and think about that. I thought about that a little bit more while I was driving. You know how you do when you're driving sometimes? You get

tired of the news, tired of music, you turn it off and drive along and think a little bit. I was thinking: I wonder how many times Peter remembered standing before Christ and Christ saying, ‘Peter, do you love Me? Feed My sheep. Peter, do you love Me? Feed My sheep.’ We know he learned a lesson because it's written here. This is what he passed on to everybody else.

1-Peter 5:2: “Feed the flock of God... [talking to the elders] ...*that is* among you, exercising **oversight...**”

- oversight is to be *watching over*
- oversight is *not* lordship
- oversight is *not* dictatorship
- oversight is *not* necessarily a democracy

It's an oversight, there of; “...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain... [to gain advantage or merchandise people] ...but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions... [to be treating them as possessions] ...but *by* being examples to the flock of God” (vs 2-3). That's how authority is to be exercised in the Church.

- What if you run up against someone like Simon Magus?
- Do you just sort of whimperingly sit back and do nothing about it? *No!*

You do like Peter; you tell him to get out and shape up his life and maybe, ‘if you repent, God will forgive you. Until then, get out and never come back!’ Unfortunately, because of misplaced authority, too many members were treated that way. That should not be.

We'll do a little surveying here in 1 & 2-Timothy, because these are instructions to ministers. God put it in the Bible so that everyone would know, not only the minister but also the members. This is really the handbook for:

- anyone who's a minister
- anyone who's going to preach the Word of God
- anyone who's going to handle the Word of God

A lot of these things are going to be, because the greatest problems that have ever been has been false doctrine and false ministers. The Bible is so filled with ‘*beware of false ministers,*’ that it becomes important for us to know.

There's a couple of important things which relate to the very first verse, which is found later in the first chapter:

1-Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ **according to the commandment of God our**

Savior...” There’s a command. We’re going to see what all this entails; everything else from there flows from that statement.

“...and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ, *Who is* our hope, to Timothy, *my* true son in *the* faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus, **in order that you might solemnly charge some...**” (v 1-3). Here’s some exercise of authority. What is the ‘charge’ and how is that to be exercised?

“...**not to teach other doctrines...** [*no other teaching*] ...nor to pay attention to **myths and endless genealogies...**” (vs 3-4). Any kind of fable, any kind of religious myth, any kind of thing like that. Don’t even pay attention to it.

In this day and age of sophistication, knowledge and things like this, a minister has to *know* those things, so that he can *not* pay attention to them from the point of view that, he knows where they’re coming from; but don’t give heed to it as doctrine, because it says, ‘no other doctrine.’ It’s talking about to give heed to as doctrine.

“...to myths...”—fables. What are some fables? *We could list all the religious fables that you’ve ever come in contact with:*

- trinity
- Sunday
- Easter
- everything in *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- law is done away with

There’s a very important section right here, just a few verses away.

“...and endless genealogies...” Yet, that’s right there and since I’ve hit the Mormons a couple of licks here, I’ll have to hit them a couple of licks again. They baptize for the dead, all their dead relatives.

I remember that I baptized a woman and she’d been baptized so many times for the dead that she was almost waterlogged one time. She went to the temple or church—whatever it was—to be baptized. She had her whole genealogy. I don’t know how they do that, but they list out the name and then they baptize, bring it up, then baptize again for another person. There was supposed to be about ten people show up so they could all be baptized for these different people who had been dead. They were in various genealogies. Because of a snowstorm she was the only one that showed up and she ended up being baptized that day 200 times. So, you see where endless genealogies come from.

- Another reason is, why would this be here in the instruction to the ministers, in relationship to the Old Testament?

- Under the Old Testament, who could minister before God? *Only a Levite who was a descendant of Aaron and Levi!*

In the New Testament, that had no bearing whatsoever. That’s why in Heb. 7 it talks about the Lord Jesus Christ Who evidently sprang out of the tribe of Judah and not out of the tribe of Levi. There would be some coming along and saying, ‘I deserve to be a minister. I was born a Levite.’ In the New Testament, **so what?**

“...which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith” (v 4).

Remember we read in v 1: “...according to *the* commandment of God our Savior, and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ...”

Verse 5_[transcriber’s correction]: “Now, **the purpose of the commandment...**” It doesn’t mean the end. Protestants read that and say, ‘The commandments have been ended.’ It doesn’t mean that. It comes from the Greek ‘teleos’ which means *the purpose or the end result* of the commandment. It is the commandment that Paul is giving here. What is the commandment of Jesus Christ that is referred to over and over again? The commandment can refer to *all* the Gospel or to the particular one: *that I give you a new commandment, which is that you shall love one another as I have loved you!*

What is the purpose of any commandment? *‘By the Law is the knowledge of sin,’ so you know what’s right and wrong!* So that you can having loving relationships with each other!

Verse 5: “Now, the purpose of the commandment’ of all that I’m telling you is love... [from the Greek ‘agape’] ...out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith”—because you have true, real, deep-rooted faith. You don’t have to put it on.

Verse 6: “From which some, having missed the mark, have **turned aside unto vain jangling.**” Have we seen that happen? *Yes!* We’ve heard some of it, too. We even have some sermons and series of sermons refuting ‘vain jangling.’

Verse 7: “Desiring to be teachers of *the* Law, neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming.” Just like that ‘Yahwehist’ who has a Texas accent. Even the ‘Yahwehists’ are not convinced how to say it or how to spell it, because you have:

- Yahwah
- Yahweh
- Jehovah
- Yah

They don’t know!

Verse 8: “Now we know that the law *is* good, if anyone uses it lawfully.”

Here's another one where the Protestants go to, to say that you don't have to keep the Law, v 9: "Understanding this: **that law is not enacted for a righteous man...**" What does that mean? It actually means this: The law is not *enacted upon* a righteous man. That's what it means.

Today, by the laws of the speed limit of California, I was not a righteous man. I was breaking the law. Here came along the highway patrol and enacted the law upon me, being a lawbreaker. That's what it means. It doesn't mean that the law is not made for the righteous man therefore, since we're all righteous brethren, we don't have to keep the law. That isn't what it means, but that's the fables that the Protestants believe.

"...but for *the* lawless and disobedient, for *the* ungodly and sinful, for *the* unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing *that* is opposed to sound doctrine" (vs 9-10).

That's what that means, and a minister needs to keep all of this in mind. Let's just go on because the whole thing, here, is really important.

Verse 11: "According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, **with which I was entrusted.**"

- Did Paul consider himself a trustee? *Yes, committed to his trust!*
- What does God say to a trustworthy trustee?
- Do you think of any Scriptures?

He's been entrusted with something:

- Matt. 25—the parable of the talents
- Luke 19—the parable of the pounds

The one that does what he's supposed to do, he says, 'Well done good and faithful servant,' because he did faithfully what was right.

Verse 12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that **He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.**" That means *no man puts himself into it*. You can't hire yourself out to it. If you are, you'll be tried and tested whether you really want to do it or stick with it. God will take care of you and 'weed you out' one way or another. Is God able to do that? *Sure, He's able to do that!*

Verse 13: "Who was previously... [he never forgot what he was] ...a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person..." Of course, Paul caused the murder of different ones, most notably, Stephen (Acts.7).

"...but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.... [though zealously he did it,

but it was ignorant and in unbelief] ...But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, **of whom I am chief**" (vs 13-15)—or a notorious one. That's what he was before.

Verse 16: "But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all long-suffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life." Then he talks about those who have departed again.

I thought that maybe I could survey and pull a verse here and a verse there, but in the 1-Tim. 1, at least, I couldn't do that because one thing just flowed on and on to another one. I don't want to belabor you by reading word for word on everything, but sometimes it's good to do so, so that we get the impact of it.

Verse 17: "Now to the King of eternity, *the* incorruptible, invisible, *and* only wise God, *be* honor and glory into the ages of eternity. Amen. **This charge...**" (vs 17-18). We see that in 2-Tim. 4, **a charge!** Every minister, every man who stands up and says, 'I'll lead you to Christ,' there's **a charge** you have to follow.

"...I am personally committing to you, *my* son Timothy, in accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you; in order **that by them you yourself might wage a good war**" (v 18). A very interesting example! I think a lot of us feel as though we have been through some warfare, too.

Verse 19: "Holding to *the* faith and a good conscience. For some, having cast aside *a good conscience*, **have made shipwreck in regard to the faith**; of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I turned over to Satan in order that they may learn not to blaspheme" (vs 19-20).

That's pretty strong. When you really get down and go through it word by word, if we all take it like I want to—and I'm sure you do and you want me to—all of these are pretty heavy words toward a minister as to what he should be doing.

If the minister that you're learning from, really takes this seriously and really does this—not that he's perfect, no one is ever perfect, we understand that—this assures the congregation, and the minister that if he does these things what's going to happen?

- God will be with him
- God will lead him
- God will instruct him
- God will open his mind

If he doesn't do these things, what happens? Just like is says, here, 'shipwreck.' Or, we could say in today's terminology, car wreck. He had to kick some out of the Church.

VII. Conduct of a Minister

We can bypass most of the 1-Tim 2; that doesn't have too much to do with what a minister, should or should not be doing, essentially.

1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, '**If any man aspires to be an overseer...**'" That's what it is in the Greek, an overseer, not a bishop.

Every time I think of bishop, I think of these pointed hats that the Catholics wear and I think of some of the titles they call them: the reverend, the right reverend, the most right reverend. I've never heard of the 'most left' reverend, because 'right,' I suppose, comes from being on the right hand of God..

Verse 2: "Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife..." That's differentiating between those who had two wives. In that society, there were those who had two wives. This is not license to go out and have as many wives as you now want. I'm just reading what it is here.

"...vigilant..." (v 2). He always had to have his guard up in doing what is right and following what is right. If he lets his guard down a little bit, that means he's got something that he has to take care of.

"...serious-minded... [sober (KJV); not given to drunkenness as we read in Titus] ...respectable, hospitable, **skillful in teaching**" (v 2). That becomes very important, that whoever is going to be a minister has to be able to teach. I think that's it's important that he be able to teach things which are difficult to understand, but teach them in such a way that they are sufficiently easy to grasp. We've been able to do that, too.

Verse 3: "Not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect; (for if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* Church of God?).... [it's a very self-evident, basic things which are true]...**Not a novice...**" (vs 3-6).

That is, not one newly come to the faith. Doesn't this happen so many times in Protestant churches? *A man newly come to the faith* and he starts out on a ministry and has a great following, all this sort of thing.

"...**lest he become conceited and fall into the same condemnation as the devil**" (v 6). What does this tell us? *Quite a few things!* A minister has

to not let his vanity and pride get in the way. It also tells us that *lest he fall into the same condemnation as the devil*. Don't everybody desire to be a minister because you're making yourself an open target for Satan; that's what it's saying.

Verse 7: "It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are outside the Church*, **lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**" There are two warnings, here. He has to be careful. That's why:

- proving all things
- holding fast that which is good
- studying the Word of God
- giving oneself over to the Word of God as a minister

All of those things become very, very important.

Then it talks about deacons. I just might say here that deacons, in the way that we have thought of them being deacons—as having nothing to do with being able to teach or to instruct in the Word of God—*is not true!* Deacons, in some churches, have been used as ministerial bodyguards. That's not what a deacon is for, because it says, given the same qualifications, here:

Verse 8: "**In the same way also, the deacons who serve** *must* be serious-minded, not hypocritical, not given to much wine, not greedy for selfish gain... [it sounds almost the same as for an overseer] ...holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And let those *who meet the qualifications* also be proved first; then let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be* blameless. In the same way also, *their wives must* be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober *and* faithful in all things" (vs 8-11).

Just reading this, I can think of a lot of problems that develop, because these standards were not followed. Where it became that deacons were bodyguards and their wives became deaconesses, then they became spies for the minister. That's not the way it should be and that causes a lot of problems.

I don't recall that I have, but I may have on occasion or two, but how many have had a visit by a minister that he got information from someone else he came to visit you and you got put on the hot spot, because of a whispering mouth somewhere along the line? *It shouldn't be!*

Verse 15: "But if I should delay, *you have these things in writing*, so that you may know how **one is obligated to conduct oneself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the Truth.**"

That's what the Church is to be. There can be other things associated with the Church, but this

is the main thing that the Church must be doing. After all, brethren, if you can't come to the Church of God, get the Truth of God, be stabilized and be grounded in it, we're just 'playing church'! *Sure we are!* Of course, you don't want to follow that kind of thing.

1-Tim. 4 speaks about those who will follow doctrines of demons, seducing spirits and all of the problems that will come with that. They'll speak lies and hypocrisies (v 2), forbidding to marry, saying don't eat meat when God says you can eat meat—we won't go into all of that.

1-Timothy 4:6: "If you are teaching these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished... [grown up, fed yourself] ...by the words of the faith and of the **good** doctrines that you have closely followed. But refuse profane and old wives' fables; rather, **exercise yourself unto Godliness**" (vs 6-7).

How does a minister 'exercise' himself to Godliness? That's different than exercising yourself to get in shape. Totally different! Exercising yourself to Godliness would be:

- through prayer
- through study
- through fasting
- through learning of the Word of God
- through putting it together
- helping other people do that

"...exercise yourself unto Godliness." That's what a minister needs to be doing, to help everyone grow in grace, knowledge and love. We are to grow up into Christ.

There are many, many thing that are really important that needs to be done. I want you to read and study all of 1 & 2-Timothy. These bring us the very important things. Some of them we have covered recently, so I am going to just summarize some of the things from here on and do more of a survey.

Verse 10: "Now, it is for this *reason that* we are laboring, and we are personally suffering reproach because we have hope in *the* living God, Who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who are believers. **These things command and teach**" (v 10-11). It's very clear what a minister ought to do, when you get into it. It's really very clear.

Verse 12: "Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers... [v 13]: ...Until I come, devote *yourself* to reading..." What does this mean? *Public reading of the Scriptures exactly as we're doing today!*

"...to encouragement, *and* to doctrine. Do not neglect **the spiritual gift** that is in you... [the Holy Spirit] ...which was given to you by prophecy

with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood. Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them..." (vs 13-15). That what a minister needs to do, give himself *wholly* to God and *wholly* to the teachings of the Word of God.

"...so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all. **Be diligent with yourself**... [you have to watch out for yourself as a minister] ...and with the doctrines; continue in them.... [this is tremendous promise]: ...**For in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you**" (v 15-16). Then it talks about an elder, how to correct, how to rebuke and all that sort of thing.

1-Timothy 6:3: "If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness, he is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness. **From such withdraw yourself**" (vs 3-5). We've all gone through that.

- Isn't it true when all of these things come about?
- Isn't it true when people don't follow the Word of God?
- Isn't it true when they have their own doctrines and their own ideas?
- What happens? *The whole Church gets in an uproar!*
- Did you feel good when you went through it? *No!*
- Did I feel good when I went through it? *No!*

That's why we're here, where we're here. Maybe one of the most important things that we can do is, to help people who went through this, be reassured and be healed spiritually, so that they can follow God.

Verse 11: "But you, O man of God, flee these things... [coveting, fornication, etc] ...and pursue righteousness... [the code word for a minister to do] ...Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith! Take hold of eternal life..." (vs 11-12). That's what a minister needs to be.

When you go through all of this and you really study this and you really go through it, then you understand that being a minister carries an awful lot of responsibility. As the Apostle Paul said, 'I have a burden laid upon me that I need to preach the Gospel. If I don't preach the Gospel, because it's laid upon me, *woe unto me.*'

Read all of 2-Timothy. We'll cover just a few verses, here, so that we can understand exactly the charge given to the ministry.

2-Timothy 1:6: "For this reason, I admonish you to **stir up the gift of God...**"

- Does a minister have to go before God and have Him stir him up?
- Does a minister have to go to God to add His Spirit to him? *Yes!*
- Does a minister have to go to God's Word and study?
 - ✓ to be inspired?
 - ✓ to be uplifted?
 - ✓ to be corrected?
- *Yes!*
- Is God going to put him through the experiences in his life so that he is going to go through these? *Yes, He certainly is!*

"...that is in you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness. Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; **but jointly suffer with me for the sake of the Gospel**, according to *the power of God*" (vs 6-8).

I know you have all experienced with me, that if you're going to really follow along, follow what is true and the Gospel, there are going to be afflictions. They will come. We come down here to those who weren't keeping the faith:

2-Timothy 2:1: "Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus."

Verse 15: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the Truth; but avoid profane and vain babblings...**" (vs 15-16)—and so forth.

We covered recently about *the charge we are to do to preach the Word of God, be instant in season, out of season!*

VIII. Overall Goal of a Minister

Luke 6:40 is one that I referred to in part one that becomes very important, as the whole overall goal and perspective that a minister needs to have in mind and why he's teaching.

- Why should a minister get up and preach, anyway?
- Just because he's supposed to?
- Just because it's the Sabbath and everyone is coming here, so you got to have a sermon to give?

If that's your motivation, you're going to have a hard time finding out what to preach on. It should be the other way around.

Luke 6:40: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfected shall be like his teacher." *Everyone or every disciple shall be perfected as his teacher!* In other words, the whole modus operandi of what a minister should do is to impart as much knowledge to the brethren as he can, so that *they* in turn will know and understand the Word of God and the Bible and be able to live by it and explain it, so that we all can then, give the answer of the 'hope that lies within us' to anyone who asks.

We have heard Eph. 4 given out of context and in context. We've heard this read to us good and bad. We've been beaten over the head with it, but most of the time they leave off several of the things that are important.

Ephesians 4:11: "And He [Christ] gave some as apostles, and some prophets... [I've seen false apostles and false prophets; so have you] ...and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." As I've said, I consider myself a teacher though I'm pastoring this Church. ***Here is the reason:***

Verse 12: "**For the perfecting of the saints...** [as a trustee of God] **...for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all...**" (vs 12-13). That is, all of us.

- Do you know your Bible?
- Can you say there's nothing more to learn?
- Do I know the Bible to say that there's nothing more to learn? *Of course not!*
- Do we have all unity and faith, yet? *No, because the resurrection hasn't arrived!*

"...**come into the unity of the faith...**" (v 13).

- notice the goal
- notice what we are shooting for
- notice the whole purpose and reason for having a Church and a ministry

"...**and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man...** [fully, spiritually mature] **...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**" (v 13).

We have so much to do as ministers to teach the Word of God, all this other stuff really is kind of so much nonsense that you need to shed aside and get rid of. Of course, that's what we're trying to do here; that's what I'm trying to do.

So, when you ask the question: **How should you follow a man?** We're all stuck. We all have to follow a man. When there's only one like me that

you have to follow, then it had better be exactly like it is here, or we're all in trouble.

This is it! So, that we can, brethren, all be there in the resurrection and all of us collectively, together can hear those good words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' That's how you should follow a man.

Just a little add-on: Because I said, referring to our little Church, that I was the only minister there, some people thought, mistakenly, that I was saying I was the only minister in the world to follow, which *is not* what I meant at all. I just want to clarify this for any future reference that we have in sending this sermon out, as kind of a standard sermon to send to people.

What I'm saying in the whole thing is this: If, as ministers and teachers, we follow what God says—to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and being, to love their neighbors has themselves and to love the brethren as Christ loves the brethren—if we do that, what we've covered about how to follow a man, really is the ideal that Christ wants us to shoot for. Not only for ministers to follow, but also for every member. We all have our individual responsibilities to follow Christ in the way that He wants us to follow Him. In saying these things, I'm also reiterating again and again, that *Christ is the Head of the Church*.

As I said when we started out on this, the thing that brought me into the Church, 'Don't follow me but follow Christ' *or* 'follow me as I follow Christ' *and* 'If it isn't in your Bible you don't have to believe it.' That's the same thing that we should always be following at all times. That's very important for us to realize.

I would say that if more of us as ministers and members would do what we're supposed to do, then we wouldn't have nearly the problems in the Church that we have seen and experienced, perhaps even ourselves.

This is not intended to be a proclamation that I am the only minister to follow, but I was just saying to our little group, since I'm the only minister that they have, and that was a reference to that, not that I'm the only minister in the world.

One other Scripture that I forgot to bring up here, says: 1-Thessalonians 1:6: "**And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...**" There, again, *it reiterates what we are to do, how we are to do it!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jude 1:16-19
- 2) Matthew 16:16-18
- 3) John 1:43
- 4) Matthew 16:18-26
- 5) 1-Corinthians 11:1
- 6) Ephesians 5:1-2
- 7) 1-Thessalonians 5:21
- 8) Matthew 20:25
- 9) Colossians 3:15-16
- 10) Matthew 20:25
- 11) Acts 8:9-11
- 12) 1-Peter 5:2-3
- 13) 1-Timothy 1:1-4, 1, 5-20
- 14) 1-Timothy 3:1-11, 15
- 15) 1-Timothy 4:6-7, 10-16
- 16) 1-Timothy 6:3-5, 11-12
- 17) 2-Timothy 1:6-8
- 18) 2-Timothy 2:1, 15-16
- 19) Luke 6:40
- 20) Ephesians 4:11-13
- 21) 1-Thessalonians 1:6

Scriptures references, not quoted:

- Romans 10
- John 1:43
- Acts 17
- John 21
- Hebrews 7
- Matthew 25
- Luke 19
- Acts 7
- 1-Timothy 4:2
- 2-Timothy 4

Also references: Books:

- *The Original Bible Restored* by Ernest L. Martin
- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop

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The Church of God The Spiritual Body of Christ

Fred R. Coulter

This becomes very important, because almost every church says it is THE church. Most people think a church is a building, because the building in which they meet is called *the church*; or it's a cathedral. The Church is NOT the building. The Church in the New Testament comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which means *the assembly of the called out ones*. So it is an assembly. The Church of God is not restricted to a building or an organization. The Church of God is identified by those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ.

Let's begin by going to Revelation 14. They have the faith of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. So if you're looking for a **true** Church of God, you have to look for one which keeps the commandments of God—including the Sabbath and the Holy Days—and believes in ALL the words of God, the whole Bible: Old Testament and New Testament. And you can start eliminating churches very quickly.

First of all, you line up the Ten Commandments, and then you ask the question: Are they keeping the Ten Commandments? Now, we'll do that here in just a minute, and you will see how many churches you can eliminate very quickly. And I know that when I was being called of God, that's how I did it.

Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." So you have to find that.

Let's go back to Exodus 20 where the Ten Commandments were given, and let's see how easily you can eliminate the vast majority of churches which are frauds in the first place and are not from God; and a good many of them—in fact, most of them are not from God but are of this world; meaning *they are of Satan the devil*. Now, that's going to make some people very angry. But, you can be angry all you want at God, it isn't going to hurt God. You can be angry at what I say; but if I say the Truth and your angry at the Truth, well then, you need re-examine your priorities. Maybe you're really not seeking God. Maybe you're seeking a religion. Maybe you're seeking a home—as they call a lot of churches—right? They call it a home, a church home.

Go to the church on your corner—that's what you are told. Well, if it doesn't have the Spirit

of God, doesn't keep the commandments of God, you might as well go down and join the local bowling club, because it won't do you much more good than bowling. As a matter of fact, it might do you more harm because you go there and all you hear are a bunch of lies preached. And if you want to go to a church where they don't teach the Truth of God, **all the Truth of God**, you're going to go to a building filled with people after their own things, and they're not worshipping and serving God—though they think they are.

All right let's begin, Exodus 20:1: "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me'" (vs 1-3). So, if they're not worshipping the true God of the Bible—God the Father and Jesus Christ; the two are one. And as we saw with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is NOT *a trinity*. So that's how you can already identify a **true** Church of God. If they believe in a trinity:

1. it's not of God
2. they're not worshipping the true God—it's not a Church of God
3. the second commandment: "You shall not make unto you any graven image of anything..."—in the likeness of anything!

Now what does that mean? What is 'anything'? Stop and think: 'anything' is what? *Anything!* Right?] (now notice, it says, 'you shall not make.'

So it shouldn't be there in the first place—should it? If you go to a church with pictures of Jesus—that's not the Church of God. If you go to a church that has a cross or steeple—it is not a Church of God. As a matter of fact, you need to get the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop and read where the cross came from. And read what it represents. It will absolutely dumbfound you, and for you to understand that you walked into that church feeling good, walking under that cross or viewing that cross up in the front of the so-called 'sanctuary' of the church or the chapel or the cathedral that you went to. Now if you go to a church that has graven images, you know that's not of God.

"You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the

iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me” (vs 4-5).

So, if you have idolatry, you hate God. You can bow down before the statue of the virgin Mary all you want and tell God how much you love Him, but He doesn't hear your prayer at all because you hate Him; because He says, *don't bow down*, let alone *make*. And you walk into any Catholic or Orthodox cathedral and you have idols everywhere. **that is not a Church of God at all**—because they are transgressing the commandments of God. And the Catholics, by the way, take the second commandment and remove it from their shortened version of the commandments. Yet, in their *Douay Version* of the Bible they leave it in. So if you don't believe me, go check it out.

So you have all these idols, all these statues, all these crucifixes, all those candles, all the beads, all the holy water—**that is not of God**. You need to understand that. So if you truly want God, you're going to have to make some decisions. If you truly want to find the Church of God, you're going to have to start searching, and you're going to have to start eliminating all those churches which are breaking the commandments of God.

Now, let's continue, v 6: “But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments” Now, if you would just make a note and turn to John 14:15, that's exactly what Jesus said. ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ So this is New Testament doctrine right here in the Ten Commandments. If you go to a church and the church says you don't have to keep the commandments of God—NO! They are **liars! They're not of God!** They may use the name of God; they may take the name of God; they may read from the Scriptures; but **they are not from God**.

- Remember that Satan also quotes Scripture.
- Remember that Satan also ‘appears as an angel of light.’
- Remember that his ministers appear as ‘ministers of righteousness. *But they are not.*

Now, here's the third commandment—v 7: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Anyone who says, ‘the Lord says’; and the Lord has not said, is taking the name of God in vain. This is not just referring to swearing and cursing. This has to do in the worship of God, where a man would dare to stand up in a pulpit and say he's from God and say that God did not mean that we should keep His commandments; that God says that Christ came to do away with the

law; Christ came to do away with the commandments, Christ showed that this was only for the Jews. If you heard that in the church you've gone to, you've been lied to. But you see, too many people are not willing to admit that they've been lied to.

- Are you willing to admit that you've been lied to?
- Are you willing to admit that you followed men?
- Are you willing to admit that the church that you went to was wrong?
- Did not teach the commandments of God and did not have the faith of God?
- That every Sunday when they got up there and used the name of the Lord, they took His name in vain?

That's something! You need to think on that!

Now the fourth commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep in Holy” (v 8). Now, we've covered that very thoroughly and we have a whole series on the Holy Sabbath—which you can write for—explaining why Sunday is not the Sabbath. Sunday never was the Sabbath. It's the first day of the week; was never the seventh day of the week—the calendars out of Europe to the contrary. And you will find that what has happened is that men have devised Sunday and it was actually the Emperor Constantine who gave the edict of keeping Sunday. You need to realize that. Someone who was not even converted; someone who was not even converted to God, never knew God, never read the Scriptures—stood up and gave the edict that everybody ought to keep Sunday. Now if you don't believe that, go ask your minister in the Sunday-keeping church. Ask him why he doesn't keep the Sabbath? And then you come back and you write in for our tapes on—we'll have a series of five or six tapes—the Holy Sabbath of God.

God says ‘remember the Sabbath’ and the first thing men want to do is forget it, reject it, throw it away, destroy it. So any church that does not keep the seventh-day Sabbath is not of God. And then when you come down to those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, then you have ask the question: Do they keep all the commandments of God? Because there are Seventh-day Adventists, and Seventh-day Adventists are just Saturday-keeping Protestants. That's all they are. Now they won't admit that, because they're so hung-up on the Sabbath that they haven't gone beyond to the rest of the commandments of God; and they believe in a trinity; and they believe in swearing allegiance to the so-called ‘Christian’ flag with a cross on it. **That is idolatry!**

So you see, now you begin to understand why the **way of Truth** only few are going to find it; because they're not going to be very many who are willing to take the Ten Commandments, like we're doing here in this study, to find out where the Church of God is and find out if they believe in keeping the commandments of God.

“Remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.... [Now, I want you to notice that little ‘of’—that denotes ownership. God owns the Sabbath. It’s **not of the Jews. It is of GOD!** Who is the God of both Jews and Gentiles. You need to get the series on *The Sabbath*.] ...You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that’s within you gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it” (vs 8-11). And *He didn’t bless any other day*.

God NEVER blessed Sunday. The pope cannot bless Sunday and make it Holy, because **he is not GOD!** And He has no authority under which to do so from the Word of God. You need to understand that! You need to get away from following men—if you want to find the **true** Church of God—you need to really sit down and start going through the commandments of God and the Bible of God and understand where the Church of God is.

Now, just to say here—we’ll read it next time; we’ll get into it on the next tape—the Church of God is the spiritual body of Christ. It is the gathering together of the ‘called out ones’

- who have been baptized
- who have the Spirit of God
- who keep the commandments of God
- who have the faith of Jesus Christ
- who keep the Sabbath of God
- who have no idols, no statues
- they don’t take the name of God in vain

They believe in ALL the commandments of God and follow them and live by them as a way of life as shown by Jesus Christ.

This is going to be a very interesting section here. The word translated *church* in the New Testament comes from the Greek word ‘ekklesia’—which means *the gathering together of the elect*. And we will see that the Church starts out with individual members that God the Father has drawn to Himself, and has brought through Jesus Christ. So let’s read what we have here; because many people are looking for a ‘church home.’ They want to find the church where the people are nice and friendly. They want to

find a church that they can feel comfortable in. They want to find a church that is not too far from their home. They want to find a church where they have good teen activities and childcare, senior activities and all of these things. But, does that make it a church? Because it’s a building on a corner, is it a church?—because it’s called a church? Well, let’s see what the Bible defines as the Church of God. Let’s read it right here, *The Spiritual Body of Christ: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 22 throughout).

The Church of God is portrayed in the Bible as the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. God the Father has appointed Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church in all things.

Now, I might mention here that there’s no such thing that God appointed the office of ‘the vicar of Christ’—to be there in place of Christ—because that then is antichrist. So if you are in a church which has claims that their head-man is the ‘vicar of Christ’ you are NOT in the Church of God.

The true Church of God is made up of all who have been called by God the Father, who have accepted His Son Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who have repented of their sins, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have received the Holy Spirit of God as a begettal from God the Father. These individuals are spiritual brethren and members of one church—the spiritual body of Jesus Christ—although they may be widely scattered throughout the world. It is by one and the same Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God the Father—that each one has been baptized into the body of Jesus Christ. This spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father is the basis of all true Christian fellowship. Jesus described Himself to His disciples as “the true vine” and the Father as “the husbandman.”

That is the one who takes care of the vine so it brings forth fruit.

All true Christians are branches of the true Vine and must remain attached to the Vine in order to grow spiritually.

Now, many people believe that if you are in a particular corporate organization, or if you attend a certain church building, or you’re within the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church or a Protestant Church; or we could take it over to the Muslim and the Buddhist and all of the other religions of the world—they all think they’re all going to the same place; they’re all going to heaven. But Christ said that He is *‘the way*

and *the* truth and *the* life.’ And ‘no one comes to the Father except through Him.’

While there is only one spiritual body of Christ, its members are scattered in numerous local fellowships and individual ministries around the world. Since all members of the Body of Christ have the Spirit of God, God does not limit Himself to work through any single organization.

And I might interject here. There is a woman in New Zealand that I visited on my trip down there, and she rents out rooms—she calls them ‘flat-mates’—and she had one move out and she put an advertisement for a ‘flat-mate’; and this person came having nothing whatsoever to do with any background of any of the organizations we know of. He kept the Sabbath, kept the Holy Days and kept the 14th Passover. Good example of someone in the *spiritual Body of Christ*. Because Christ is looking at His Church from His vantage point down on the earth—and that’s what He sees.

Since all members of the Body of Christ have the Spirit of God, God does not limit Himself to work through any single organization... [regardless of *name*; regardless of *claim*—He will not do that]. ...Every group or ministry that is part of the body of Christ will manifest the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit, bear the name of God, and be keeping His commandments as magnified by Jesus Christ. The primary function of the Church is to nurture the brethren of Jesus Christ with spiritual food from God’s Word so that they may grow up into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. The Church also has a commission from God to preach repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ in all the world, and to preach the good news of the coming kingdom and government of God in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ to rule on the earth.

Now let’s look at the Scriptural references here. But before we do, I just want to comment. I think it is fitting, and the way that God has designed it—and all in His plan—that Christ return not until mankind, under the direction of Satan the devil, has reached the highest pinnacle that men can reach. Where we live in this technological age, where men can go into outer-space, they can delve into the smallest parts of creation, and finally have come to the conclusion that they are so smart and so intelligent and so advanced that they don’t need God—and that yea, they themselves are God. That’s why Christ is going to return from outer-space; because that’s the only thing that men fear today— isn’t it? So God is going

to do it in a way, which will be a tremendous and fantastic witness to them.

Now, before He ascended to heaven—let’s come to Matthew 28, and let’s read what He gave as the overall purpose statement or mission as to what the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ were to do. Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority... [*all authority*—‘*exousia*’ in the Greek. He also has *all power* being ‘*dunamis*’—that is the *strength and energy* of God] ...in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [This is why we are to have full faith and belief in God and Jesus Christ.] ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations... [So the Church is to *teach*] ...baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... [And if you want to know about baptism, just go ahead and refer to the section that we’ve already covered concerning *Water Baptism*—which is a covenant death in a watery grave.] ...**teaching them to observe all things...**” (vs 18-20)

You are to go out and *preach* and you are to *teach*. Teach them to observe ALL things. Not some of the things that you agree with; not some of the things that churches say, ‘we’ll take this because we agree with that and we think Christ is right here. But over here we don’t think Christ is right, so therefore, we won’t do it.’ And that’s what a lot of them do when it comes to taking the so-called, what they call ‘communion’ or ‘Lord’s supper’—which is not right. That’s a counterfeit of the Christian Passover. If you don’t have the book *The Christian Passover*, well you be sure and write in for it; or you can click over to York Publishing and you can buy it right on-line, right there, if you want to. But, I want to tell you something very clear, they reject foot-washing. Does your church believe in foot-washing? Does your church keep the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, according to the commandment of God. That’s what Jesus taught, didn’t He? So if you are in a church where they don’t teach these things, you’re not in the Church of God. God has nothing to do with that church that you may attend. Oh, you may have Bible study, you may read Scriptures, but how many times has the minister told you, ‘Well, He didn’t mean this. Christ didn’t mean that. We don’t do this today’—etc.

Now let’s see here: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.” (v 20).

Now, let’s come here to Matthew 24:14—since we’re right here in the book of Matthew. Here’s something else that the Church will be doing—***always be doing!*** And it has happened in varying degrees, at varying times in history. And at

the end it's going to be done in such a way that there will be absolutely no doubt that Christ is returning.

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied... [and we are living in that day right now. You look around you in your city, your town, your state, your country. Is not iniquity abounding?] ...the love of many shall grow cold... [or grow cold.] ...But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved.... [so there has to be endurance by those who have the Spirit of God.] ...And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world... [whether people believe it or not; whether they accept it or not; it will be a witness.] ...and **then shall the end come**" (vs 12-14). *Not until then.*

Let's come here to Ephesians, the first chapter, and let's see where it talks about the Holy Spirit of God. And where, if you don't have the Holy Spirit of God that you are none of His. When you are baptized and have had the laying on of hands and receive the Holy Spirit of God, then you'll receive the begetting of the Spirit of God, which is the earnest of eternal life. Everyone who has the Spirit of God, with the earnest of eternal life, is in the Body of Christ, the *spiritual* Church of God.

(go to the next track)

Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory" (vs 13-14). And all of those who have the Spirit of God are waiting for the resurrection, when Christ returns.

Let's come down here to v 22 and let's see Who is the Head of the Church of God. We need to make it very clear: NO MAN anywhere on this earth is the head of the Church of God. Christ alone is the Head. And if that is not taught in the church that you attend, you're in the wrong church, v 22: "For He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the Church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all" (vs 22-23). So there we have it.

Now, let's come here to Acts, the second chapter, and let's see that God adds members. He adds them by *calling* them, by *bringing them to repentance*. Let's see how that is done. We had that with *Repentance* and *Baptism*, but let's just review that. In order for you to become a part of the Body of Christ—it's not a membership role; it's not some sort of initiation that you just do because it's required; but—it is that you come to a point of complete repentance and understand that your sins

have crucified Christ, and that His payment for your sins is *full* payment for all of the sins that you have committed. But, in order to have that sacrifice of Christ applied to you, you must repent. And something has to happen in your life, in a profound way—just like it did to those who heard Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost here in:

Acts 2:36—and he finished His sermon by saying, "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart.... [That has to happen to everyone. You can't just go join the Church of God. You have to come to repentance. God has to lead you to it.] ...were cut to the heart... [because your heart is the deepest, innermost part of your mind. And that's what God wants.] ...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (vs 36-38). And it's a gift that comes by grace. 'By grace have you been saved' as we have covered.

- you can't earn it
- you can't buy it
- you can't sign up for it
- you can't win it in the lottery

It comes because of God's direct intervention in your life.

Now, Peter continues: "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, as many as *the* Lord our God may call.' [So that's why the Church is the assembly of the *called out* ones. We have been called out of this world; though we live in it, we're not part of it.] ...And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' [And if there's ever a generation that is untoward, it is this one, now. Full of perversion and so evil that the book of Revelation calls it 'Sodom and Egypt.'] ...Then those who joyfully received his message... [so you have to do *it with your full being*—that's what it means] ...were baptized; and about three thousand souls were added that day" (vs 39-41).

Verse 47—and talking of all of those who believed, they were "Praising God and having favor with all the people; and the Lord added to the Church day by day those who were being saved."

So you see, it's not just running down to the corner and finding a little church building that looks nice to you; and there are things there which please you; or they have a good song service; or they have

a wonderful choir. All of those things are not necessarily wrong; but those things are secondary and tertiary at best; because unless you have the Spirit of God then you're 'none of His.' Let's see that now. Let's go to Romans, the eighth chapter and we'll see that.

Romans 8:9—he's speaking to those true Christians who have the Spirit of God: "However, you are not in *the* flesh... [that is as God views you. And as we covered in the section on the two righteousnesses, if you repent and are baptized and stand in the grace of God, God imputes to you the righteousness of Christ—meaning that God is viewing you as you are going to be ultimately in the resurrection. Though you walk in the flesh you don't live after the flesh. That's what it means: *you're not in the flesh*. Obviously, as long as we're still alive in this body, and we have flesh and blood, we're still in the flesh. But spiritually speaking, since we don't live after the flesh, but we live after the Spirit, we are not in the flesh as far as God is concerned.] ...**but in the Spirit**... [and here's the reason why]: ...if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [Now, *if* you have the Spirit of God, you'll know that you have the Spirit of God. Sometimes people doubt and wonder about it because they've let it slide and everything slack along for so long that they drift away from God. But that can be re-kindled back. So that's a big IF.] ...But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

So there is that sharp dividing line. Notice: "But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, **he does not belong to Him**" (v 9). So you have to have the Spirit of Christ. Now if you are in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, then God has provided the teaching so that you are to grow in grace and knowledge and understanding of God's way.

Let's come here to Ephesians, the fourth chapter, and let's see that. The whole purpose of why there is a church.

- It's not to have a building—though buildings are not wrong.
- It's not to have a political movement. If you get all involved in the politics of this world, soon you're taken down again by Satan the devil.

We are not to be a part of this world!

Ephesians 4:4: "*There is one body*... [that is *spiritually speaking* of the Church of God] ...and one Spirit... [because that comes from God the Father, as we saw] ...even as you are called in one hope of your calling.... [which is the return of Jesus Christ at the resurrection, at His return.] ...One Lord, one faith, one baptism... [not many different

ways—ONE] ...one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all" (vs 4-6).

Now, let's come over here to v 11, to see why He gave those as teachers and leaders in the Church. Not as some great, high office; not to exalt themselves over the brethren, but to serve and to help and teach. "And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints... [that all can grow in grace and knowledge; all can develop to the fullest of their spiritual capacity] ...for *the work* of *the* ministry... [which means the *work of the service*] ...for *the edifying* of the Body of Christ.... [and 'edifying' means *to build up*—and the root word comes from the Greek which means *to build a building*. So it's to **up lift**, it is to **teach**.] ...until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [that means *a spiritually mature person*] ...unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ" (vs 11-13).

That is the whole purpose of any organization that is done in serving the people who are called the brethren of Christ, who are part of the Body of Christ. "so that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ.... [Now notice how the Bible defines the church]: ...from Whom all the body... [wherever those are who have the Spirit of God, they are part of the Body of Christ—and we'll see in 1-Cor. 12 (in just a minute) how it is defined there.] ...fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies.... [Everyone has a part.] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (vs 14-16).

That is the whole ultimate goal of what a church should be. So if you are in a church that is run by fear, or that is run by politics, or that is run by get along/go along, then you're not in the Church of God. You have to have the Spirit of God.

Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 12, and let's see what it says about the Church—that it is a spiritual organism, with many different fellowship groups, many different congregations, and so forth. 1-Corinthians 12:4—it talks about the different ministries of Christ. "Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all.... [So God is the one Who is doing it] ...But the manifestation of the

Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*" (vs 4-7)—'with all' means *those who are the members of the Body of Christ*.

- "For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit... [this means for those who are the leaders and teachers]
- ...and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;
- and to a different one, faith by the same Spirit,
- and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
- And to another, *the* working of miracles;
- and to another, prophecy;
- and to another, discerning of spirits;
- and to a different one, various languages;
- and to another, *the* interpretation of languages.

But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God Himself desires*" (vs 8-11).

"For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; **so also is Christ**... [So here is the *spiritual definition* of the church.] ...For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the *body of Christ* is not one member, but many" (vs 12-14). Then it goes on to describe different functions that are there.

Let's come to John, the fifteenth chapter, and here is where Christ defines the Church as the vine. He is the Head and everything comes from Christ. John 15:1:—Jesus said: "I am the true vine..." Wherever you see something like the 'true vine'; 'the true word'—that is contrasting it to what? *Something that is counterfeit and false*—right?

- Is there a false vine? *Yes!*
- Are there false ministers? *Yes!*
- Are there counterfeits? *Yes!*

There's only one Christ, and He is the **true vine.** "...and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit... [So, if you have the Spirit of God and you're in the Body of Christ, Paul says that we'll have 'many tribulations'; many trials. That's because God is purging us.] ...order that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me, and I in you.... [Christ in you.] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can you bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me" (vs 1-4).

The question is: Are you in Christ? If you

have the Spirit of God and are looking to Christ as your Head, and He is the one Who rules your life, then yes, you are in Him and He in you.

"I am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned.... [Now, that's referring to the final day of judgment of the wicked.] ...If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." (vs 5-7).

You have to have all of it. Now notice, if you are in Christ, through the Spirit of God; and He is in you, because of the Spirit of God; and His words live in you—as Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' So all of those have to be in you.

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love." (vs 7-10).

So those who are Christ's will be keeping the commandments of God. Let's see that even in the end-time here. We'll see that in just a minute. Let's come to Revelation 12. Even right in the middle of the tribulation, right at the time of great duress against the Church, that is coming in the future (as prophesied here in Rev. 12), the people of God will still be keeping the commandments of God; because they will be still abiding in the vine of Christ.

Revelation 12:17: "Then the dragon [Satan the devil] was furious with the woman [the Church] and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" Now, that's a profound verse.

Let's come over here to Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."—meaning having His very own faith. Now that is a thumbnail sketch of what the Church of God is:

- Spiritual organism
- consisting of many different fellowship groups
- but all having the Spirit of God
- all keeping the commandments of God
- all in the Vine, Who is Christ

- and all loving God with all their heart, mind, soul and being

That is the true description of the Church of God.

Now from time-to-time there will be troubles which will come into the Church; because Satan is after the Church. So, as we find in Revelation 2 & 3, there are various false doctrines which will creep in to different organizations and fellowship groups. Even having to

- put up with false apostles
- having the doctrine of Baalim
- eating things sacrificed unto idols
- committing spiritual fornication with the churches of this world

—of which Christ corrects ALL of them for that and tells them to repent.

In this day and age we have what is called ‘the Laodiceans’ or the lukewarm ones; because they claim they are rich and increased with goods. And yet, God corrects them and calls them to repentance. And just because it is a spiritual organism, as God looks at the Church, does not mean as people who are weak and human that they will not also subsequently have some problems, too. But God expects all of the false doctrine to be purged out; all of the problems and difficulties to be repented of as we grow in grace and knowledge.

So, that’s the broad, overall scope of the Church of God. Notice, I didn’t say, ‘Come and join us.’ Notice I didn’t say, ‘Find the church of your choice.’ What I’m saying is: You find Christ and God the Father, and you *will* find the Church of God. However, to finish up this section, there are definite signs that you can look to as to where a Church of God is. Now, it’s not restricted to any one organization. There may be many different organizations, but here are the major beliefs that they will be believing that you can look to, to see if it is a Church of God:

1. **They will believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ.** They will not believe in a trinity, but they will believe in the Father and the Son. Now, those who believe in a trinity call those who believe in the Father and the Son only, they call them “cults.” But the truth of the matter is, all of those who believe in a trinity belong to a “cult.” It’s the opposite way around.
2. **Believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.**
3. **Christ only is our High Priest**—there is no intermediary on earth; such as: a man, a leading minister, or even a Pope or a Dalai Lama.

4. **Believe the Word of God**—that it is God inspired. We might add to that, that *you have the right Bible*, which is based upon the text, which was used for the *King James Version* of the Bible—for the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament is based upon the true Levitical Massoretic text, not the Rabbinic Massoretic text. And the New Testament should be based upon the Byzantine Greek. All other Bibles, such as *New International Version*, *The New American Standard Bible*, *The Revised Standard Version*, anything that comes from the Greek text of Wescott and Hort have been perverted and changed and they no longer are considered the Word of God. Now there is a book you can get called *New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Replinger, which you can get and read and you will be astonished as to what they have done to change the words in the Bible.
5. **Will be keeping the commandments of God.** That is, will be keeping ALL of the Ten Commandments.
6. **They will be observing the seventh day weekly Sabbath**, which is called Saturday today. They will be observing the Passover and the Holy Days. So you have Sabbath, Passover and Holy Days all included in there in number six.
7. **They will have the love and grace and of God.** They will understand that; because true commandment-keeping and true grace of God go hand-in-hand because Paul says that ‘through grace we establish law.’
8. **Will love the brethren**—that is, each other. There will be exemplified within the congregations of God, the same love that Jesus had for His disciples.
9. **They will observe the laws of clean and unclean meats**, because that is enforced in the New Testament (as we will see—we haven’t yet come to that one).
10. **Believe in tithing.**
11. **Believe in the coming Kingdom of God**, which Christ will be the King—which will be on the earth.
12. **Do not believe in the immortality of the soul.**
13. **Do not believe that people go to heaven when they die.**

And there are others that can be added on to it, but these are the basic signs that you will find if you are looking for a congregation, which would be the Church of God. The last one we could add to that, which is one I needed to put down there—let’s come

to John 17—this is very important for us to understand.

Now, in the Old Testament, God put His name upon Israel, and His name upon the city of Jerusalem. In the New Testament, with the death of Christ, now the physical temple no longer exists, but we—the collective Body of Christ—***are the temple of God***; and ***that's where He has placed His name***.

John 17:11—Christ was praying before He was arrested to be led off to be crucified: “And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*” So they will bear the name of God. So the Church will also have the name of God.

Now, just this morning driving up, I heard an announcement on the radio where a choir was going to sing at a designated place; and they said the choir was coming from the church, which is called The First Church of the Last Laugh. Well, you can know for sure that that is NOT Church of God—neither any other church called by any other name; because they don't have the name of the Father. And if they don't have the name of the Father, they are not of God. So that's how you find where a true Church of God is.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 14:12
- 2) Exodus 20:1-11
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Matthew 24:12-14
- 5) Ephesians 1:13-14, 22-23
- 6) Acts 2:36-41, 47
- 7) Romans 8:9
- 8) Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16
- 9) 1-Corinthians 12:4-14
- 10) John 15:1-10
- 11) Revelation 12:17
- 12) Revelation 14:12
- 13) John 17:11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14:15
- Revelation 2 & 3

Also referenced:

Sermon series: *The Holy Sabbath*

Books:

- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

The Church of God The Ministry of the New Testament Church

Fred R. Coulter

Now we've come to the section in the *Beliefs* booklet, concerning the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God. And the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God is different than you would consider any ministry of any of other church—inasmuch as we are not hierarchical. And we'll see the reason why we are not hierarchical, but we can still perform the functions necessary and have the proper organization for doing the work of the ministry and serving the brethren that God has sent us.

Now let's begin the section here by reading in the *Beliefs* booklet, the explanation: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 23 throughout)

The Christian Biblical Church of God has a ministry patterned after the instructions of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament.

And also, as we'll see later, according to the instructions of the Apostle Paul.

Those who serve in this ministry do not exalt themselves over their brethren by exercising authority or rank, but strive to serve their brethren in humility and love. The ordained elders of the Christian Biblical Church of God understand that they have been called of God to spiritual service to fulfill the needs of their brethren. An elder may serve as a minister, teacher, pastor, evangelist, or in other needed capacities. The function that each elder fulfills varies according to the measure of the gift of Jesus Christ. The qualifications for elders are found in 1-Timothy 3 and Titus 1. That a man has been called by God into the ministry is evidenced by his love of the brethren and his love of God the Father and Jesus Christ. An ordained elder must maintain an attitude of true conversion and dedication to God the Father and Jesus Christ. He must have a deep desire to serve the brethren of God and must have the ability to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the ministry is to edify and build up the Body of Christ. It is the responsibility of the ministry to teach and preserve the true doctrines of the Bible, to serve the spiritual needs of their brethren,

and to provide leadership within their local congregations. Those who are ordained to evangelize also have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers, to teach all who will listen, and to baptize in all nations.

Let's first of all go to 2-Timothy 2:1, and see one of the very first qualifications for an elder. Now, this was before the Apostle Paul was going to die, and he knew that this was his last instruction that he was sending to Timothy; and he was turning things over to Timothy at that point: 2-Timothy 2:1: "Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also" (vs 1-2).

Now, if we look at the pattern of the Apostle Paul's ministry, and how he dealt with the local congregations, though he was the apostle he never exercised authority upon them downward in a way that most religious organizations are used to, and especially in the sense of the Catholic Church as we see it today. So it's very important to understand that ***a man must be called of God***. Let's see what Jesus told His apostles. He can't appoint himself. In a day where we're living in an age when we have so many, many as self-appointed ministers. Now, they need to be careful because they are bringing judgment to themselves in doing so.

John 15:16—Jesus told His apostles: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you.... [And then He gave another command concerning the elders]: ...These things I command you, that you love one another" (vs 16-17). So there has to be a love between elders as well. Not only for the brethren, but for each other; because how can you serve the brethren, collectively, unless you love God and love the brethren and love each other. Otherwise, there will be strife and competition which will take place among the elders, and power struggles and politics will ensue, which encompasses nearly every church that you can think of—whether it be a Church of God or whether it be a church of the world; Protestant or Catholic.

Now, let's go to the Epistle of James, chapter three, and let's see the warning that James gave; and this is very important to understand, the relationship to elders and teachers. James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers... [now the Greek there is 'didaskalos' which means then *teachers*.] ...knowing that we will receive more severe judgment.... [It says 'condemnation'—and if it is a negative judgment, then it is going to be *condemnation*—held more accountable.] ...because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body" (vs 1-2). Now, elders are not perfect. They're human beings. They have faults and mistakes like anybody else. And so, they need to watch over themselves.

But let's first of all see the attitude of the structure that Christ wants. Let's come to Matthew 20:17, and let's see what Jesus told His apostles—what they were to do; how they were to conduct their lives and their ministry. But I'm going to start here in v 17 because everything that is done by the ministry or elders is based upon the life of Christ and what He has done; because it is His Church and He is the Head of it.

Matthew 20:17: "And while they were going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside in the way and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death; and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock *Him*, and to scourge *Him*, and to crucify *Him*; but He shall rise again the third day.'.... [Then notice what happened right after that. Here is Mrs. Zebedee waiting in the wings with her two sons: James and John.]: ...Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [Now her sons were with Him and they knew what she's going to ask. And I've often wondered, did they put her up to it? Because they wouldn't dare ask Jesus themselves, but maybe if mom asked, maybe He would be a little more kindly toward the request.] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, 'What do you desire?'...." (vs 17-21).

"She said to Him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your* left *hand* in Your kingdom.'.... [And she probably added in, 'You know, Lord, they are good boys.' They were also known as sons of thunder, 'and Lord, you know how they can preach.' So we have a little bit of motherly politicking here. Now, Christ was very merciful to her, because notice how He handled it. He didn't talk to her, He talked right to the two boys, because they were the ones who were responsible.]: ...But Jesus answered *and* said, 'You

do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'" (vs 21-22).

Now, they really didn't know what they were asking for, but Jesus took them up on it, "And He said to them, 'You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give.... [now notice, even though this was as presumptuous as it was, Christ handled it in a very humble way—didn't He? And was exemplary of what He was about the teach them.] ...but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.' And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers" (vs 23-24). Because, I think it was, that none of the other ten got to Him first to ask the same thing. Even at the Passover—remember? They always had contention, who is going to be the greatest? When the Holy Spirit came that helped modify that carnality a great deal.

It's not a matter of who's going to be the greatest, because that isn't the way that God wants it. God does not look on the face of a person, or respect persons, in doing things in a political way that people do.

So Jesus had to settle an argument. So here are all the twelve apostles out there. Can you imagine Peter getting right up in John's face and say, 'Oh, the gall of you doing that. Why did you do that?' So Jesus called them all together, v 25: "But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, 'You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them... [and that means 'dominion downward' as in a hierarchy, because the Greek here is 'katakuriueo'—which means *authority downward*; to exercise *lordship* over them.] ...and the great ones exercise authority over them.'" And that is 'katakuriueo'—which means *to exercise authority downward*. Now the rulers are the princes; the great ones are the religious leaders, as we talked about concerning Simon Magus. He was some 'great one' who was called 'the great power of God and deceived them in Samaria and bewitched them' with the demonic powers that he had, giving out that he was the great power of God. So he exercised dominion over the people there in Samaria.

Christ said, v 26: "However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, **let him be your servant**.... [one who serves.] ...and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave... [comes from the Greek word 'doulos'] ... just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life

as a ransom for many.’” (vs 26-28). So there is the whole attitude that Christ wants.

Now, the ministers are to understand, always, that Christ is the Head and He has the authority. Let’s go to Matthew 28. In exercising the authority that Christ has given, you have the authority to teach, the authority to preach, the authority to correct; but not the authority to lord over. Too many times, ministers are all involved into solving other people’s problems, they do not then have the time to teach them how solve their own problems. The main thing is for anyone who is an elder or teacher is to teach them how to solve their own problems and have a relationship with Christ. Then he can give himself to the Word of God and study as he needs to.

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority... [which in the Greek is ‘exousia’] ...in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [And that means *within the Church*—Eph. 1: Christ is the Head of the Church. He is the Head of the Body. Here is the responsibility for teaching and evangelizing]: ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father... [because He is the one Who does the calling and the drawing and gives the Holy Spirit.] ...and of the Son... [because it’s through His sacrifice, through His life, through His resurrection, through His atonement and His justification for us that we have forgiveness of sins.] ...and of the Holy Spirit’” (vs 18-19). Because the Holy Spirit is the power that comes from God to lead us in the way that we need to go.

Now here’s what they are to do: “‘Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.... [not to leave out anything. Not to come along and say, ‘Well, God didn’t mean this, and Christ didn’t mean that, and this isn’t in the Bible, and that’s not in the Bible like the *New Age Bible Versions*; the *New International Version* of the Bible takes so much out of it. How can you teach all that Christ said when you leave it out? It’s almost unreal.] (now notice—anyone who is an elder or a teacher or a minister can have full confidence): ...And lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the completion of the age [or the world]. Amen’” (v 20). He’s not going to give up on them. He’s not going to leave them alone—either the elders or the brethren. Christ said that He came to ‘do the will of the Father.’ And all those that the Father ‘have given’ Him, He wouldn’t ‘lose one.’

Now let’s go to Titus, the first chapter, and see some of the qualifications that Paul gave for those who should be elders. We have a series on *pastoral epistles* [*Seven General Epistles*] of 1-2

Timothy; Titus and Philemon. I’m just about done with 1-Timothy and about ready to get into 2-Timothy and there’s an awful lot that we can learn out of it. So we’ll just review a little bit of it here as we’re going through.

Titus 1:5: “For this cause I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things that needed to be done, and might ordain elders in every city, as I commanded you.” So there was an overseership, by Paul, over the elders that were with him; to instruct them and to do what they should do. But we don’t find a ridged hierarchy anywhere in the Bible where that it is likened unto the Catholic Church. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church is that kind of hierarchy that is needed to keep the people in line, *in fear!* Because it is not of God, and as a matter of fact, it is of Satan the devil and the only way you can keep people in line with Satan the devil is to let them have their indulgences and to keep them in fear and control. Jesus said, *‘That shall not be so among you.’*

So, here are the qualifications: “If any man be blameless... [and is living a good and a decent life. And ‘blameless’ then has to be according to the commandments of God.] ...*the* husband of one wife, having faithful children...” (v 6)—and ‘faithful children’ indicates here that younger men can be selected as elders. What happens when your children grow up and then leave the home and they become unfaithful? Should that disqualify from being an elder because of the choices of their own offspring? *No!* That would have disqualified Samuel, wouldn’t it? Because Samuel’s sons turned aside and took bribes, but God did not remove Samuel from judgeship because His sons became corrupt—did he? *No!* It’s the same way with Moses. Now it’s hidden, but in the book of Judges it says the son of Manasseh, Gershom; but that should be Gershom, the son of Moses, led off people into idolatry. Did God remove Moses because of what Gershom did? *No!* So this is showing that they can be younger men, they can have children, but they are to be faithful children as long as they’re living under his roof. Obviously, because you cannot hold someone else, who is fully accountable adult, hold their mother and father responsible for them at that date.

“...not accused of debauchery or rebellion. For it is obligatory that as God’s steward an overseer... [now this is an unfortunate translation in the *King James Version* and reflects some of the prejudice of the translators—still not too far removed from Catholicism. It should be *overseer*. That means that an overseer is to oversee the affairs of the congregation, to make sure that everything is done in decency and in order. That does not mean he’s an overlord. He’s more like a coach on the sidelines, getting everyone involved in doing what

needs to be done, but especially in their relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...an overseer be blameless..." (vs 6-7). Now, a steward is one who takes care of someone else's property. In today's parlance, it's called someone with a fiduciary responsibility; meaning that *you have a responsibility to care for someone else's property according to their instructions.*

All the brethren belong to God, and it is the fiduciary responsibility of all elders to understand that they are to act and conduct their lives and their ministry in serving the brethren; knowing that everyone that has been called has been called of God the Father. None of those who are baptized members belong to any man; they belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ. They're not the vassals, they are not the servants, they are not to lord it over the brethren as stewards of God. So he's to be blameless in that. He's to be blameless first in the world, in his conduct in the world—in the first case (v 6). Then he is to be blameless as a steward over the things that belong to God.

Continuing now: "...not self-willed... [because whose will is he to execute? *The will of God*, not his own.] ...not quick-tempered... [doesn't mean he can't get angry. You can have righteous indignation, but not someone who just continually flies off the handle at the least little thing.] ...not given to wine... [doesn't say he can't drink it; but not given to it. Even Jesus was called a 'wine-bibber'; so that meant He drank a considerable amount of wine.] ...not given to wine... [that is *addicted* to it—and of course, this then would be leading toward alcoholism.] ...no a bully... [that is, in Australia they call it 'buckup'—when they have a fist-i-cuff it's called a 'buckup'—so we can say here: not a buckuper, no striker.] ... not greedy for material gain" (v 7)—because he has to handle the money and the funds of God with the tithes and offerings. And if he's covetous of money then he's given to 'filthy lucre' and take that for his own use. And we've seen many examples of that.

"But **hospitable**, a lover of **good**... [not just good men, but a lover of good] ...sound-minded... [serious-minded, not some jokester. Remember, we had an evangelist that every time he got up in the pulpit it was almost a semi-pornographical exposé of different things in the Old Testament in such a hilarious way that everyone was rolling in the aisles—and sooner or later he was no longer an evangelist.] ...**sound-minded, just**... [means he's not to be intolerant—he's to be just, to be fair.] ...**Holy**... [that is having a conduct which is worthy of the Holy Spirit] ...**self-controlled**... [having self-control] ...**holding steadfastly** to the faithful Word" (vs 8-9). Not only is he to hold fast in it, but he's also to grow in grace and knowledge of it.

As we found out, as Paul was talking to the Jews and instructing them in Rom. 2, he said, 'You that teach the law, do you not also teach your own self?' So the ministers and elders are to constantly be studying and growing in grace and knowledge and learning and letting the Holy Spirit of God to lead them, to teach them. Then they can teach the brethren.

"...the faithful Word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*... [which means *out of the Scriptures*.] ...so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine... [this means he must *know the doctrines*; he must *understand the Truth*; he must *be able to teach and explain it*.] ...and to convict... [encourage and uplift] ...those who are gainsayers.... [Now, here's his authority within the congregation]: ...For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from the *circumcision party*, whose mouths must be stopped; who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain" (vs 9-11). They are to preserve the doctrine, preserve the teachings within the Church.

Now, let's see the parallel account back here in 1-Timothy, the third chapter—it explains a little more about that. There's some very good admonitions which are added to this. We will see their similarities, but there are also differences.

1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.'.... [It's not wrong to desire it. But what is the motive of the man involved in desiring it?

- Is it to be important? *Forget it!*
- Is it to be able to control people? *Forget it!*
- Is it to be able to make money? *Forget it!*

None of those!] ... he desires a good work.' Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant... [that means *watching over himself*] ...serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching; not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarrelor... [you don't want someone out from the World Wrestling Federation to be...he'll take the brethren, if they don't do right, he'll throw them down on the mat in the ring. God doesn't want that kind of thing, that kind of attitude.] ... not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect" (vs 1-4). Of course, if your children have grown up and gone away from home, then they're not at home.

"(for if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* Church of God?). Not a novice... [that means *someone newly come to the faith*] ...lest he become conceited

and fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil... [because the devil is right there to take advantage of pride. Wherever there's pride Satan is there: 'Yea, go get it!'] ...It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside *the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the snare of the devil*" (vs 5-7).

So, it also shows this: That the devil is going to be there to take advantage of every elder or overseer or minister who does not conduct his life in a right way and live by every Word of God, and do the things that God wants. He's going to be there to trip you up and cause you problems.

Now let's come to 1-Peter, the fifth chapter. Let's see what Peter also taught; how he admonished much the same thing. And he also gives a warning concerning that Satan is right there to take advantage. Now the way the churches are taken down is that you have ministers or elders or people who are in position—which we have all seen in our church experience—haven't we?—that then fall into a habit and practice of sin. Then it becomes unrepented of and then there's an entrance of Satan the devil into the situation to take it down. Now notice what Peter wrote here:

1-Peter 5:1: "*The elders who are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed.... [He saw Christ transfigured on the Mt. of Transfiguration—didn't he? He also saw Him after He was resurrected—didn't he? *Yes!* And we'll see Christ's instruction to Peter in just a bit.] ...**Feed the flock of God**... [that's why he is to be a steward, because the flock belongs to God; and of course, Christ is the true Shepherd.] ...*that is* among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions..." (vs 1-3). Again, **not to lord it over!** Did Peter learn the lesson? *Yes, he did!*

"...but *by* being examples to the flock of *God*. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory. In the same manner, *you* younger men... [younger elders] ...be subject to *the* older men and all *of you* be subject to one another... [That's why we saw back there in John 15:17: 'love one another.' So there has to be that love among the brethren; the love among the elders.] (now notice): ...being clothed with humility... [much more so for anyone who is serving in any capacity—elder or deacon, doesn't make any difference.] ...being clothed with humility, because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble" (vs 4-5).

Now just the opposite of human nature. I mean, go back and look at the example of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was warned! And one day he was out looking at great Babylon and he said, 'Look at what I have done. Look at what I have accomplished. I have built this great Babylon myself.' BANG! Now, he was not a minister; he was not an elder; but he exalted himself in pride—didn't he? Did God humble him? *Instantly!* He went out of his mind for seven years and ended up eating grass like the cattle. That ought to be a lesson to anyone who's a leader. He was a leader, but he wasn't an elder.

"Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time" (v 6). Don't be striving politically to gain, to get up the ladder. And we've seen that, too—haven't we? What did we have? *We had local elder; next rank was preaching elder*; oh, we had one below that, that was local, local elder—that's what it was. And then local elder; and then preaching elder; and then pastor and evangelist and then apostle. And there was all the political climbing. And everyone wanting to exalt himself.

Verse 7: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [He's talking to the elders.] ...Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the devil* is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world" (vs 7-9). So the vigilance of an elder is very profound. One of the chief requirements.

Now, let's come to John 21, and let's see the lesson that Jesus taught Peter—and he learned this lesson. Very last chapter of the Gospel of John. This is after Christ was resurrected. John 21:15: "Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter... [This is a formal title.] ...'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?'" So this ought to keep politics out of the whole thing, because there were the other apostles that were there with him. If you love God, if you love Christ, then you're not going to be involved in politics.

"And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.'.... [Now, in the first case, Jesus asked it of the *agape* love, the Divine love; and Peter answered Him with the *phileo* love, meaning *the friendship love*. 'You know I love You.')] ... He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?'... [again, *agape* or *agapo*] ...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.'... [Again, *phileo*] ...He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'.... [Now, I want you to notice the impact of

this]: ...He said to him the third time, 'Simon, *son of Jonas*, do you love Me?...' (vs 16-17). Now, why do you suppose He asked him three times? *Because on the night of the crucifixion, Peter denied Christ three times.* So He wanted to make sure that he wasn't going to deny Him. And the way you do that is with the love of God.

"...Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'... And then Peter turned right around and became political. After he received the Holy Spirit, he learned the lesson, as we saw there in 1-Peter 5.] (But notice what happened): ...'Truly, truly I say to you, since you were young, you have dressed yourself and walked wherever you have desired; but when you are old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall dress you and bring *you* where you do not desire *to go.*' Now He said this to signify by what death he would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'... [Which means follow Me to what? *Unto your death!*] ...But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following... [turned around and looked at John] ...who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is betraying You?' Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, what *shall happen* to this one?' ... [little comparison here] ...Jesus said to him, 'If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you? You follow Me!'" (vs 17-22).

What is the whole lesson here, for any elder? You're to love God totally, in everything that you do; and you're to follow Christ in everything that you do. That's the whole lesson, and that's the whole thing of which the ministry of which the Christian Biblical Church is based upon.

Now, we'll come to one other Scripture and I'll let you go through all the rest of it yourself. There are many other things that can be added to it that we've covered in the pastoral series. Let's come to Ephesians, the fourth chapter, and again, we will see how profound it is in Paul's writings. And I'll tell you one thing that's very important, which one minister told me one time, and I took it very serious, which is this: If you want to know how to conduct your ministry, study and know 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. And know the Epistles of Paul and pattern what you do after Paul, the way that he did it. And I'll never forget that. Now here's what Paul says:

Ephesians 4:11—this is after He ascended to heaven: "And He [Christ] gave some as apostles... [not all, some] ...and some prophets... [and the prophets are those who would be inspired speaking as well as foretelling.] ...some evangelists, some

pastors and teachers." You see, all of the above are functions. They are not offices into which a person is ordained, which he perpetually is there. All ordinations make those who are ordained as elders.

- some elders are overseers
- some elders are teachers
- some elders, as Peter said—who was an apostle—'who am an elder, too.' He was an apostle

So these are the functions of what they do in their eldership. But here's the whole purpose of everything that is done. And the reason and the heart and core for the ministry of any church—but in particularly the Christian Biblical Church of God:

"For the perfecting of the saints... [Now that's quite a responsibility, isn't it? To help all the brethren, feed the flock and perfect them.] ...or the work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all... [now notice Paul includes himself] ...until we all come into the unity of the faith... [So you grow in that] ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [and that means *unto a full, mature, spiritual Christian.*] (Now notice the standard): ...**unto the measure of the stature of fullness of Christ**" (vs 12-13). Now that's where we are to all attain.

And I tell you, brethren, God is really, really got some fantastic thing in His plan for everyone that He calls.

"So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine... [especially anyone who is an elder.] ...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body [the Church], fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (vs 14-16).

So that gives you a brief overview of the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God. Obviously, there's a whole lot more to it, but you can get the tapes on the Pastoral Epistles and go to it more in-depth.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Timothy 2:1-2
- 2) John 15:16-17
- 3) James 3:1-2
- 4) Matthew 20:17-28
- 5) Matthew 28:18-20
- 6) Titus 1:5-11
- 7) 1-Timothy 3:1-7
- 8) 1-Peter 5:1-9
- 9) John 21:15-22
- 10) Ephesians 4:11-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Timothy 3
- Titus 1
- Ephesians 1
- Judges
- Romans 2

Also referenced: Sermon Series:
Seven General Epistles

Christian Biblical Church of God Offices:

United States

Post Office Box 1442
Hollister, California 95024-1442

Canada

Post Office Box 125
Brockville, Ontario
K6V 5V2 Canada

Australia

GPO 1574
Sydney 2001
Australia

United Kingdom

Post Office Box 8224
Witham CM8 1WZ
United Kingdom

New Zealand

Post Office Box 73
Pokeno 2473
New Zealand

Republic of South Africa

Post Office Box 494
Frankfort 9830
Rep. of South Africa

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