

I Chose You to Bear Fruit--Ordination of Glen Bloomstrom--October 12, 1981 by John Piper

Sermon Excerpt:

You must, you must resist everything that would pull you away from rigorous study of God's Word and daily hours of prayerful meditation to let that Word sink in and abide. The inwardly abiding word is a truth of Scripture believed, cherished, and rolled back and forth in the imagination until its implications spill over into daily life as love and joy and peace and righteousness. The Word will not abide within us if we are in a hurry. We pastors deceive ourselves when we are so busy doing good things that we snatch a text and a prayer on the run and think that we will be mighty men of God and bear spiritual fruit.

To be very specific, Glenn, so that you will remember it, almost no minister of the gospel will be a spiritually fruitful person if he is spending less than two hours a day in prayer and meditation in addition to his sermon preparation. Holy, powerful, life-changing spiritual men of God are not made on the run. There are so few people who believe that, Glen, that the expectations laid on you in the service will probably be a constant threat to your spiritual power and fruitfulness. But Christ has appointed you to go and bear fruit. So resist those expectations with boldness. <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/i-chose-you-to-bear-fruit>

"Pastor, You Are Not An Errand Boy To The Church!"

When Alexander Maclaren was called to the pulpit of a great Baptist church in Manchester, England, he sat down with his deacons and said. "Gentlemen, there is one matter to settle before I take this position. Do you want my head or my feet? You can have one or the other, not both. I can run around doing this and that and drinking tea, if you wish me to; but don't expect me to bring you something that will shake this city."

God does not call men into the pulpit to become errand boys. He does not call pastors to be jacks-of-all-trades. There is no way on earth a pastor can do everything. Yet this is what many pastors attempt to do.

These kinds of pastors are not specialists, they are generalists. Too often we find pastors who are interested in everything and everyone. And too often we find churches requiring their pastor to be interested in everything and in everyone. Pastors like this can do a lot of things very well, but almost nothing great.

Instead, God calls pastors to get on their faces before Him. He calls pastors to search and study His Word. He calls men to seek Him, to learn from Him, to know Him and to make Him known.

Show me the pastor who gets on his face day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and I will show the pastor of a healthy congregation. Show me the pastor who is a specialist in God's Word, and who delivers the goods each time the church gathers for worship, and I will show you a man fulfilling the call God has placed on his heart. Pastor, quit being errand boy to the church, and start being a servant to the King.

4 Expository Preaching books that D.J. Horton recommends

- *Preparing Expository Sermons*, Ramesh Richard,
- *Spirit-led Preaching*, Greg Heisler
- *Planning your Preaching*, Stephen Rummage
- *Preaching for God's Glory*, Alistair Begg

Resources:

preceptaustin.org (tons of resources, one of the best!)

bible.org (ministry of Dallas Theological Seminary)

desiringGod.org (Piper)

truthforlife.org (Alistair Begg)

sermoncentral.com

sermonillustrations.com

gotquestions.org

christiananswers.net

apologeticspress.org

carm.org (apologetics)

rzim.org (Ravi Zacharias)

djhorton.org

movingforwardradio.org

(Stephen Rummage)

lwf.org (Adrian Rogers)

gracepres.org (Bryan Chapell)

I recommend: Thirty Minutes To Raise The Dead: A Primer on How Pastors or Lay Persons Can More Effectively Communicate God's Word (Bill Bennett)
How To Read The Bible For All It's Worth (Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart)
Grasping God's Word (Duvall & Hayes)

DESIGNING THE MESSAGE

Section One: Why Is This Important?

- Here's why you need to listen.
- If you don't listen to this, you forfeit something. There is something at stake.
- The next few minutes are worth your time.
- I want to create common ground.
- Here's a story that shows we have something in common.
- There is a problem or challenge we both share.
- We're about to discover the solution, together.

Section Two: The Answer

- I am going to unpack the solution to the tension I created in the introduction.
- Here is the bottom line.
- I'll repeat that bottom line several times from this point forward.
- I'll illustrate the bottom line.
- I'll show it, not just say it.
- I'll show you why you **MUST** buy into the solution I'm presenting.
- Here are the results.
- Don't you want to be a part of this?
- We're in this together.

Section Three: Imagine

- Imagine what this would look like if it became reality in our lives.
- Repeat the bottom line.
- Tell a story to illustrate what could happen.
- Tell them what they can do this week to act on this

PreachingRocket.com

Ask These Four Questions Before You Start:

1. What is my message about?

- Every message should have a central theme, but a message is more than a topic. You can have a topic without having a point.

2. Why is it important?

- You might know why it's important to you, but why is it important to your congregation? What's at stake?

3. What do I want them to do?

- Great sermons don't just present important information...they lead people to action. Do you have a clear and compelling action step?

4. What is the single most persuasive idea?

- I have a topic, but do I have a point? If you can't summarize your idea for Twitter, keep working. The best ideas are short and memorable.

Before you write a sentence, paragraph or an outline, answer those four questions. Those questions don't need quick answers; they need prayerful answers.

A Framework For The Message

With answers to those four questions in hand, it's time to start laying out the message. I'm going to give you a framework for a message that works in most circumstances. This isn't meant to be a fill in the blank template for every message, but it's a general framework that has worked time and time again to help organize content and ideas. Let's think of your message in three boxes.

1. The Introduction

During the introduction, you must answer the question: Why is this important? And when you set out to answer that question, it's got to be deeper than why it's important to you. Sometimes, things that are important to the communicator are not important to the congregation. Just because you're passionate about something doesn't mean your audience will be passionate about it.

It's also not important to everyone because it's in the Bible. Of course, the Bible is the Word of God and all sermons must be based in the Scripture, but everyone in your congregation will not automatically listen to something because it's in the Bible.

The introduction is the proper place to build tension and find common ground. In these important minutes, you're not talking to an audience, you're talking to a single mom, a teenager, a skeptic, a committed Christian man, and more. How will you find common ground with them? How will you relate? To the preacher, the most important thing is the bottom line. To the listener, the most important thing is why they should listen.

How will you build tension during the introduction? Tension gets someone to lean in. Tension is what engages someone. When you tap into tension, the person sitting in the audience wants you to keep talking. Instead of thinking, "How much longer is this?" they are nodding their head in agreement and hoping you're going to answer the questions they are thinking.

So here's box one.

- Why is this important?
- Here's why you need to listen!
- If you don't listen to this, you forfeit something. There is something at stake.
- I need to convince you that the next few minutes are worth the price of your attention.
- I want to create common ground. A story is a great way to do that.
- A story that says, "We share something in common."
- There is a problem or challenge that we share and we're about to discover the solution together.
- The introduction to any message is important, because the first five minutes often determine the effectiveness of the next 30 minutes.

2. The Answer

If you've done a good job during the first five minutes, the congregation is ready for you to answer the question you've asked or resolve the tension you've created. This section is really the meat of your message. In this section, you need several things:

You need a memorable bottom line.

- A bottom line is the big idea. It's the main and memorable point of the entire message.

You need stories and illustrations.

- As you unpack a passage of Scripture, you're connecting it to the bottom line. As you repeat your bottom line a few times in a few ways, you're illustrating it with stories. You're looking for ways to show it, not just say it. You need to clearly tell people why they MUST believe the bottom line.

You need to unpack the Scripture.

- Your opinion might be interesting, but what God says in his Word has eternal implications. During the meat of your message, you need to carefully explain the Scripture in a way people can understand.

So here's box two.

- I am now going to begin to unpack the solution to the tension in the introduction.
- This is a great place to introduce the bottom line.
- I am going to repeat the bottom line over and over again from this point forward.
- How can I illustrate the bottom line?
- How can I show the bottom line in addition to saying it?
- I'm going to reference the problem in the introduction and talk about why this solution is the answer, and why they MUST buy into this.
- Here's why. Here are results.
- Don't you want to be a part of this?
- That's what I'm inviting you into.
- We're in this together.

3. Imagine

As your message comes to a conclusion, it's time to share the vision. Vision casting isn't just for building projects or launching new initiatives, it's something you must do in every sermon.

As you've explained a passage of Scripture or unpacked a Biblical principle, you must get people to imagine how their lives, their world, their jobs, their kids, and their faith would be different (and better!) if they accepted your proposition.

Not only should you drill home the bottom line, you need to show people what life would look like if the idea you've presented became reality in their lives.

So here's box three.

- Imagine what this would look like if it became a reality in our lives.
- Repeat the bottom line.
- I am now going to share a story that illustrates this.
- After the story I'm going to reinforce the bottom line and then tell them what they can do this week to act on this.

These three boxes...the introduction, the answer and a call to imagine make a great framework for any message. Whether you're teaching through six verses in Colossians or continuing a series on relationships, these guiding principles can make your message stronger.

It's important that you find a rhythm, not ruthlessly follow a prescribed sermon outline, even the one we're presenting. Preparing and preaching a message is both a personal and a spiritual task. Thinking through these three boxes might help you craft your message in a way that leads people to follow Jesus.

PreachingRocket.com

Simple Framework for preaching: Hey You Look Do (Adrian Rogers)

Hey-grab their attention in the intro

You-make it personal, show how the message relates to them personally

Look-look in God's Word together to discover what God says.

Do-show them how to apply the message to their life, share practical steps.

The 12 Essential Skills For Great Preaching by Wayne McDill

Intro:

•**Attention:** story, personal testimony, something to grab the attention of the listener, which helps to set up what the text and sermon is about.

•**Need:** the condition of those to whom the Biblical author is writing, which is usually a condition we still struggle with today.

•**Textual Idea:** What is the text about? What is the author's intent?

•**Sermon Idea:** This is your bottom line, the main thing you want the listener to grasp and walk away with. It is derived straight from the text, not your own idea or opinion.

•**Pose The Question:** ex: How can I be a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block? (1 Cor. 8)

Body: Answer The Question/Need

•Each Point should answer the question/need, and support the sermon idea

•**Explanation:** explain the meaning of the text (define words, historical background, etc.)

•**Illustration:** story, example, analogy which gives the listener a picture of the point you are explaining.

•**Argumentation:** cross references, quotes, stats, etc., which reinforce the point

•**Application:** show how this point relates to the listener and how they can put it into practice, ask questions, gives steps, etc.

Conclusion:

•**Visualization:** show the listeners what this message looks like being lived out

CRAFTING A BOTTOM LINE

General Eisenhower once said, "You ought to be able to put your bottom-line message on the inside of a matchbook - before you ever start at your typewriter." Today, we might update this for the world of Twitter.

Love it or hate it, social media is changing our world. Your bottom line point needs to be tweetable - 140 characters or less. Short, sweet and to the point. We created a simple acronym to help you craft short, memorable bottom lines and key points. To make it memorable, you need to **PREACH:**

P - Picture. Pictures engage people's imagination, and when that happens, people remember more. The Bible is actually full of word pictures (like a ring in a pig's snout) and effective communicators throughout history have painted great word pictures that helped their audiences remember the big idea.

R - Rhyme. This is one of the oldest memorization tricks in the book, which is why you remember one of Benjamin Franklin's quotes: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." See if you can't come up with a rhyming statement to help people remember your big idea.

E- Echo. Repeating a word or phrase is a powerful way to help people remember. Franklin Roosevelt's most famous line used repetition: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

A - Alliteration. Alliteration is the verbal weapon of choice for many preachers who love to start points with the same letter. But don't abandon this technique; it's powerful. Prepare more than you preach - that's a good Preaching Rocket principle, but it's also an example of a memorable statement that uses alliteration.

C - Contrast. Combine two contrasting ideas - the past and the future, the light and the dark, the rich and the poor, truth and lies, laughter and sorrow. "Never do tomorrow what you can do today," might not be true, but it's memorable because of the use of contrast.

H - Hook. If you use one of the above techniques, you'll have a good hook. Like a great song, you'll have a memorable bottom line that will capture attention and be easy to remember. preachingrocket.com

EXPOSING EXPOSITION (by D.J. Horton)

INTERESTED IN BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL PREACHING?

HERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER.

WHAT IS EXPOSITORY PREACHING?

Expository preaching shares a common trait with many other subjects related to Christianity. In the discussion of exposition, there is a common vocabulary, but various dictionaries. In certain conservative circles expository preaching is a resurging subject, much to the delight of any person who believes it to be the supreme model of preaching. However, its new found popularity has not been without confusion and misrepresentation. A great deal of modern preaching is labeled exposition incorrectly. Therefore, a definition must be established.

Expository preaching can be defined as preaching devoted to communicating the central meaning or idea of a biblical passage as the central message of the sermon by exploring, explaining, and applying a biblical passage with the intent of redemptive life change for the glory of God. In short, it is giving the Bible a voice. The subject, message, structure, and application of the sermon are derived from the chosen text and nothing else. I like the way Sydney Greidanus sums it up when he writes expository preaching is “Bible-centered preaching.” True expository preaching is, however, not just delivering exegetical information. It involves both a dependence on the text and the Holy Spirit’s work in the life and heart of the preacher. As Haddon Robinson astutely pointed out years ago, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, arrived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.” I stress again, expository preaching is not simply the relaying of information derived from biblical study. It is the living Word of God taking root in a living person to speak to a living audience on living life!

Much debate and criticism around the subject of expository preaching asserts that it is disconnected, mundane, or just plain boring to modern audiences. Unfortunately, this type of thinking infers that the style, format, and subject of preaching are to be determined by the preferences of its hearers. I am reminded of how James Thompson addressed this when he wrote, “preaching is a trust and that the preacher is to act as a trustee of the message on God’s behalf.” [James W. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 51.] He is not at liberty to alter or modernize the eternal message. However, the preacher must be so in tune and surrendered to the Holy Spirit’s application of the text in his own life that he (not the text) avoids being disconnected, mundane, or just plain boring. I like to summarize it this way. Expository preaching is not boring or disconnected to a modern audience but preachers can be both!

WHY IS EXPOSITORY PREACHING THE MOST FAITHFUL WAY TO PREACH?

I believe I can answer this question both biblically and practically. Biblically justifying expository preaching is much more about deciding which passages to exclude than it is about searching for passages relevant to the a subject. We must go no further than II Timothy 3:16-17 to find a powerful reason for preaching through the entire word of God. Paul encourages his young protégé to remember that “all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The biblical basis grows even stronger when we look at the theological implications of exposition derived from seeing the revelatory nature of God. God chose to reveal himself through the written word of men under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In other words, God’s picture of Himself to men is the Bible. I illustrate this by saying the Bible is God’s ultimate Facebook profile. This is why so much emphasis is placed on God’s revealed word from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible does not separate God’s words from His deeds. He is and does what the Word says He is and does. Perhaps the Israelite remnant exemplifies this most powerfully. As Nehemiah records in chapter eight of his book, when they wanted to celebrate God’s faithfulness in restoring a wall for Israel, they told Ezra to “bring out the book.”

Interestingly, Nehemiah also shows us that reading the law was not divorced from explaining its meaning. The Levites “read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.” This Law was so revered because it was given to God’s people as a sign of possession. Throughout the redemptive story we find the Moses that recorded it, David delighted in it, Jeremiah

ate it, Jesus was it, Peter proclaimed the resurrection with it, Paul explained it, John saw it, and young Timothy was told above everything else to preach it!

Expository preaching both biblically and theologically is the purest way to heed Paul's call to "preach the Word...correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction."

Practically speaking there are numerous advantages and benefits to expository preaching. I like the list Vines and Shaddix provide in their book, "Power in the Pulpit." First, preaching systematically through texts of Scripture is the greatest means to combat the growing trend among Christians toward biblical illiteracy. People do not know the God of the Bible because they do not know the Bible. Secondly, expository preaching holds two groups accountable in two ways. The preacher is held accountable to study if he commits treating each passage he preaches expositionally. Likewise, he is also held accountable to deal with the entire counsel of God's word. He cannot pick and choose topics at will. Rather, he will be married to the subject of his chosen passage during both his preparation and his preaching. The congregation or audience is then in turn held accountable to hear the whole counsel of God's word. Additionally, they are given no room to filter the message. By focusing on the passage, the preacher forces his hearers to make a choice. Obey God or disobey God. There is not liberty to say that a certain point is the preacher's opinion or preference when he simply and faithfully preaches the text. In a broader sense, exposition also exposes people to God's entire redemptive plan and the means to carry this plan out. In short, expository preaching helps the preacher promote God's agenda for his people. Third, exposition alleviates the stress of deciding what to preach. Each week the preacher is well aware of the next section of Scripture within his series. His heart can then be focused on the task of proclaiming the text versus finding it. Fourth, preaching the Word faithfully creates hearers who demand the Word be preached faithfully. Once an individual or group grows accustomed to exposition they will not settle for anything less. Finally, and not surprisingly, this is appetite for the Word is a sign of spiritual growth and maturity. Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17 clearly shows the relationship between God's word and sanctification when He asks the Father to "sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth." Expository preaching sets the tone, determines the direction, and feeds the saints of the church in a way unmatched by any other means. I have not only read this truth, I have experienced it firsthand.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Describing the status of expository preaching in our culture requires a mixed response. To my knowledge, there are no statistics to show how many pastors actually engage in preaching that is authentically expositional in nature. However, if one truly believes biblical exposition to be a primary ingredient to church health the reality become obvious. We have lost many of our pulpits. Many who ardently propagate the methods of the church growth movement assert that churches are shrinking because they are not connecting. I agree that struggling or unhealthy churches do have a problem of connection. I would just clarify that it is not just a lack of connection with a lost world. Many have lost their connection with God. Carrying this premise one step further, I am convinced that the greatest way to connect God's people to their Master is through His Word. Likewise, connection with God through His Word is accomplished most beautifully and effectively through preaching. And preaching most faithfully is done expositionally.

On an encouraging note, all is not gloom and doom. My own observations have shown a renewed interest in expository preaching among young pastors. Some of this is no doubt linked to the popularity theological study has gained along with the conservative resurgence within evangelical denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention. The doctrinal debates over the authority and infallibility of Scripture have had effects on how biblical passages are interpreted and treated within the preaching event. I am convinced God loves his church and will not allow her to starve. It is my prayer that He is raising up a new generation of leaders who break the bread of life with bold assurance in the method of exposition.

<http://djhorton.org/exposing-exposition/>

“The Good Shepherd” Psalm 23

The *LORD is +my *shepherd; +I shall not want. (notice the 4 reasons)

- 1- *He maketh +me to lie down
in green pastures:
- 2- *He leadeth +me
beside the still waters.
- 3- *He restoreth +my soul:
- 4- *He leadeth +me
in the paths of righteousness
for *His name’s sake.

GOD IS MY PROVIDER

Yea, though +I walk
through the valley
of the shadow of death,

+I will fear no evil: (notice the four reasons)

- 1-for *thou art with +me;
- 2- *thy rod and thy staff
they comfort +me.
- 3- *Thou preparest a table before +me
in the presence of +mine enemies:
- 4- *thou anointest +my head with oil;
+my cup runneth over.

GOD IS MY PROTECTOR

Surely *goodness and *mercy shall follow +me
all the days of +my life:

and +I will dwell
in the house of the *LORD for ever.

GOD IS MY PRESERVER

Notice all the references to God-*; to I and me-+

Key Nouns to study:

- 1-LORD
- 2-Shepherd
- 3-Green Pastures
- 4-Still Waters
- 5-Soul
- 6-Paths of Righteousness
- 7-Name’s sake
- 7-Valley of the shadow of death
- 8-Rod
- 9-Staff
- 10-Table
- 11-Enemies
- 12-Oil
- 13-Cup
- 14-Goodness
- 15-Mercy
- 16-House of the LORD

Key Verbs to Study:

- 1-Want
- 2-Maketh
- 3-Leadeth
- 4-Restoreth
- 5-Comfort
- 6-Preparest
- 7-Anointest
- 8-Runneth
- 9-Follow
- 10-Dwell

“INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORSHIPPING GOD”

PSALM 100

1 SHOUT

with joy
to the *LORD,
O earth!

2 SERVE

the *LORD
with gladness.

COME

before Him,
singing with joy.

3 ACKNOWLEDGE

that the *LORD is *God!

He made us,

and we are >His.

We are >His people

the sheep of >His pasture

4 ENTER

>His gates
with thanksgiving;

GO

into >His courts
with praise.

GIVE THANKS

to Him

and BLESS

>His name.

5 For the *LORD is ^good.

>His ^unfailing love

continues forever,

and >His ^faithfulness

continues to each generation.

KEY:

1) 8 Commands– **BOLD AND ALL CAPS**

2) 5 Specific Instructions– Underlined

3) 8 Pronouns Indicating Ownership– >

4) 4 times LORD is used which is God’s personal name– *

5) 1 time God is used, which is used to refer to His greatness and power– *

6) 3 attributes of God are given– ^

7) 16 references to God

THE DANGER SERIES

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

The following is a list of the many dangers that we must avoid in order to live the Christian life in the way that Christ commands.

Dangers:

1-Defeat (1:1-4)

2-Doubt (1:5-8)

3-Poverty and Riches (1:9-12) (cf. 5:1-6)

4-Temptation (1:13-18)

5-Anger (1:19-21)

6-Disobedience (Hearing Only) (1:22-27)

7-Favoritism (2:1-13)

8-Dead Faith (2:14-26)

9-Tongue (3:1-12) (cf. 4:11-12)

10-Worldly Wisdom (3:13-18)

11-Selfishness (4:1-10)

12-Practical Atheism (4:13-17)

13-Impatience (5:7-12)

14-Prayerlessness (5:13-18)

15-Backsliding (5:19-20)

“The Dangers of Sin”

Joshua 7

Dr. Stephen Rummage

Sin Is Dangerous Because...

1.) Sin Is Easy To Commit

(vv.20-21)

2.) Sin Is Impossible To Conceal

(vv.14-23)

3.) Sin Is Sure To Cost (vv.5, 24-

26)

but

4.) Sin Can Be Cleansed (v.26)

Thoughts on Preaching and Pastoring A to Z

by Dr. Steve Gaines, Pastor First Baptist Church, Gardendale, Alabama

1. Make prayer the priority of your life, and make preaching the priority of your ministry.
2. Preach your own sermons. Preaching someone else's sermon is stealing (cf. Jeremiah 23:30).
3. Use personal illustrations, especially those that show that you don't have it all together spiritually.
4. Talk normally when you preach.
5. If you earn a doctorate, forget about the title. Your authority doesn't come from a title – it comes from the Holy Spirit's anointing!
6. Let God open doors from you. Don't be a politician or a "networker." Don't try to climb the denominational ladder.
7. Magnify the name of JESUS!!! Sing about it and use it when you preach (instead of "Christ," "God," etc.)
8. Don't touch the money or the women.
9. Take a day off each week besides Sunday.
10. Go to your kid's ballgames and ballet recitals.
11. Keep dating your wife.
12. Laugh a lot.
13. Never resign on a Monday. Go eat the Pizza Hut buffet instead.
14. Be the first one in the worship service and the last one to leave. Remember that you are in the people business.
15. Walk slowly through the crowds and look people in the eye when you talk with them. If they ask you to pray for them, do it on the spot.
16. Don't make your secretary mad!
17. Understand that musicians can be moody. You might not want them on the Finance Committee, but then again, you probably wouldn't want the Finance Committee to sing before you preach. Everyone, even musicians, has their place.
18. Don't worry about money and don't fuss at your wife about it either! You probably won't have much here. Your treasure is in heaven.
19. Keep your mornings for God. Read your Bible, study and pray.
20. Don't read anonymous letters and don't write them either.
21. Don't take praise or criticism too seriously ("Hosanna!" can quickly become, "Crucify!").
22. Say "hello" to the janitors.
23. Share the gospel at funerals and weddings. Lost people are always present.
24. Minimize meetings at your church. Try to move all of them to Wednesdays and Sundays.
25. Heat the water before you baptize.
26. Check your zipper before you preach.

P.S. Be a man. Don't be a "pretty boy" who looks like a model from GQ magazine. Avoid pocket puffs and monograms if possible. Don't have a jelly belly and/or soft hands and flabby arms. Drive a pickup truck if all possible. Don't act like a sissy. Don't ask for your own parking place next to the building. Save those for the visitors and senior adults.

WHAT TO IGNORE IN THE MINISTRY

When I read this quotation from Alfred North Whitehead in J. A. Davidson's "Perspectives" in the January/February issue, it set me to thinking: "A man has to ignore much to get on with something." I offer the following thoughts about what pastors must ignore in order to get on with their task:

1. A pastor must ignore the temptation to compare. The comparison game has killed more than one pastor's career. This game is never fair, for it never compares apples with apples. God has gifted us all differently. So if you compare yourself to another, you never have all the facts. It is best to ignore this temptation.

2. A pastor must ignore the temptation to compromise. I mean here the compromise of values, beliefs, or truths. There is a positive kind of compromise that often is needed, but one should ignore the temptation to compromise that which is basic, real, and fundamental.

3. A pastor must ignore the temptation to become critical. Life, for some strange reason, slides to the negative and the critical, if one fails to guard against it. When circumstances seem to go against us and failure writes a chapter in our life, our response is too often criticism. An added thought concerning criticism, we need to ignore most of the criticism that comes our way. Learn from it, if possible, but don't let it defeat you.

4. A pastor must ignore the temptation to center everything on self. A pastor gets lots of praise and encouragement. This is good, and it is not to be discounted. What one needs to guard against is letting one's ego become too robust. Ignore this temptation to focus on self.

5. A pastor must ignore the temptation of carelessness. When lay people are not carrying their share of the load, the temptation is to pull back and do less. Such a decision invites mediocrity and indifference, cancers on a career. Do not let other people's actions decide what is best for you.

6. A pastor must ignore the temptation to commit to more than can be done. Know your limits and just how much your time and calendar will tolerate. Learn to say no tactfully. Ignoring the temptation to overcommit will benefit family, self, and work.

7. A pastor must ignore the temptation to conformity. This dulls the growing edges, blunts ideas, and invites apathy. Granted, some conformity may be good for each of us, if there is reason and purpose behind it. But the conformity of which I write here invites one to comply with the power structure of the organization without processing the reasons or questioning the history. One must learn the difference between honest conformity and timely challenge.

8. A pastor must ignore the temptation to cynicism. This temptation is always present. In the daily experience of pastoral ministry, there are enough disappointments, failure, criticisms, and hard moments to tempt cynicism. Avoid it like the plague, for what the pastor needs to do is respond to life's experiences with positive thought and resolve. Cynicism builds barriers, destroys relationships, and blurs the vision. Cynicism robs the mind of its positive moments, hence destroying the scaffolding for answers, for hope, for finding a way through.

A pastor has to ignore much to get on with something. And these are but a few of the things to ignore. That pastor is better able to serve, and be served, who learns what to ignore in the mission for God.

10 Signs Your Pastor Is Becoming a Chaplain

By Thom S. Rainer

In the broadest sense, a chaplain refers to those who are assigned to care and provide ministry for a specific group of people. Military and hospital chaplains, for example, have clearly defined groups who come under their care and ministry. In local church ministry, we don't typically use the term "chaplain," though there are many pastoral roles that are congruent with chaplaincy. In fact, most of the pastoral care and concern for church members are chaplain-like functions. Without a doubt, pastors should minister to church members. The danger is when pastors do little other than minister to the needs of church members, and the leadership of the church is neither equipping others nor leading the congregation to reach those who do not have a church home. In essence, the pastor is becoming a chaplain. Here are ten warning signs that such a process is likely taking place.

1. The pastor is not equipping others.

- Church members expect the pastor to do most of the ministry, and the pastor fulfills those unbiblical expectations.

2. Pastoral care of members is increasing.

- As a consequence, the pastor has less time to lead the congregation to reach beyond its walls.

3. The pastor does not take time to connect with non-members and non-Christians.

- Simply stated, there is no outwardly focused Great Commission leadership.

4. The pastor deals with members' complaints at an increasing rate.

- Once members get accustomed to the pastor being their on-call chaplain, they are likely to become irritated and frustrated when the pastor is not omnipresent and omniscient for their every need.

5. The pastor worries more about the next phone call, conversation, or email.

- Such is the tendency of the pastor-chaplain who knows there will always be complaints about needs not getting met.

6. The pastor experiences greater family interference time.

- Many pastor-chaplains are fearful of protecting family time lest they not be highly responsive to church members. Some of these pastors have lost their families as a consequence.

7. The pastor is reticent to take vacation time or days off.

- Pastor-chaplains would rather have no time off than worry about what they may miss while they are away from the church.

8. The pastor is reticent to take new initiatives.

- There are two reasons for this response. First, the pastor-chaplain does not want to upset the members with change. Second, the pastor-chaplain does not have time for new ideas because of the time demands of members.

9. The pastor has no vision for the future.

- The pastor-chaplain is too busy taking care of current member demands. Little time is available for visionary thinking and leadership.

10. The pastor has lost the joy of ministry.

- Of course, this unfortunate development should be expected. There is no joy in dealing with unreasonable expectations and constant streams of criticisms, or with a ministry that has no evangelistic fruit.

I pray you pastors will look at these ten items as a checklist for your own ministry. And I pray you church members will look at the list and honestly evaluate your church to see if you have pushed your pastor into full-time chaplaincy.

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/10-signs-your-pastor-is-becoming-a-chaplain.html>