
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
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A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
Basic Lecture 3

INTRODUCTION: The value of a philosophy of ministry

- A. It gives you a set of guidelines that will help you develop your ministry.
- B. It gives you some way to evaluate your ministry.
- C. It will help you stay focused on what is important.
- D. It gives your ministry a strong foundation.
- E. The following five principles should be considered when you define your own philosophy of ministry.

I. A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF GOD (Isaiah 6:1-3)

- A. It emphasizes His holiness. (Isaiah 6:2-3)
- B. It shows us the seriousness of our own sin. (Romans 3:23)
- C. It reveals to us that what we deserve because of our sin is death. (Genesis 3:3, Romans 6:23) Some examples follow.
 - 1. Manoah thought they would die because they had seen God. (Judges 13:6, 8-9, 21-22)
 - 2. Moses was not allowed to see God's glory because he would have died. (Exodus 33:20)
 - 3. When Peter realized who Jesus was, he recognized his own sinfulness and asked Jesus to leave his presence. (Luke 5:3-8)
 - 4. The disciples were afraid of the storm (Mark 4:40), but were extremely afraid when they realized that God (Jesus) was so near (in their boat). (Mark 4:41)
 - 5. Isaiah thought he was going to die (Isaiah 6:5 "woe is me"), confessed his sin (Isaiah 6:5 "unclean lips"), received forgiveness (Isaiah 6:6-7), and then humbly volunteered to serve the Lord. (Isaiah 6:8)
- D. It leads to a reverential fear of God which is the beginning of true wisdom and understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)
- E. It leads to an understanding of why God did certain things in the Bible.
 - 1. The Canaanites were extremely sinful and would tempt Israel to adopt their sinful traditions, so God wanted Israel to kill all of them. (Exodus 23:23).
 - 2. Nadab and Abihu were sons of Aaron. They were trained to give sacrifices as priests. They didn't follow the instructions for giving sacrifices, and God took their lives. (Leviticus 10:1-2)
 - 3. Uzzah was in charge of transporting the Ark of the Covenant, but one time he didn't do it properly and as a result he touched it to keep it from falling. He died instantly. (2 Samuel 6:1-3, 6-7)
 - 4. Forty-two boys were killed by bears for making fun of God's prophet. (2 Kings 2:23-24)
 - 5. Annanias and Sapphira lied about their offering, and as a result, they both died. (Acts 5:1-5)
 - 6. Some of the Corinthians were not taking the communion service seriously, and because of that, they died. (That is what "sleep" means.) (1 Corinthians 11:30)

- F. Some results that come from an incorrect understanding of what God requires.
 - 1. People will ignore God's standards of holiness and righteousness and create their own standards (or rules) of righteousness. (Romans 10:1-3)
 - a. Abraham was to be blameless before God. (Genesis 17:1)
 - b. Israel was called by God to be holy. (Leviticus 11:44)
 - c. Jesus told us to be perfect like God. (Matthew 5:48)
 - d. Peter wrote that we are to be holy like God. (1 Peter 1:15-16)
 - 2. People will also be tempted to rely on their own traditions instead of the doctrines that come from the Bible. (Mark 7:7-9)

II. A COMMITMENT TO THE SCRIPTURES AS OUR FINAL AUTHORITY

- A. Jesus said we are to live by EVERY word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)
- B. Paul spent three years teaching the believers at Ephesus the whole purpose of God. (Acts 20:27)
- C. God's Word is inspired and useful. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- D. God's Word is the source of our spiritual growth as Christians. (1 Peter 2:2)
- E. God's Word is our source of truth. (John 17:17)
- F. Since the Scripture is our source of truth and authority, Paul instructed Timothy to guard it (1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:14), to be careful to handle it accurately (2 Timothy 2:15), and to preach it without compromise. (2 Timothy 4:2)
- G. The Bible has always been under attack, and today is no exception.
 - 1. Liberals deny it is inspired and infallible.
 - 2. Cults say the Bible is not enough. They say we need other books.
 - 3. And even Christians attack the authority of the Bible in subtle ways
 - a. Some want to add visions and other experiences to the Word of God. But, the Bible warns us about relying on dreams and visions. (Colossians 2:18)
 - b. Another subtle attack is from the pastor who says he believes it but does not teach it.
 - c. Another attack from Christians is when they say they believe it but do not live by what it says.

III. A COMMITMENT TO DOCTRINAL CLARITY

- A. If we take God seriously, and we take His Word seriously, then we will want to know what God has said about every subject He mentions in the Bible. That is what we mean by doctrinal clarity. Every topic is related to the doctrine connected to that topic. Doctrinal clarity means we want to be clear about what the Bible teaches. (Compare this with Ephesians 4:11-13 which speaks of "the unity of the faith.")
- B. Illustrations and examples: Do you know what God says about lying, stealing, cheating, obeying the government, giving money to support the work of the Lord and His church, marriage, divorce, remarriage, being single, anger, abortion, homosexuality, qualifications for leadership, etc?

IV. MAKE PERSONAL HOLINESS A PRIORITY IN THE CHURCH

- A. Jesus called all of us to live holy lives. (Matthew 5:48)
- B. God used Peter to call us to a life of perfection. (1 Peter 1:16)
- C. We have become holy and blameless in Christ through salvation (Ephesians 1:3-4), and now we are to live lives that are worthy of the privileges and calling described in the first three chapters of Ephesians. (Ephesians 4:1)
- D. There are several reasons why we are to live holy lives:
 - 1. Holy lives reflect the nature of God, whom we serve. (Leviticus 18:1-2).

NOTE: In Leviticus chapters 18-20, Israel was told repeatedly to live a certain way because God is their God and God is holy. (Examples: Leviticus 18:4; 19:1-4; 20:7, 24)

- 2. We are ambassadors. Ambassadors represent the ones they serve, and we represent God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- 3. Jesus said to let your light shine so people will see your good works and glorify God. (Matthew 5:16)

V. APPOINT OR ELECT LEADERS WHO ARE MODELS OF HOLY LIVING

- A. God leads His church through human leaders.
- B. It is important that our leaders are growing spiritually as Christians, and are good examples for the rest of the church. (Hebrews 13:7)
- C. The Lord makes the qualifications very clear. (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:1-9)
 - 1. The qualities mentioned in Timothy and Titus are character qualities, not administrative abilities!
 - 2. All of the qualifications are spiritual in nature.
 - 3. The only ministry related qualification is their ability to teach the Word.

CONCLUSION

Leaders are to lead by example so be sure to keep the standards high (biblical) for the leaders you select.