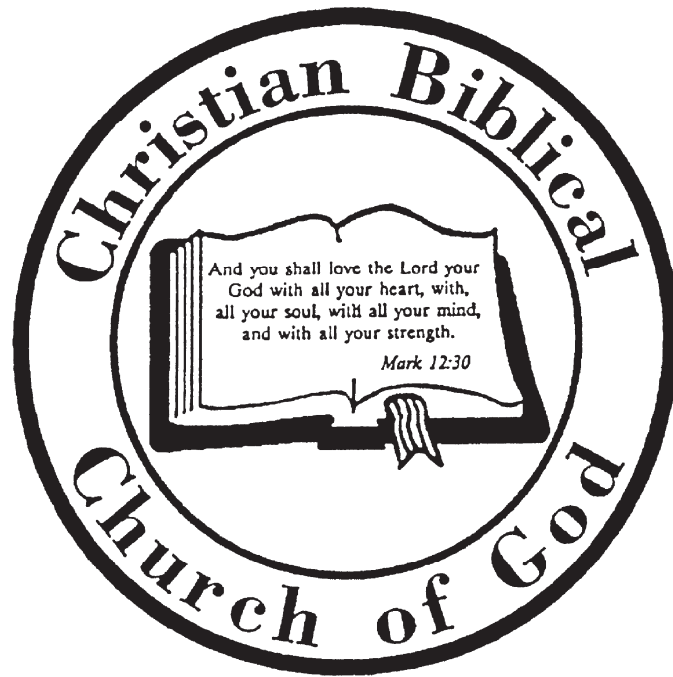


Elder Conference



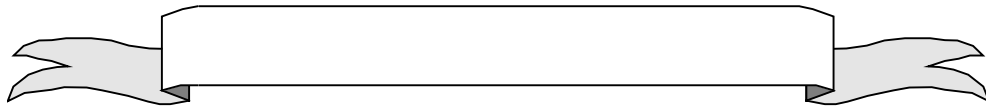
Transcript Book

© 2015, 2024
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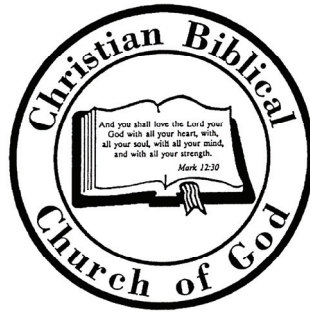
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Elder Conference

Series of 13 transcripts



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Elder Conference

Foreword

This book covers how God intends His Church and the elders within deal with those who respond to God. Fred R. Coulter and other elders speak in detail about how to teach God's people the Word of God effectively. The use of authority given by God is examined. The fact that the Church is intended to be organized so as to provide instruction in God's Word and to be able to facilitate the work of elders by providing resources that they can use.

In speaking about the role of the Church it is emphasized that when the people of God come together upon the Sabbath it is not for a platform of political expression. Nor is it a platform for an elder to speak of his own thoughts. The emphasis for coming together on the Sabbath day is to participate in fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is to be understood by all, that what matters is what God the Father and Jesus Christ teach and do. This book speaks of how elders are to use the authority of God in dealing with those who bring their own agenda to the holy assembling of the people of God.

Examples of problems that elders have to deal with and solutions used in the past by elders to successfully cope with those who would corrupt the word of God are spoken of. It is emphasized throughout this text that the central focus of elders is the preservation of true doctrine accompanied with being a helper of the joy given to God's people by God. How an elder is to live a godly life so that they can serve as an example for people to follow who are growing in the faith.

Overall the consistent thread of people that are God's people needing to know that God the Father and Jesus Christ will never abandon them. People may abandon them in troubles but God will never abandon them.

Special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell for transcribing the messages.

Elder's Conference I

Purpose of the Church and the Ministry #1

Fred R. Coulter

There was a man who was with one of the other Churches of God, and he thought that what I was teaching concerning church government and structure was anarchy. 'Fred Coulter doesn't believe in government, and Fred Coulter *this that and the other thing...*'

It doesn't matter what I believe, it's what Jesus teaches; if I believe what He does, then that's fine! The man said, 'What are you going to do when you have to organize? How are you going to organize it?' He was trying to defend one of the ridged hierarchical churches.

At the time that this man was talking to me, we didn't even have a fellowship group. When Christian Biblical began I was the only elder. I'll just have to say that when we left Worldwide and began Biblical (Church of God) we set it up almost exactly the way that United set up: a committee here, there and everywhere; right, left, center, up and down. Biblical destroyed itself within three years.

Then we were just left alone with seven brethren. What sort of organization do you need with that? *You need a minister, three deacons, a guard at the door and a deaconess!* (Joke) That's when I began to sit down and teach instead of standing up to preach. It would have been silly and ludicrous for a group of seven if I got a pulpit and stood up there and preached to them.

When I wrote the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God* booklet, and put in the section there concerning the elders, it was only Carl Franklin and me. That was it!

- I had no idea what God was going to do.
- I had no idea whom God was going to call.

I had no idea except to know and understand that if we were doing was something that God was inspiring and blessing.

- let *Him* handle it
- let *Him* do it
- let *Him* lead it

If we stayed at seven, ten or twelve, that's fine. Whatever God wants.

I think that in going through some of these things that we've all learned; we've all been through the church wars. You're all battle-scared as it were.

- we are not going to re-create a hierarchy, because God has rejected that

- we are not going to re-create things with controls
- we are not going to lead other people's lives
- we are not going to impose our will upon any of the brethren

That would be entirely and absolutely wrong.

Let's look at what God really wants us to do, rather than sit here and say what we shouldn't do. Let's see what the whole thing is for all the people of God, and we are the ones—as elders...

I might just say that when we were in Biblical (CoG) we laid hands on everybody, because it says have elders in every city. God just dumped that right back on us and really punished us to learn the lesson. I didn't learn the lesson of Biblical until years after.

'Why, Lord? Why?' Finally He's got your attention. *He didn't want that!* There had to be some real re-thinking, and real repentance on that. Then I read the Scripture that say, 'Lay hands on no man suddenly.' That's what we did! So, that's why God had to get rid of it. You can have the best intentions in the world, and preconceived notions when you come to Scriptures, and you miss the whole point of what God is doing.

1-John 1 tells us what it is and that we're the ones—as elders—to facilitate this. This must be with us first, before we can do so with the brethren. I think that in our past church experiences that all the elders and deacons were kept so busy that they have very little time for doing the things they needed to do, because they were so 'activitized' that all they could do is keep up with the activities. Even those who were full time ministers and on salaries when it came to the end of the week and Friday, after they got done with everything Friday afternoon, they sort of stumbled over the threshold and said, 'Now, what am I going to speak on this week?' It deteriorated the quality of the speaking and teaching, and they missed the whole point in the first place.

The first thing we need to understand is right here, 1-John 1:1: "That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard... [concerning the words of Christ] ...that which we have seen with our own eyes..."

Which Paul says that those who wrote of these things guaranteed it for us. So, the Word of God is God inspired. It is guaranteed! This is where

we begin in everything that we do.

“...that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of Life... [Christ] ...(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us)” (vs 1-2). Tie in John 1:1-3, 14, and all of that: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh, and so forth.

Verse 3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you...” This is the whole purpose, right here! When we come together in fellowship groups, with congregations, what are we doing? *It's not a political meeting! It is not a meeting for control!*

We are coming together on the Sabbath Day—and whenever we come together—because we're fellowshiping with God the Father and Jesus Christ. God created the Sabbath Day for the very purposed of fellowshiping with us, and all the brethren, especially on that day ***if we use it correctly as God has instructed us to use it!*** Therefore, it has to be what God wants.

“...in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ” (v 3). That's where it all begins.

Our personal fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father on a daily basis: through prayer, study and living. Then we can fellowship with the brethren.

What do we show the brethren to do? *To fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ!*

We're here meeting when there are some in this country are trying to provoke a Constitutional crisis, so that no one knows who the leader is. Look what has happened to people. There are people who are emotionally upset, mentally upset, the stock market is plunging. That's why God did not give us physical leaders that we look to as the head of the Church. We have Christ:

- Who is the Head of the Church
- Who is the spiritual Leader
- Whom everybody who had the Spirit of God has contact with all the time

That's what it needs to be!

Verse 4: “These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full.” We're going to see in 2-Cor. 1 what we are to be for the brethren: *helpers of their joy!*

How can we be helpers of their joy if we're miserable? *You can't!* The only thing you can do is share your misery!

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light...”

As we go through this—and all of you know your bibles; you wouldn't be here if you didn't—we are not going to cover a single Scripture that we have not covered in the past, but hopefully we will cover it in such a way that we're going to get the true meaning out of it, rather than a pre-conceived notion of what we *think* it means.

As far as the direction that God wants us to take, we don't know, and we don't know how long we have. We've got to walk in faith, but we've also got to know the surety of the Word of God. We've got to know the surety of the responsibility of us stewards of God.

The parable of the talents and pounds was *I entrust you with my money*. Go and work! You know what happened to the one who didn't. We also need to understand, as I've come to understand in working on the third edition of *A Harmony of the Gospels* that the four Gospels contain all the New Covenant personally spoken by Christ.

Every words spoken in these four Gospels are the words of the covenant in its totality. So, when we go through the Passover and through the Scriptures that we have for the Passover ceremony—through John 14-17—those chapters contain the summary of the covenant.

But let's look at it from the point of view of elders and serving the people, and that *we*, upon ordination, have a covenant with God. What we've been learning with covenantal law, and understanding covenant, is very important. That began in 1994 with Carl Franklin bringing me an article concerning 'diatheke' and what it meant in Heb. 9 and has opened up understanding for us for *covenant*.

Let's understand that we have a covenant as elders in serving God, and let's understand what it says here:

John 12:47: “But if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has

told Me” (vs 47-50).

Everything that we are to do as elders the basic foundation is contained right here in the Gospels. This also shows us that we need to follow those words. If we don't, and we don't live by them, what happens? *We're rejecting Him!*

Let's see the two things—the two foundational covenant statements from Jesus—concerning how a ministry is to operate.

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’” (vs 17-18).

Let's learn a lesson from the chief priests and scribes. What is the lesson? *They set their system up that God originally gave*, but changed it because that was leading to death. So, we'll learn the lesson from them.

Verse 19: “‘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 the mother of the sons of Zebedee... [James and John] ...came to Him with her sons, 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 19-21). This tells us the first lesson that Jesus is teaching us is that ***there is no politicking!*** That's the first lesson, because politicking is favoring men and going against the fellowship of Christ. Jesus knew that!

I just might add here that that's why I was never popular among the ministers in Worldwide, because I never played politics! That always got me in trouble because I was fighting the hierarchy.

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.’” We could repeat the words: *you don't know what you're saying!*

We need to be careful what we say. If we say certain things, Christ is going to take us up on it—right?

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...’” Not even Christ, Who was manifest in the flesh, when it gets to anything that the Father said.

“...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). I guess so!

There are two ways of looking at it. They were angry because the two brothers got their first to ask for it, and were going to eliminate the other ten. Or the other ten also wanting those two position to bore out the other ten, whichever it may be.

So, Jesus then gives the lesson. This is the first lesson for us to learn and understand, and unfortunately in our experience it's been the last one that we have learned. So, as we begin here, let it be the first one that we learn.

Verse 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...’” [*katakuriuo*—*lordship downward*] ...over them.”

- ‘kata’—*downward*
- ‘kuriuo’—*to lord*

Every Gentile system has a hierarchy. Here in America, we have a judge system, which is the closest thing left on earth today to the judge system that God gave Israel. It's the bureaucracies that are lording it down with their regulations. That's how you change a representative government into a dictatorship, by having the bureaucracies be able to enforce regulations as if it's law.

You take away the legislating power from the legislators, and the legislators give it up by giving them the authority to give regulations with the force of law. *A sleight of hand!*

“...and the great ones... [Simon Magus, because he was called the ‘great one’; referring to the religious leaders] ...exercise authority over them”—‘katexousia’—*authority downward*.

Verse 26: “**However, it shall not be this way among you...**” First lesson!

- that doesn't mean we don't have authority
- that doesn't mean we don't exercise the right and correct authority

But the Church of God does not need a hierarchy like the world with its corporations.

If you're in the business of making airplanes—like Boeing is—you need a hierarchy. What you're doing is building a plane, not Godly character. You need to have supervisors.

They developed this plane on computers first, before they even built the first part. They tested on the computer where the wings would break.

Those wings they bent up by force to 28 feet above level. They snapped right at the rib in the wings that they said it would snap. You need to have a hierarchy when you're running an airline.

You need to have a hierarchy when you're running an army, because you're telling people to go shoot, ill and destroy, and get rid of things. You need to make the soldiers do what they would not naturally do as human beings. That's why you have training and you brainwash them. You get them together to do and act and do these things. You sear their consciences so they can kill and do without thought.

God does not want a hierarchy! And we're not going to recreate a hierarchy! But we're going to look and see what the right organizational structure is that God wants.

Here it is, and this is part of the words of the covenant for those who are elders:

"...but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant" (v 26). Greatness is not counted as the world does. Greatness is in the eyes of God, not in the eyes of men. Greatness comes from serving the brethren, and loving them as Christ would love and serve them.

Verse 27: "And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave; just [exactly] 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 27-28).

- Christ is the Head of the Church
- Christ is also the Servant of the Church

And we are to serve the brethren *as He did!*

Now let's look at the second part of the covenant that we make with God

John 21 will show us very clearly that what we are to do, and is the whole basis of what we are doing, is because we love God. That's what it is. I've said many times that if we don't love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being then we've missed the whole point, especially for those who are elders.

Notice what Jesus said to Peter, and let's take these words personally to us. These words were inspired of Christ, preserved for us that we may learn. If Christ were here today, this is what He would tell us:

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?'" That's what it has to be with every one of us. Do you love God the Father and Jesus Christ more than

other human beings? That's just a *spiritual fact of life!* That's to not to sleight wives, or other people. We're to love the brethren and each other as Christ has loved us. This is not slighting anything.

"...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" (v 15). That's what we need to do in anything, *feed the sheep of God, shepherd the sheep of God.* And you do that by *teaching them how to live their lives with God's Word, not live it for them!* That's a demonstrating of your love of God.

Does God let us have choices? do things right? **Or** make mistakes? **Yes! Certainly!** Can you decree perfection by law? **NO!** Perfection comes by choice and love. Likewise with the brethren. **You cannot decree perfection!** You have to show them *how* to love God, and the only way you can show them how to love God is if **you** love God. You have to show them that they have their choices, and they are going to do good things, not so good things. They're going to do some bad things, and there may be even some terrible sins that will come along. But all of those, upon repentance, can be covered by the blood of Christ.

- Has not God done that with us?
- Are we not here because we did things wrong?
- Are we not here because we're repenting of the things we did wrong in the past?

Part of the repentance is learning what to do right after you repent of doing what's wrong. *Feed My sheep!* That's what we are to do! Teach them from the Word of God. That means that *we* have to understand the Word of God; *we* have to know the Word of God.

I've learned that just through the bad times and trials that we go through. Because with the trials that we go through, all we have is the Spirit of God and His Word. Maybe we ought to get the lesson. That's what God wants us to always keep, the Spirit of God and His Word!

Verse 16: "He said to him again a second time... 'Shepherd My sheep.'He said to him the third time... 'Feed My sheep'" (vs 16-17).

What is our job? Feed the sheep!

Still, Peter was political. Later we're going to see that God did not preserve the ministerial structure that Peter had, James had, Bartholomew, or any of the other apostles. So, we don't know what it is.

The only kind of organization and structure that God has preserved for us is what the Apostle Paul did! So, God must approve the way

that Paul did it. That is the most perfect system!

I did not know, until someone brought this up. The New King James and the NIV translate Eph. 4:11 as "He gave some *to be* apostles..." They add to be because it's not there in the Greek.

Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave **some as apostles**... [not to be, which connotes an office, if vacant, must be fulfilled. But unless God send an apostle, we don't have an apostle.

I remember that as late as 1965 Herbert Armstrong still did not accept being an apostle. I was there at the ministerial conference when he said so.

Here is the instruction that we need to have, v 1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord..." Sometimes, when you're really down—Paul was a prisoner in chains—you get the point. Why? *Because then you understand the greatness and the love of God, and you understand what some of the things that Christ has suffered!* God really inspired Paul to write.

"...am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called with all humility and meekness...(vs 1-2). That's what it has to be, brethren.

- we're not here because of the works that we have done
- we're not here because we're important
- we're not here because of what we have studied with the Greek

We are here because God has called us to do what we're doing, every single one of us—just as He has called all the brethren. I dare say that there are probably millions of people that we don't even know about—let's say hundreds of thousands anyway.

the only place a Jew can be a Christian is here in America, and there are over 200,000 Messianic Jews in America. When I talk about things that Jews are doing and conspiring to overthrow governments, infiltrate and take down churches, I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about those who have given themselves over to Satan the devil to do that. There are many who have not.

We need to, with "...all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love" (v 2). We will never reach the ideal state of no problems, either with ourselves or with the Church or with the brethren, because we're all in the flesh. That's why we need this.

Verse 3: "Being diligent to keep the unity of

the Spirit in the bond of peace." That's why we have this first elder conference of the Christian Biblical Church of God; so that we can have ***the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace!***

Verse 4: "*There is one body...*" As God sees us, it's probably a lot different than what our knowledge and acquaintance and knowledge of God is.

Someone brought out to me that in New Zealand there's a whole group of people we never heard of, and they never heard of Worldwide. They keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, and understand things nearly like we do. I remember that it must have been about 1991-2 that I heard a Jewish rabbi who believed in Christ. He sounded just like Herbert Armstrong in speaking, and he explained John 1:1-3 exactly as Herbert Armstrong explained it,; and they keep the 14th Passover as we keep it.

God looks down and the Body of Christ is much different than we think. But what God has done in bringing us together, as He's brought other people together, then whatever part of the Body of Christ we are, we need to make sure that we are functioning according to the Scriptures the way we need to. Always remember Elijah and Gideon!

"...and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all" (vs 4-6). That's what it has to be with us, and all the brethren.

Verse 7: "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ." There is a *grace* that God gives in being an elder, which is ***with the laying on of hands you are committed unto the grace of God!*** That's what's so important!

Verse 8: "For this *very* reason, He says *that* after ascending on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." That's how you test how faithful that you really are. If someone is not looking over your shoulder:

- How do you live?
- How do you act?
- What is your life?
- What are your thoughts?

That's why Christ has done it this way. ***That's why He sent Christ and why God divested Himself of being God to become a man!*** That was the greatest thing that God has done since the creation!

Verse 9: "Now He Who ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" In other words, experienced

everything that all human being did and was dead and buried.

Verse 10: "He Who descended is the same One Who also ascended above all the heavens so **that He might fulfill all things**. And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets..." (vs 10-11). Prophets come two ways:

1. inspired speaking of the Word of God
2. the foretelling of events before they happen

"...and some evangelists; and some, pastors... [shepherds] ...and teachers" (v 11). All of these we will see are *descriptive functions* of what a person is doing.

All of the evangelists we knew were administrators and not evangelists. They became political and were in-fighting and so forth.

- What has happened? *God has spewed them all out of His mouth!*
- How many remained faithful?

To be an evangelist is a function of evangelizing! If you're not evangelizing, you're not an evangelist! You're still an elder. We're going to see that Paul says that he's an apostle, a preacher and a teacher. What is he? *An elder!*

I prefer to just be teaching; that's what I prefer to do. I don't want to assume responsibility, have an great title, I don't need it, because then we start exalting the self and puffing up pride, and we start looking to *our* accomplishment instead of to *God's* accomplishments. This is where we all need to be, and I know that we're all on the same page and the same line of the same page.

Here's the task: the only reason for everything in v 11 is what comes afterward. Today with corporate things, they like to have 'job descriptions.' Here it is; God had the job description before the corporations were formed:

Verse 12: "**For the perfecting of the saints...**" How do you *perfect* the saints? *You teach them the Word of God!* That's how you do that! This is how you *perfect* the saints, 1-John 2. We can have great confidence in the Word of God, great confidence in the Spirit of God, not to get lifted up, not to presume some authority that God has not given. Here's what we need to teach the brethren:

- They need to know that they know God!
- They need to know that they can have direct access to God the Father at any time!

People like charts—remember some of the charts in the past with the hierarchical structure—burn it. I will tell you the structure very simply:

- God the Father and Christ are in heaven
- Christ is the Head of the Church
 - ✓ which we know
 - ✓ which He is
- everyone who has the Spirit of God has direct connection to God the Father and Jesus Christ into the very Holy of Holies in haven above, any second of their life with any thought that they may have

That comes down to all the brethren. So, you just put God the Father and Christ, and the brethren. Now then, elders or overseers are kind of like on the sidelines as a shepherd is with the sheep. Is a shepherd right in there walking in the middle of the flock?

There was a movie where a woman inherited a ranch of sheep and she didn't know what to do. She had man who came along with the sheep and he had a dog. The cattlemen wanted to get rid of the sheep because they were taking down all the grass and the cattle couldn't eat and get fat. So, they decided to get rid of the sheep.

They got on their horses to drive the sheep like cattle and they just went through the middle of it and, lo and behold, the flock all came back together. So, the guy who was the shepherd with the dog was laughing at these cowboys who were trying herd the sheep. He said, 'Dog!' He gave some signal and the dog moved the sheep.

Christ is the Chief Shepherd. Those who are shepherding and feeding the sheep have to make sure that they're in green pasture, but are on the sidelines *overseeing!* That, brethren, is the structure of the Church in a big overview and also in whatever fellowship group or congregation.

(go to the next track)

Here's what we're to teach them, 1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, **truly in this one the love of God is being perfected**.... [this is how we perfect the saints; *with the love of God*] ...By this *means we know* that we are in Him" (vs 3-5)—if we love Him! You can tie all kinds of other Scriptures in there:

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments."

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; 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...'" (vs 23-24).

That's what we need to teach the brethren!

1-John 4:16: "And **we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us...**" I remember in a sermon that I heard in the auditorium in Pasadena (WCG). They were all lauding the leader Herbert Armstrong. I was getting sick and tired of hearing sermons that ministers would give where they would laud Herbert Armstrong more than Christ, so I just did my little 5-tick-mark thing. I came out 20-1 in the name of Herbert Armstrong. Now you know why WCG no longer exists, because they were not doing 1-John 14:16.

"...God is love..." (v 16). Whenever you have a hierarchy, the first thing you do is kill love.

"...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.... [it's a way to live] ...By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment..." (vs 16-17). Do we not want all the brethren, and us, have boldness in the day of judgment? *Yes!*

"...because even as He is, so also are we in this world" (v 17). How was Christ in this world? *Serving! Giving His life!*

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love of God..." A hierarchy instills fear! Fear instills torment!

"...rather, **perfect love casts out fear...**" (v 18). It is in the present tense on-going. That's what we need to do. We, brethren, are going to face the most awesome times in the history of the world that has ever been. We can't turn back the clock; we can't make the events the way *we want* them.

The only way that anyone has ever survived any of the things that have come against the Church of God is to love Christ and God the Father. That's what it has to be continually. Then we *perfect* the brethren this way, and what they do is *perfect their lives* because they are taught how to use the Spirit of God and love God and continually have that contact with God.

"...because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him because He loved us first" (vs 18-19)—in all our glorious carnal, sinful old self!

The goal is the perfecting of the saints! That's what Christ wants.

Ephesians 4:12: "...for **the work** of the ministry..."—service; there is the service of the ministry; there is a service for God and the service for the brethren.

"...for **the edifying**... [to build; up-building] ...of the body of Christ" (v 12). The hireling does not up-build. The hireling lets the wolf in and then runs away (John 10). That's why *everything we do* has to help people look to God the Father and Jesus Christ, and have faith, belief, hope and love. That's how you build it up. The flesh is going to die. The flesh is going to corrupt. That's why we have *hope*.

Verse 13: "Until **we**... [including Paul, all the elders that were with him, and all the brethren] ...all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [a spiritually mature person] (here is the goal): **...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**' *That's the whole goal!*

Paul says that *all the fullness of God dwells in Christ bodily!* (Col. 2), and 'we have received of His fullness' (John 1).

The thing that is important to understand is that Christ is never going to empty out. This is what it needs to be, this is the goal. Anything else is below that.

Also part of the things that we are to do as brethren and elders, v 14: "That we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." I tell you what, those breezes are 2,000-plus-years-old. All of this wind of doctrine, plus the New Age Gnosticism that is coming in, they went through back then.

We'll talk about doctrine. One thing that elders are to be: they are to know the doctrine of Christ. They personally are given charge to not let false doctrine take root in the congregations and fellowship groups. With that you have broad unilateral authority. Whereas, personal sins—1-Cor. 5—requires the Church activity. But doctrinally, the elders have broad unilateral authority that it not be established in the Church, that they can mark and get rid of those individuals unilaterally.

They may also confer with the congregation, but we can't let the tares come in—though there will be some; we can't let false brethren take root—though there will be some. That's why we do not accept elders straight across the board being from another Church of God. And with good reason!

"...by the sleight of men..." (v 14)—meaning they have an agenda! I tell you what, the one that had the worst agenda was Stavrinides (WCG). When you understand that Stavrinides was have Turkish and half Greek, then you understand the Esau connection.

"...in *cunning* craftiness..." (v 14)—waiting their time whereby they lie in wait to deceive! That's

what happens with a hierarchy. You can create a structure and put your plants in there and they can just wait for years and years until the right time. You do your pushing/pulling. You pull your men up that you want in different positions, and that's what happened in WCG, and, lo and behold, by time things turn around everyone that should have been in the position to help run the things in WCG—as far as printing, writing, editing—all were changed in a merry-go-round of changing chairs. Then they had their plants right in there, waiting for the right time to destroy it.

When God tells us what really happened, I think we are going to be shocked, even though some of the things we know of it now.

“...with a view to the systematizing of the error” (v 14). In other words, they were beginning to have ‘Systematic Theology’ to bring in false doctrine right at that time. Our job is that we must know the Word of God, and *know* that we know it, properly apply it and teach the brethren the same in their lives. We have every assault of Satan that the world, and things against God's way is. We've got to be strong!

Verse 15: “But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ.”

Colossians 1:27: “...Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Christ is the Head of the Church! Christ has put us all where we are because that's what He has done.

I have not organized any of you; I have not called any of you. We can talk about how you all came into contact with me, and how I came in contact with you, but I just count it all of what God is doing. If I give a sermon and mail it out, that's all I've done. The rest is what God is doing.

Ephesians 4:16: “From Whom [Christ] all the body, 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.”

Notice how many times it talks about love and edifying. That's what it's to be. That's the bond!

I remember a minister who was a district superintendent who told me one time, ‘Fred, I don't know why we have 1st and 2nd Corinthians in the Bible; we don't have any of these problems.’ Guess what? Let's see how Paul thought of himself, and this is how we're to think of ourselves, every one of us!

Yes, we are to love each other, work

together. I'm not going to exercise authority over you. You're not going to exercise authority over the brethren. I'm not going to exercise authority over the brethren. If I can help you, teach you and lead you that you be better elders and servants, and in feeding the flock, I'll do that. If there are some things we need to discuss—where I may be wrong, or you may be wrong—we'll discuss it.

I'm not perfect. I make my mistakes. As a matter of fact, I make so many mistakes sometimes it makes you wonder how God puts up with this. But He does put up with us! He knows it, and that's why we have the grace of God! Let's review our past church experience:

1-Corinthians 3:1: “And, I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but as to those who are carnal—even as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, and not meat; for you were not yet able *to receive spiritual meat*; and neither are you able now, for you are still carnal...” (vs 1-3). We didn't realize that—did we? We thought we were so spiritual.

“...For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal? And *are you not* walking according to human ways?” (v 3). That's what it was at every level, from the top on down!

Verse 4: “When someone says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another one *says*, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal? Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos?... [we can just put our names in there; who are we?] ...*They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one” (vs 4-5). That's not just those in the congregation, but that is to those who are ministers who are serving the brethren. We have to go to God and say:

- God, I need Your Spirit
- I need Your love
- I need Your Truth
- I need the understanding of Your Word

Paul says, v 6: “I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” God is the One Who gives the increase; that's what's important! Not increase in the way of numbers. There's increase:

- in the gifts of God
- in love
- in faith
- in hope
- in the knowledge of Christ
- in grace

That's where the increase comes from.

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants

anything..." Paul could have been all uplifted, because if you talk about what he was responsible for, *for the New Testament*: 14 epistles, the book Luke and Acts. That's 16 of the 27 books in the New Testament. And he said that he was *nothing!*

"...nor he who waters; for it is God Who gives the increase. Now, he who plants and he who waters are one..." (vs 7-8). That's where we want to be, brethren. We want to be one with Christ and one with each other. That is how the ministers are to be.

"...but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (v 8). This is talking not just about the people in the congregation, but this is talking about those who are doing the planting and the watering.

Verse 9: "For we are God's fellow workers..." That's why we started out with that we have to first fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We're laboring together with God. Have you ever thought of it that way? That's not to build you up and say great and how good it is, 'God is with me, not with him.' *NO!* That is to humble you and realize that God is using all of us, regardless of the frailties of our human nature and weakness of our personalities—whatever.

I tell you one thing, personality is a carnal way to run things. You don't run things on personality. Paul did not have a personality. They said that he was 'ugly and rude in speech; why do you come and insult us with these words?' We can all say the same thing.

"...and you are God's husbandry, *even* God's building" (v 9).

- "...we are God's fellow workers..." refers to Paul, Apollos and the other ones
- "...you are God's husbandry..." refers to the brethren
- "*even* God's building"—which comes with ordination

Christ is the *true vine*, and 'My Father is the Husbandman' (John 15:1-7).

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*." This then becomes our responsibility.

Verse 11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ."

- Christ is the Head *and the Foundation*
- Christ is the Head, *and the Chief Cornerstone*

We are working together with God to bring the brethren to perfection through the Word of God and Spirit of God and the Power of God. It's not what we can do. Always remember this: *Physical things cannot accomplish spiritual things! You cannot accomplish spiritual things with physical means!*

Verse 12: "Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble." God has been merciful and hopefully He's burned off a lot of the wood, hay and stubble. Some of which we may have been responsible for in the past. But with that, Paul is telling us now, we need to build with gold, silver and precious stone. And that comes through love, faith and hope—those three tie together. Love is the greatest, and that's why it starts out with gold; then silver and precious stone, so that the brethren can receive the greatest reward. And let them be exalted above us at the resurrection; not that we're over them now. That's how we need to look at it.

Verse 13: "The work of each one shall be manifested..." We will have trials along the way, individually in our lives, so that we may grow in grace and knowledge and learn not to think of ourselves more than we ought.

"...for the day of *trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire... [the trials that we go through] ...and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is. 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 13-15). That applies individually and collectively.

I never will forget; there was this rancher who had a tremendous crop of hay. He had these bales all lined up. He must have had three stacks of bales as high as you can stack them, and I think about four to six wide and it must have been 200 feet long each. Some pranksters came along and through gasoline lit bottles at the base of them and they all burnt up overnight.

When I saw that, this Scripture came to mind. If it's wood, hay or stubble we're in trouble. That's why we need to constantly teach the Word, preach the Word! *We should never bring in the psychology of the world!* Never! *We should always teach the Word of God!*

This applies to each individual, v 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are" (vs 16-17). We need to apply that individually, but let's apply it to what we used to

think of as *the Body of Christ!*

- Was it defiled?
- Was it built with wood, hay and stubble?
- Was it burned up?
- Was it destroyed?
- Was it vomited out?
- **YES!**

Verse 18: “Let no one deceive himself...”—which we can do. Can we deceive ourselves in this thing? *We sure did!* We bought the propaganda hook, line and sinker, because it was supposedly rooted in Scripture.

“...If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God's sight*. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God...” (vs 18-19).

This answers the question as to why we should not organize as the world! We don't have a carnal task like a world organization is doing. We have a spiritual task!

“...for it is written, ‘He entraps the wise in their own craftiness’” (v 19). Did he not do that? *Look at the history of it!* Did we all get trapped in our own conceit? *Yes!*

Verse 20: And again, ‘*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*’ Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men...” (vs 20-21). What did we do? *We gloried in men!*

“...for all things are yours... [back to the Church] ...whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or *the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours; and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's*” (vs 21-23). So, there we have the full connection all the way around.

That's how we need to have the way we do the fellowship groups and congregations. I'm confident that God is going to add more to us. God is going to do the *calling*. We have to the *working*. I think that the only place where you can truly preach the Truth without being muzzled is via CDs and the Internet.

I'm sure that we need to constantly improve and upgrade the Internet. But there are the two things we are doing to reach out. We reach out to the world through it, and we're also reaching out to brethren who have been betrayed and misled. So, we have two purposes in it.

All of those of you who are on the Internet we need your input, too, so we can always keep it in a way that is going to be most effective in helping and serving people.

There's something else we need to do, and this is our responsibility. Because God has set before us choices—everybody had choices—and no one can guarantee how you're going to finish by how you start. Even Paul knew this.

I had someone ask concerning ordaining people: How do we know he's going to remain faithful? *God doesn't even know!* You cannot create a system that guarantees faithfulness. The only system that guarantees faithfulness is what God does in the inner-acting with each person ***IF*** there is fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ constantly.

Even though we're going to examine what the Apostle Paul did, we're going to see that as long as there's human nature, there are going to be problems. There's only one solution to solving the problems:

Acts 20—Paul called all the elders down to Miletus. We'll see later on that elders are *overseers* and overseers are *elders*. Here's the instruction that Paul gave; here is the only way that we can remain faithful. We can't do as the Jews did and say we have it made, ‘we're the seed of Abraham.’ We can't say that we've got it made because God has called us and we're elders.

Acts 20:28: “Take heed, therefore, to yourselves...” Who is to police you? *You and Christ!* Each one of us is responsible to:

- study
- pray
- to know the Word of God

Then we have something that is important, Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew... [or an elder because the principle is the same] ...and you yourself rest in the law...” You teach the Word of God; we're to do it honestly and truthfully, not in deceit or for political things.

“...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. **You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...**” (vs 17-20). We're to be constantly be learning by:

- studying
- praying
- learning
- living
- having the Word of God in our mind

"...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? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the law?" (vs 20-23).

This is what the Churches of God have been guilty of, v 24: "For **through you** the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written." Because of the way we behaved ourselves. They would look at us and say, 'That's the Church of God?'

Acts 20:28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves..."

- the Holy Spirit is going to lead us, **but we have to follow**
- Christ is in us, **but we have to walk as He walked**
- Christ will work with us and bring trials, problems and difficulties to help us, so that we grow in grace and knowledge, **but we've got to take heed to ourselves**

every one of us individually, that we don't:

- get lifted up
- make ourselves high mucky-mucks or low mucky-mucks

But we just be the servants and teachers to shepherd the sheep, to feed the flock.

The first responsibility is to take care of your spiritual standing with Christ, then you're next responsibility:

"...and to all the flock... [we come right back to where we started from] ...among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (v 28). All the brethren belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ. All of their sins have been covered by the blood of Christ, not by the blood of the minister or the power of the minister. We are stewards working in the husbandry of God.

Even Paul knew that they system that he set up and helped organize, v 29: "For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock... [we've seen that happen] ...and from among your own selves men will rise up... [we've seen that happen] ...speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Watch, therefore... [take heed] ...remembering that *for three years...*" (vs 29-31). [Paul could see this coming; he said, 'all those in Asia have left me.' He knew that the *mystery of iniquity* was at work.

"...I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears. 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" (vs 31-32)—with all the saints.

If we take heed to ourselves, if we teach ourselves, and when we preach, if we preach to ourselves and let Christ be in us, *then* we can be built up in the grace of God. How can we build up the brethren's grace and knowledge if we're not built up? *We can't do that!* There is no funnel big enough to do it.

What will happen if we do not be built up in Christ, then what do we do? *We tear down Christ in them, because we're not feeding them!* That's quite a lesson for us.

2-Corinthians 1: 21: "But He Who establishes us with you in Christ... [it's a joint operation] ...and Who has anointed us, *is* God." So, an ordination, with the laying on of hands, is an anointing, a spiritual anointing. Not that you become an 'anointed one'—please understand that.

Verse 22: "Who has also sealed us... [everyone who is teaching, because he had mentioned Silas and Timothy] ...and has given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. But I call upon God to bear witness of my intentions, that in order to spare you I did not yet come to Corinth" (vs 22-23). What was he doing? We'll see later: '*God is sparing you so that you may work out your problems so that before I come they may be all worked out.*' So, he's teaching the brethren to work out their own problems.

Verse 24: "Not that we exercise lordship... ['exousia'] over your faith, but because we are working with you *to increase* your joy. For you stand by faith."

I've been to ministerial conferences where they said we ought to be helper of the brethren's joy. But they didn't have a clue on how to do it. So, all these Scriptures that we've read are not new, and you could go back to conferences in the past and pluck out these same scriptures again. But it has to be done rightly, applied correctly.

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 1:1-4, 7
- 2) 1 John 12:47-50
- 3) Matthew 20:17-28
- 4) John 21:15-17
- 5) Ephesians 4:11, 1-12
- 6) 1 John 2:3-5
- 7) John 14:15, 23-24
- 8) 1 John 4:16-19
- 9) Ephesians 4:12-15
- 10) Colossians 1:27
- 11) Ephesians 4:16
- 12) 1 Corinthians 3:1-23
- 13) Acts 20:28
- 14) Romans 2:17-24
- 15) Acts 20:28-32
- 16) 2 Corinthians 1:21-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 1:1-3, 14; 14-17
- Hebrews 9
- John 10
- Colossians 2
- John 1; 15:1-7

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series & Booklet: *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God* by Fred R. Coulter
- Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 3-25-15

Elder's Conference II Purpose of the Church & the Ministry #2

Fred R. Coulter

Let's cover a couple of things that was brought up in Eph. 4:13 showing the purpose of the Church. The purpose of the Church is to bring many into the Kingdom of God as spiritual sons.

I'm going to read from *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry:

Ephesians 4:12: "With a view to the perfecting of the saints..." All purposes are toward a goal. The *perfecting* is a participle, and that's the whole purpose of it. There is no other reason for the Church. There is no other reason for a ministry, *none!*

"...**for** work of (the) service..."—to minister, the same word as deacon—"diakonos."

It's interesting that all the rest of these have the proposition 'eis'—*toward or into*—the work of the service or ministry. It's showing an on-going thing.

"...**for** building up of the body of the Christ..." Again, it's the word 'eis'—unto the building or edifying of the body of Christ. It's interesting, it's *the* body of *the* Christ. This also reaffirms about Christ establishing His Church, because of Christ is in the possessive genitive case, meaning of *Christ*. It is *His*.

Verse 13: "Until... [however long it takes] ... we all come... [everyone] ...into... ['eis'] ...the unity of the faith..." This is where doctrine comes in; it is not only what you believe, but also doctrine.

"...and of the knowledge of the Son of God... [we grow into it] ...unto... ['eis'] ...a perfect man... [fully mature spiritually] ...unto... ['eis'] ...*the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ."

Those to verses tell us the whole purpose of the Church and the ministry—*into/unto*—showing that it's an on-going thing. This is why we all need to have the attitude that what we're doing today is fine, what we did yesterday you can't rest your laurels on. If you made mistakes, hooray, it's yesterday and gone. Tomorrow you have no control over until tomorrow is here.

This is what it implies by *into*, because it's constantly on-going.

I've mentioned that being an elder is a separate covenant with God alongside the covenant of baptism. A covenant is always based upon the

sacrifice where it is a blood sacrifice. I want to bring out a couple of things here that are important:

Acts 20:22: "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" (vs 22-23). We're going to enter into a time when that's going to come again, that none of these things ought to move us.

If we come to those things, which we probably will, then God is going to inspire us with His Spirit what we ought to say in the time that we ought to say it, in the moment we ought to say it.

Verse 24: "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..."—1-Cor. 4:7—*we have nothing we didn't receive*. In receiving a ministry, we have received it of God. That's why we are to be stewards.

In a modern way you could say that you are a *trustee*. You are given someone else's property to hold it in trust for that person. Christ is the Trustor.

"...to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God..." (vs 24-25). So, we have right here the Gospel of the Grace of God and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God are the same. You cannot separate the two.

"...will see my face no more; wherefore, I testify to you on this day..." (vs 25-26). These are the words of Christ.

In Deut. 30 when Moses was giving his last sermon to the children of Israel before they went into the 'promised land,' God inspired Moses to say that the words of God were that 'I testify to you before heaven and earth that I have set before you death and life, good and evil; therefore, choose life that you and your seed may live.'

Jesus said that 'heaven and earth may pass away, but My words will not pass away.' We have the same thing here in Acts 20, expressed just a little differently.

Verse 26: "Wherefore, I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all." In other words, if any go commit the unpardonable sin,

it's not because Paul caused them to.

Verse 27: "For I have not held back from preaching to you all the counsel of God." That's what's important.

Remember in the sermon series *Twelve Steps to Covenant Law* that the enemies of God are also our enemies. That is, he fights the enemy so we need to stand for the Truth and fight the enemy. The enemy comes in *false doctrine*. That's a sign of an enemy. It comes in the form of a person, it's sure not going to come in the form of an animal, and always ends up in the form of *false doctrine*.

That's why some people have said, 'Why do you have to answer all these questions?' *Because it's false doctrine!* If people get carried away with false doctrine—which we've read about in Eph. 4—we are to arm the brethren that they are not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. Neither are elders to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. So that they can be strong in the knowledge of the Truth of God, that they can stand for the right doctrine, they can see where false doctrine is. That's why it's very important that we always exercise ourselves in our mind with the Word of God and Truth, so that we can stand against the enemy.

Verse 28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves..." That's very important for us to realize.

- Did Paul stand against the enemies? *Yes!*
- Are we going to see that in our lifetime? *Yes!*
- How is it going to be manifest? *Through the synagogue of Satan!*

That's how it is. We can go along and cut as low a profile as we can, but then on the other hand:

- Does God want us to carry a low profile?
- How can you carry a low profile when you're preaching the Truth?
- Use secure phones?
- *NO! You preach the Truth!*
- *It's going to have to be loud and clear!*

Let's move on to some other things that are really important in covering this so that we can understand.

Matt. 16—How many times have we heard this? Every time the pope gets out he quotes this, to reinforce the wrong interpretation and lie that he's the successor of Peter. There were times when the Church of God understood this correctly.

Matthew 16:18—Jesus says: "And I say also to you, that you are Peter; but upon this Rock

[Christ] I will build My Church..." It's important for us to understand that we *let the Spirit of God lead us so that He can build* the Church. How is the Church to be built? *Eph. 4—unto/into!*

Who does the calling? *God the Father and Jesus Christ together!* He's going to build His Church, therefore, it's imperative that we yield to the Spirit of God so that He can build in us, so He can build His Church. It's a join operation.

"...and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it" (v 18). If we go out and try and force growth, like some have done.

- What are the tactics that they have used to cause churches to grow? *You make it attractive to the unchurched!*
- What do you do when you do that? *You're not letting the Holy Spirit convict the person of sin!*

Then you end up with a false understanding of the *unity of the faith*, to where then it becomes a social club and getting together for Sabbath services is not so much to hear the Word of God, but it's so you can be with your social friends. Then you've lost the whole purpose of:

1. the ministry
2. the Church
3. the Sabbath

Yet, didn't we all slide into that? *Yes!* So, we need to let *Christ* build His Church.

- How is He going to build it? *On Himself!*
- How is He defined? *Right in the Gospels and the New Testament!*

I think we've been brainwashed through the years about what the *work* of God is. We'll just summarize it: *The greatest work of God is what He's doing in everyone who has the Holy Spirit!* That's the greatest work of God! Unless that takes place on an individual basis, there is nothing you can do on a collective basis to evangelize.

That's why when there are different ones in a fellowship group gave out the sermon series: *The Holy Sabbath* and *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* this reached out to new people. That gave us the idea that we need to have a beginner's care pack, because the original Care Package #1 was too heavy a load for a brand new person. That's like saying, 'You don't know how to swim? Let's take you in this helicopter out in the middle of the lake and drop you in.'

We need to have new things, and we need to have advanced things. People who have been in the Church for years need to have things to grow in grace and knowledge in. Whereas, the new ones coming along

need to have milk so they can grow. You need both. You can't sacrifice one for the other.

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.'" That means in the Church and in the world. Christ has all authority; He delegates some to us, but we are not to abuse that in any way.

Because of this, v 19: "Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations... [Gentiles] ...baptizing them into... ['eis'—because you are brought from the world into a relationship] ...the name of the Father..." That's the family name we are going to bear, and He is the One Who draws us (John 6:44-45).

"...and of the Son..." (v 19). None can come to the Father except through Christ, and that's only through His life, death and resurrection.

"...and of the Holy Spirit" (v 19)—because that is the gift of God to lead us and guide us.

Verse 20: "**Teaching them to observe all things...**"

Baptism formula: When you say, 'In the name of the Father and of the Son because of His life, death and resurrection, and of the Holy Spirit, because it is to lead and guide you, we do this in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, amen!'

Verse 20: "**Teaching them to observe all things...**" What do we have with this? *A whole cycle!* All things meaning from the beginning clear through to those who are being perfected.

"...all things that I have commanded you..." (v 20). Let's understand something about the writings of Paul. 1-Cor. has a lot of irony in it, and some cynicism in it, because the Corinthians, with all of their sins, thought they had arrived to the peak, ready for the Kingdom of God. That's why Paul said in 1-Cor. 4, WHAT? Are you reigning without us? I would to God that you would reign so that we could reign with you! He really had to lay it on them; here he lays it on:

1-Corinthians 14:36: "WHAT? Did the Word of God originate with you? Or did it come only to you *and no one else*? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual..." (vs 36-37). They were saying, 'We have new understanding.' You can read what they had. Some were speaking in tongues, some were singing Psalms, some were prophesying. You had your Peter group over here, you Paul group over there, your Christ group over here. You had women speaking, and it was wild! Imagine if some of us walked into a church like that today?

That's what Paul is saying here, and 'I'm going to end this dispute': "...**let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are commandments of the Lord**" (v 37). That carries the full weight and authority of Christ! That's why we *teach* the Scriptures; not just speak *from* but *teach!*

Verse 38: "But if anyone *chooses* to be ignorant, let him be ignorant. So then, brethren, desire to prophesy... [inspired speaking to uplift, rather than speak in tongues] ...and do not forbid speaking in *foreign* languages. **Let all things be done decently and in order**" (vs 38-40).

That means there has to be some organization. We have to do this in a way that when there are enough people we do have the right and proper structure and organization. We'll look into it and see what the Apostle Paul had and we will fashion what we do according to that, because they are the commandments of God.

Matthew 28:20: "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.' Amen."

Concerning Christ, He is always the Head! That's why He is always with you. Through the power of the Holy Spirit He is always there.

Hebrews 13:5: "*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior, but be satisfied with what you have; for He has said, **'In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.'***" That is something we really need to teach to the brethren, that they understand that. When something comes along and they have a trial or difficulty, the first thing they think: Has God left me? Why am I going through this trial?

I tell you what, if we thought that with all the trials we've gone through—and all of us have had our share of them—there would be no hope. But I never will forget what William Tyndale wrote: *If God bid you to go across the sea He will send a tempest to prove you whether you believe Him or no!*

Don't look upon trials as a sign that God is forsaking you, because He says that **He never will!** Look upon the trials as something that God has given so that we grow in *grace, knowledge, faith, trust*. I tell you what, when I read the book of Revelation and the things in there, we '*ain't seen nothing yet!*' If we can't take it now, how on earth are we going to be able to take it then?

The trials are sent to increase our faith! Look at all the trials that we have gone through so that when all else fails—which it has—*read the Book!*

- Does God mean what He says? *Yes!*
- Does Jesus Christ mean what He says? *Yes!*

I have to tell you one that I can pass on to you by a woman who was Herbert Armstrong's last female counselor. She said that in discussing the Church and everything in the days leading up to his death, he said—referring to the 1939 article that he wrote concerning church government—'You know, it could have worked that way.' That says a lot—doesn't it?

- Can what we find in the Scriptures work? *Of course!*
- Can we improve upon it? *No!*
- Are there going to ups and downs? *Yes!*

Christ is *never* going to forsake us! That's what He said! We can count on it! We don't need to substitute man's way, or the way of the world, to accomplish what God wants.

Currently in many Churches of God they are following what is called 'servant leadership' out of a book written by Stephen Covey, who is a Mormon. The truth is, Mormonism is the up-to-date New Age Gnostic 'religion' based upon angels—Moroni—angle-worship. They have a hierarchy and structure. Servant leadership, the way is there—though they use Scriptures—it's not the kind of leadership that God wants us to have. Their kind of leadership is to keep them all in the fold in the corporation. And by all means, keep the money rolling in.

If you think Worldwide had problems in checking up on people's tithes, believe me they are pikers compared to the Mormons. Every year the Mormons go into their bishop for a reconciliation of their income, and they must bring their Income Taxes, and if you didn't pay all the tithes, you are indebted to pay them. That's what happens!

True leadership inspired by Christ is to teach everyone to live their lives before God with their choices. Not that we give edicts to them and tell them what to do. We can point out the Scriptures, we can pray for them, we can advise them, but just like no one can control your thoughts—or anyone else's thought...

Even Galileo said, 'Okay, I know it's flat' and turned around and walked out and said, 'Nevertheless, the Earth is round.' *A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.*

Only God can change your heart and mind, and that's called *conversion*. Only God can make you change your thinking. A person may intimidate you for a while so you can 'get along and go along' or so you can stay in the social fold, *but true*

conversion comes from God!

Verse 7: "Remember your leaders who have spoken the Word of God to you..." Whereas, the other way puts them as *rulers* over. It says. **"Remember your leaders who have spoken the Word of God to you..."** so that they can live their life. You are to lead them, so they can lead their lives, who then in turn can help others.

The brethren are not to be docile, passive dimples or chads. They are to be strong in the Word of God and the brethren ought to be trusted to have grown in enough grace and knowledge to help new people coming in. That's what Paul said.

"...considering the outcome... [issue or example] ...of *their* conduct; *and* imitate *their* faith" (v 7). If we do not have faith how can they imitate that? In other words, that means to inspire them.

The only way a person imitates something is that they are inspired, which is the exact opposite of command and control. You inspire them to do it.

How do you do that? *You up-build them!* As I've said quite a few times, I followed the advice of the Superintendent of Ministry when I was first ordained, and he says, 'Men, I want to tell you that every year you have to give a stinging attack sermon on every sin in the congregation.' So, dutifully, I did! Man! It destroyed the relationship with the congregation. It took me a whole year to win them back. I've never give another sermon like that, and never will!

Can we point out sins and wrong-doing without attacking? *Yes!* We can do so by instructing! Paul said, 'You can instruct those who oppose themselves. In other words, their conduct is destructive to their own relationship with God. I'm convinced the greatest help we can get for new people coming into the Church are the brethren. God wants us to follow His Word, and in doing that we're going to turn everything we have learned concerning the Church upside down, because we're plowing it back to what it needs to be, and bring up out of the Scriptures what God wants it to be.

We're literally going to turn it on its head. The ministers aren't the only one to preach. They're not the only ones to be an example. It has said in the past that the greatest number that have come into the Church is because of the personal example of the brethren, or talking about it. In some cases greater than radio or TV. I tell you what, the greatest fiasco and loss of money was the newsstand distribution of the *Plain Truth* magazine. That was a design of the infiltrators to take money and spend vast quantities so it couldn't be spent on what was correct. Think about it!

Paul is saying that very thing, Hebrews 5:7: "Who, in the days of His flesh [Christ], offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because *He* feared *God*. Although He was a Son, *yet*, He learned obedience from the things that He suffered" (vs 7-8).

We're going suffer things, brethren. There is going to be no doubt about it. I don't enjoy it; you don't enjoy it. Nobody enjoys it, but *afterward* comes the 'peaceable fruits of righteousness.' That's when we come to our senses before God, and understand it with the Spirit of God.

Verse 9: "And having been perfected..."—though He was never imperfect, but there is greater and greater perfection.

"...He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, after He had been designated by God *as* High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec; concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing" (vs 9-11). What we need to do that we ministers, and the brethren, are not "...dull of hearing."

How did they get dull of hearing? *By going to Sabbath services every week and hearing the same old pabulum preached every week!* 'Now, everybody pray before you go to church so you come to church in the right attitude.' And you go and hear this lousy, stinking sermon and come home mad as can be; upset and distraught! Then you go through a whole week condemning yourself, from beating yourself over having an attitude like that. 'O God, help me to have a better attitude.' You pray, and by Sabbath morning you're attitude is better, and you go back to church and hear the same old slop again, and you come home in a bad attitude. *Dull of hearing! That makes you dull of hearing!* The modern way is called 'dumbing down.'

Here's the key and this is what we need to do not only for ourselves, but in particular for the brethren; this is the responsibility of the brethren.

Verse 12: "For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers..." Not that they are ordained as elders, but they can teach people. They can show them the Word of God. They can give them a sermon tape or CD. They can explain it to them.

"...but *instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God..." (v 12). I tell you what, those who have gone to Sunday-keeping, you can't even teach them the first principles of the oracles of God anymore. I'm afraid that unless some events come along where they repent at the last minute,

there may be more candidates for the Lake of Fire than we wish. What we need to do is make sure that what we do is that we do not make candidates for the Lake of Fire, but *for the Kingdom of God!*

"...and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food.... [that's why on the website we have milk and meat] ...For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant" (vs 12-13).

What we need to do, as we started out, with the brethren growing

- up 'into the fullness of the stature of Christ'
- up into the knowledge of God
- up into the grace of God

That they be strong. I tell you what, that's going to make the job of an elder more productive in the Word of God, because all the brethren are helping.

Servant leadership in the other Churches of God is that you have so much activity and you're running around seeing so many people, and you are trying to do all of these physical things that you don't have time to give yourself to the Word and doctrine. You're trying to live everybody's life for them, which God does not want. You give them counsel of God, like Paul did, and they choose.

Verse 14: "But solid food is for those who are fully grown... [mature] ...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil."

So, there are always going to be these choices set before us that we need to do. We need to *teach the brethren!* That's what helps them more than anything else. This also gives them liberty, too—doesn't it? *Yes!* You do not become their disciplinary conscience whenever they see you. Then they can be *led by the Holy Spirit* to live their lives. Whatever mistakes they make they're going to make. They can repent of them. That's the whole process of growth, grace and overcoming.

I think the longer we have God's Spirit, the more we realize that we have to be in a constant attitude of repentance.

Let's look at a few other things; let's just do a little overview, and for us to understand that in several things we are doing them exactly correctly, and also:

I had one man ask me, 'What are you doing with re-confirmation and laying on of hands if someone who was an elder in another Church of God, who is now an elder in Christian Biblical Church of God?' *the answer is that the*

congregations that they are serving recommend them to be elders, and because we are doing things differently than it was in the other structure, therefore, we need the added blessing and gift of God and grace of God so that we are all in *the unity of the faith* in serving the brethren. That's why?

Not that we're trying to do one-up-manship on Christ, but so that we ask God to bless that man with His Spirit, and with the extra gift of grace to serve the brethren. In that then, in ordination, why are they done publicly?

I'll just mention that the three worst ordinations that ever took place were the three done privately over in Tucson, Arizona. We'll just answer it this way, then we'll see the proof of it: ***The brethren are involved in the selection, so therefore it's a confirmation also because of the brethren's recommendation!*** That's why it is done publicly. Plus it is a public thing. Reason being: Are they going to serve more than themselves? *Yes, indeed!* So, that's why it should be public. As far as does it need Fred's endorsement? *No!*

It needs *their* endorsement first. Let's understand something concerning the growth of the Church. We'll just review and start it out with the 12 apostles. They replaced Judas with Mathias. There were a total of 120 disciples and on the Day of Pentecost 3,000 were added. Later on 5,000 were added. Thousands more were added, and they had no structure.

How should structure be? *According to need!* That's what we find. You don't build a structure and the plug people into the structure like you would with a phantom corporation. That you're starting out a new corporation and then you have all of these positions. Acts 6 tells us when they had the first need and what the solution was. It also involved the brethren.

(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..." Here was a little complaining within the ranks or among the brethren.

"...because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said...: (vs 1-2). Here's a problem/here's a solution:

"... '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).

When they appoint, we will see that there is always the laying on of hands. But notice that this is input from the brethren. Who knows the men in the area better than anyone else but the brethren. In our past situation, how many problems could we have avoided if the congregations were spiritually strong and mature and they could have recommended different ones to be elders. There would have been a lot more ordained that should have been, and there would have been a whole lot less not ordained that shouldn't have been.

Sometimes, in our past experience, there was a lot of political appointments. With us here, we're all brought together with the Spirit of God. You probably wouldn't have chosen me, and I probably wouldn't have chosen you. But through the Spirit of God and of Christ and His Word, He has chosen us. Now we come to a point that we have need. We fulfill the need. This is what they did:

Verse 4: "...whom we may appoint over this business, 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).

So, when there's an appointment, then there is a laying on of hands after the appointment. The appointment can also be a selection.

Someone will say, 'Does that mean voting?' *No!* What you will find is that if the brethren are led by the Spirit of God—which they should be—and the man that they are selecting has shown by his fruits that He's led of the Spirit of God and loves God, they will know that and understand it. It will be a full agreement. You may call that consensus. That's all right, that word is good enough, and it will be that way. Obviously, they did it in the presence of everyone.

Verse 7: "And the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplied exceedingly..." I don't know if that's what God has for us. We're not going to go out and try to artificially stir this for the sake of getting numbers or whatever. God is the One Who is going to add.

"...and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith" (v 7).

Now we have a little bit different thing. Here is the only way that I think, if there's going to be an apostle, that this would ever be. Since we have

never experienced this—and I don't think we're going to—this is how it was 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, '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).

Here again was another need. God was going to open the door for Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. The only Gentiles that had received the Word of God up to this point was in Antioch, which then became the headquarters or home church of the Apostle Paul.

Paul didn't know what was going to happen. Paul went out and preached in the synagogues. That's where he started. You talk about a ministry; everywhere he went preaching in the synagogues it ended up in a riot and division.

- Acts 13—we have the whole thing of his preaching, how he went through and did it.
- Acts 14—Paul continued on with it; the stoning and coming back

I overlooked in Acts 13 the reason that we have the laying on of hands again is because Paul and Barnabas were already prophets and teachers, already teaching. Prophets in the sense that they were bringing in inspired preaching. So, we then have the occasion of the laying on of hands on them again.

Acts 14:21: "And after preaching the Gospel to that city, and making many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch." The counsel would be: *don't go back in there, you may get stoned again!* Paul went right back.

Verse 22: "*Where* they established the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith..." This is a summary of quite a length of time. They wintered there and came back in the spring.

"...and *declaring* that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. And when they had chosen... [selected or appointed] ...for themselves elders in every church, *and* had prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord, on Whom they had believed" (vs 22-23).

When it says that they prayed with fasting and commended them, the commending is the ordination, what we call *the laying on of hands*. That's what we do.

- Do we not do that when we lay hands on at baptism? *Yes!*
- Do we not do that with ordinations for eldership? *Yes!*

Commend them unto the Lord.

In other words, each elder is to serve and love God and the people that God has given him the overseership to do. That then is a spiritual function that involves everybody. How many times did we have it in the past where, because of transfers, a minister was sent to a city over which the brethren never really accepted and caused no end of problems.

- Did they grow in grace and knowledge? *No!*
- Were they uplifted in the Lord? *No!*

I think that it's interesting that when we really get into the Scriptures that there are a lot more things in here than we have imagined in the past. A congregation should never be saddled with a minister. The problem is this: If they're truly selected in the first place because they love God and are going to feed the sheep, if they love God and the people of God, then the brethren are going to fully accept that man because of his fruits.

That way then you do not have a congregation or fellowship of people who are saddled with a minister who is really not a minister, or an elder who is really not an elder, or an overseer who is an overlord. If that begins to happen, then the brethren can begin to correct the situation. Not only is the responsibility of the elder to take heed to himself and teach himself, but it's also the responsibility of the congregation or fellowship group to then keep everything in equilibrium. You can't let carnal people in to tear it apart. You can't let wolves in to tear things down. But handled on a spiritual basis, on a spiritual level, then it will work.

But it's got to be based on the love of God first, with everybody: those who are elders and overseers; those who are the brethren. That's what we are trying to really focus in on and make sure that that is what we do. If there's really something wrong with an elder in a church area and the congregation knows it, why should the hierarchy interfere and transfer him to another church only to destroy it?

If the congregation knows that the minister has backslidden into sin—gambling, committing adultery and not using the Word of God faithfully—the brethren have the right to go to him and talk to him and ask him what's going on and if there's some problem they can help him with and to restore him to repentance if possible. If not, they can get

together and say, 'Hey, we do not want you to be an elder to oversee us any longer until you get your personal problems squared around.'

You don't want to send him on to another church to destroy it; absolutely not! Catholics did that with all the pedophiles. What did they do? *They had tens of thousands of pedophilia everywhere!* Under a hierarchy you can't go to the minister because he has the 'katakurieuo' and the kataexousia'—exercising authority down—and 'who are you little worm to come and talk to me?' Remember, a little worm ate the gourd that gave Jonah the shade! If someone ever says that you're a 'little worm' you should bring this up and say, 'remember Jonah!'

I will never forget the icy cold—this is when the exact thing happened that we're talking about here took place—right after the time when the leading evangelist confessed that he had adultery with over 200 women! Then his golden voice was missed on the *World Tomorrow* program and the income went down. Rather than coming out with the truth, they covered it over with untempered mortar and balm and brought him back. I never will forget the Sabbath before he was brought back—Carl Franklin was there in the Bible study—and Herbert Armstrong got up there and said, 'You're all a bunch of dumb sheep!'

A little light went on in my mind: *but God doesn't want us to remain dumb sheep!* If you feed the sheep, they're not to be dumb! Do you think anyone could have gone up to *the apostle* and say, 'Hey, you're strapping us down with this man who is totally unfit to be a minister.' Whether he has repented or not has nothing to do with preaching the Word of God. His conscience has been so absolutely—maybe not seared—but from a case we know of later that, *yes, it was seared* and he ought to step down.

You could not go up and say to him 'Why don't just step down?' *I'll lose my perks and my plane and power and prestige!* God says, 'Damn all of that! If you don't repent and serve Me, and you don't love Me, it doesn't matter. Why take My name upon your lies? Why take My name upon your sin?'

That's the way, also, that the brethren can help not let wolves come in. If an elder sins so greatly, spare everybody the trouble and voluntarily step down. But it's the responsibility of the brethren to do so. So, we're seeing that the brethren have a lot of responsibility, and we as elders and overseers have a covenant responsibility because Christ—Who purchased the Church with His blood, the covenant blood—that in the covenant with the eldership we have a far greater responsibility and stewardship

than we have understood. Not authority as we think of authority in the past. But in responsibility toward God and the people.

It's an awesome thing to understand that God has set men to oversee those whom He has called. That's where it all is. That's why some people were a little askance when I said that we were going to have a ministerial conference. Some almost passed out! They remember some of the ministerial conferences that they went to. I remember some that I've gone to.

Everybody wants God just like they want a car, but they don't want Him for the steering wheel, they want Him for the spare tire! A lot of brethren in the Church of God have as much salvation as they think they need; that they are close enough to God to that if something happens they can go to Him, but they also have one foot also in the world, and they are close enough to the world that they can get along with the world.

Sooner or later it's like a person straddling a crack. The crack, as you're walking along, gets wider and wider. Pretty soon you're not going to be able to straddle it, and something is going to have to give.

Acts 14:23: "And when they had chosen for themselves elders in every church..." This was after a period of time. They came back to confirm the word of the disciples. They were confirming everything that they were doing as God had wanted.

Here we have, again, structuring according to need. If you don't have brethren you don't have a congregation. Do you then need two men who are there and have them both as elders? *Of course not!* What are they going do? Oversee each other? *So, it's according to the need!* We have to look to God

- to make sure that He's doing the leading
- to make sure that it's the Holy Spirit that is guiding
- to make sure that it is Christ
- to make sure that it is based upon the love of God

Then we can understand. We have to look to the fruits!

Now we're ready to look at some other things. After they had these churches, how were they run? What were the instructions that God has given us? *The only instructions that we have were through the Apostle Paul!* We do not have any structure of the Apostle Peter. We don't have any structure—except just a hint of it—of James.

I'll just mention concerning James, that he—because some came down from James of the

circumcision party—unfortunately, was trapped into the Jewish way of doing things by having a little Sanhedrin. So, when Paul came up there, they all got together, and the very ones that James was so happy about—the Zealots—were the ones who martyred him.

Acts 21:17: “Now, when we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren gladly received us. And on the following *day*, Paul went with us to *see* James; and all the elders *were* assembled. And after greeting them, he reported one by one the things that God had worked among the Gentiles through his ministry” (vs 17-19). We are not seeing a hierarchy where James was the headquarters and they had church.

Verse 20: “And when they heard *this*, they glorified the Lord. Then they said to him, ‘Brother, you see how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous of the law of *rituals*.... [How many were converted?] ...But they have been informed that you are teaching all *the* Jews who are among the Gentiles to apostatize from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk in the customs. What then is going to happen? A multitude is going to assemble, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore, **do this that we tell you...**” (vs 20-23).

It is not necessarily true that in a multitude of counselors there is wisdom if it is not good counsel. You can always hide bad counsel by saying that it was a multitude of counsel, because you had a predetermined purpose of what the group was going to think before you ever started. So what you have is an ideological mask covering the fact that the counsel was no good.

That’s what we have here, unfortunately: “...there are four men with us who have a vow on themselves; take these and be purified with them, and pay their expenses, so that they may shave *their* heads...” (vs 23-24).

Let’s understand that God took advantage of the political move by James and the council **to fulfill His will** as a last witness to Jerusalem before it was destroyed. God will go ahead and trap men in their own circumstances and use it to **His** benefit. **He did that!** James was captured and God rescued him and so forth.

The point of this is that we do not have the structure of what James had as the model for us. What we have in Gal. 2 is a correction by Paul for not only the wrong practices, but of the wrong political ‘religious’ influence of men. Peter was the apostle to the circumcision, and may have had a highly structured ministry; we don’t know. But if he did, is that why it’s not recorded here. I think at the end of his life he understood it.

Just like Herbert Armstrong, at the end of his life he understood it and said, ‘I think we could have done the way I wrote in 1939.’ Look at all the things that we went through. And I think that Peter understood it here. I think this helps us understand that where we started out in John 21, why Jesus said to Peter the things that He said. Peter was very political!

Remember what he said after Christ said, ‘Do you love Me?’ three times? Peter turned around and said, ‘What’s going to happen to him [John]?’ Jesus said, ‘If it’s My desire that he live until I come again, what is that to you? You go do what I said.’

Here we have that Peter learned the lesson late in life, 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: Feed the flock of God *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; 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 1-4).

He learned the lesson! But let’s look at Peter’s mistake, and we’ll also see that James was involved in it. Don’t you think that all those in Jerusalem that it was hard for them to give up Judaism:

- how hard it was for him to give up the traditions
- how hard it was to admit that circumcision of the heart was greater than circumcision of the flesh

Galatians 2:1: Then after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with *me* also. And I went up according to revelation, and laid before them the Gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run in vain. (But indeed, Titus, who *was* with me, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.)” (vs 1-3).

{Note sermon series: *Circumcision Wars*—being compelled to be circumcised is the whole issue here}

Verse 4: “Now, *this meeting* was *private* because of false brethren brought in secretly, who came in by stealth to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we did not yield in subjection, *not* even for one hour, so that the Truth

of the Gospel might continue with you” (vs 4-5).

- How Paul fight against false doctrine? *Stood right up!*
- How are we to handle false doctrine? *Look it square in the face and answer with the Truth!*

These people had about all the salvation they could handle at the time. We can see these political mistakes, and anytime you're motivated by fear, instead of faith, then you make a wrong decision.

- What will people think?
- Wasn't that the decision of the council in James?
- Look at all these out there, should we offend them?
- Have you heard that in the past? *If it's the Truth, let them be offended!*
- Is God able to handle that? *Of course!*
- Did not Christ say that He came to bring a sword?
- Did He not say that if you're offended in Me...?

That's what we're dealing with here. I know that there are always some people who say, 'Fred Coulter, who do you think you are that you're accusing Peter of politicking? *I'm not accusing him; I'm reading what Paul wrote!* The irony of it is that Paul was martyred before Peter and all of this was sent on to Peter, who then retained the book of Galatians, later when Peter died that went on to John.

Not only did Peter learn the lesson, he also agreed with what was written in Gal. 2 where he was wrong. How wrong what Peter? *It was a salvational issue! Salvation by works, or salvation by faith!*

Verse 6: "But *the Gospel that I preach did not come from those reputed to be something.* (Whatever they were does not make any difference to me..." That's the way it has to be in any situation that is not according to Scripture. It doesn't matter what a person may seem to be or is. If it's not correct, it's not correct!

"...God does not accept *the person of a man.*) For those who are of repute conferred nothing upon me. But on the contrary, after seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, exactly as Peter *had been entrusted with the Gospel of the circumcision*" (vs 6-7). Paul was not condemning everything that Peter did. He was bringing out this great mistake, in front of everybody, that Peter made.

Verse 8: "(For He Who wrought in Peter for

*the apostleship of the circumcision wrought in me also toward the Gentiles); and after recognizing the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John—those reputed to be pillars—gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, affirming that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision. Their only request was that we remember the poor... [send back things to help them in the way of food and money, and so forth] ...which very thing I was also diligent to do. But when Peter came to Antioch... [Paul's home church] ...**I withstood him to his face because he was to be condemned;** for before certain *ones* came from James.... [there we have the situation with James] ...he was eating with the Gentiles.... (vs 8-12).*

Now, Peter should have known the lesson! Who was sent to Cornelius? *Peter!* Who learned the lesson that he should call no man common or unclean? *Peter!* Here is Peter backsliding, based upon *fear!* *Politicking!*

"...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles, being afraid...* [fear] ...of those of *the circumcision party.* And the rest of *the Jews* joined him in *this hypocritical act,* insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy" (vs 12-13). Is that not what politics always gets down to? *Yes, it does!*

Verse 14: "But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, **I said to Peter in the presence of them all,** 'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize? We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the Gentiles*—knowing that a man is not justified by works of law..." (vs 13-16). What was the law that they sought to be justified by? *Separating themselves from the uncircumcised Gentiles!* That made them holy, righteous, different. 'We're not to associate with those people; after all they still have the foreskin on.'

"...**but through the faith of Jesus Christ,** we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the faith of Christ...*" (v 16). Paul is saying that 'Look, we're still claiming justification by faith, but what are we doing in reality? What are you doing, Peter, in reality? *You're going back to justification by works!*'

"...and not by works of law; because by works of law shall no flesh be justified" (v 16). In the Greek is not there; it's just "...works of law..." You can take this same thing and apply it to any 'religion'; be it: Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammadism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, all the works that they have. Only the sacrifice of Christ can do it!

Verse 17: "Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ... [they still reserve that to themselves] ...and we ourselves are found to be sinners, is Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed, I am making myself a transgressor" (vs 18-19). Not Christ! Christ does not approve it! We could add in there every hierarchical thing that we sought to justify ourselves with.

- Were we not justified because we had the hierarchal structure?
- Were we not justified because we had 'the government of God'?

All of those things did the same thing as separation by circumcision! Ye, what happened? *It was all reserved to themselves, that they were justified by Christ, but the other people have to do this, that and the other thing!*

Verse 19: "For I through law died to *works* of law, in order that I may live to God.... [Paul is telling Peter this] ...I have been crucified with Christ, yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (vs 19-20). Notice how it comes right back to Christ and what Christ started. What this is telling us, when they were doing these things, is that they were *leaving Christ!*

- When we had a hierarchy, were we leaving Christ? *Yes!*
- What is the fruit of it? *Ruined lives and destruction in the name of God!*

As Carl Franklin pointed out, there are some people who have never been healed from that to this day in certain churches. Even though you have a hierarchy, which sets its place instead of Christ, you end up with anarchy because you've cut off the Head, *Christ!* While you give lip service that He is the Head, the reality is that you've cut Him off, and He's not. Therefore, you end up in anarchy one way or the other.

Where do we find—outside of when the churches began and were organized in the book of Acts and a few things that we find in 1st & 2nd Corinthians, and what we've read in the book of Ephesians—the only knowledge of structure in the Bible of how the church congregations were structured? *In the Pastoral Epistles!* We're going to go through them.

We are going to take our time and understand it as we go through. We're going to see some very profound things.

Let's notice the emphasis and the things that Paul is teaching. I remember one time that we were told at a ministerial conference: *All you ministers out there, if you want to know how to run your local church read and study and apply 1st & 2nd Timothy and Titus! But it was never done that way!*

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, to Timothy, *my* true son in *the* faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 1-2).

What we're going to see is that Paul had connection with every one of the Churches that he wrote to. Just as there are seven churches in the book of Revelation, Paul also wrote to seven churches, different ones with the exception of Ephesus.

What we see is that an inner-working together with great independence, but we do not see an isolation. Most independent churches in isolation—that are not connected with something greater than just their local church—ended up destroyed with false doctrine or having no purpose other than just the socializing of the local group.

Verse 3: "When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus... [he was the overseer of Ephesus] ...in order that you might *solemnly* charge some not to teach other doctrines." The first thing we learned is that we *must guard against false doctrine!*

How did Paul give the command? We're going to notice as we go through here:

- I charge you
- I remind you
- I command you
- you command
- you charge
- Do the elders have that authority to do so? *Yes! No question about it!*
- Is this a hierarchical authority? *No! It is an overseeing authority!*
- What authority do they have? *The full authority of the Word of God!*
- Does that make you some 'big something'? *No! It means that you are a steward of the Word of God, and of God's people!*

God wants it defended!

- Does God want the hireling and the wolf to come in? *No! We all have to be responsible!*

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 4:12-13
- 2) Acts 20:22-28
- 3) Matthew 16:18
- 4) Matthew 28:18-20
- 5) 1 Corinthians 14:36-40
- 6) Matthew 28:20
- 7) Hebrews 13:5, 7
- 8) Hebrews 5:7-14
- 9) Acts 6:1-7
- 10) Acts 13:1-3
- 11) Acts 14:21-23
- 12) Acts 21:17-24
- 13) 1 Peter 5:1-5
- 14) Galatians 2:1-20
- 15) 1 Timothy 1:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Deuteronomy 30
- John 6:44-45

Also referenced:

Book: *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry

Sermon Series:

- *Twelve Steps to Covenant Law*
- *The Holy Sabbath*
- *Refuting Sunday-Keeping*
- *Circumcision Wars*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 3-25-15

Elder's Conference—2007 Roundtable Discussion & Purpose of the Ministry

Fred R. Coulter

In our personal study, generally broken down into doctrine, prophecy, Christian living. We have to rightly divide the Word, properly put it together. We need to understand broad overall principles in order to understand other aspects of the Word of God.

Example: Everything that men do ultimately goes back to the earth; comes from the ground. That is an overall principle that will help us understand tithes and offerings in the day and age that we are living in.

What do we do? Most of our money is digital and funds. If you write a check and you don't have enough in your account, they don't say you ran out of money, they send a notice of insufficient funds. We always carry around with us 'digital debt' called *credit cards!*

We need to have some overall principles to understand that and to understand about how we conduct the Sabbath, about driving, eating, and all of those things.

Health:

The next category we need to talk about is health. Get a good checkup and take care of yourself. We'll talk about educating ourselves concerning food and water, medication, supplements and what we need to do. Every single one of us here are weak, and we all have some kind of health problem one way or the other.

It's not a matter that we're going to miraculously be healed, or that we're going to find that supplement that is going to give us total longevity until the return of Christ. But at least if we can take care of ourselves and our families better, and help us to avoid some difficulties in our health, that's what we need to do.

I know that Marlin has been very diligent in watching his situation because of his diabetes. It's very evident that he's taken care of his health. He's watching what he's eating, and he's getting the sleep and rest that he needs. He's not over stressing himself. That's what we all need to do; sit down and take an evaluation of where we are health-wise, how we're eating, where we're going and what we're going to do. We need to have the discipline to do it.

I've had to do that myself. My big battle in life is fighting weight. I have to discipline myself

and make sure that I exercise three or four times a week. Exercise is important. We can talk about all of those things.

Aging and Decisions:

Another thing that I want to cover is *old age*. We're all older! Delores brought this to me: You look in the Bible, and how many men—even of God—who made bad decisions and terrible mistakes in their old age?

- Eli the priest and his sons
- Samuel in making his sons judges

We're talking, in some cases, about righteous men, not evil men.

- Solomon—after everything that God did for him

Look at the terrible decisions he made in having all those wives and women. I have no clue as to how he had enough stamina to endure all that. *Bad decisions!*

- Hezekiah—God gave him an extra 15 years and he celebrated by showing all the wealth of Judah and the blessings of God to the ambassadors of Babylon.

God said that He would send it to Babylon, but 'I won't do it in your day.' Hezekiah said, 'Thank You, Lord, at least I'll have peace.' It's not recorded that God was really angry at him, but I think God was, because guess who succeeded him? *Manasseh!* How many years did he reign? *55 years, the longest reigning of any king!* We need to think about some of those things! Look contemporarily:

- Herbert W. Armstrong—all the mistakes that he made

That's why we need good council when things come up. We need to be making the right decisions, and I came very close to making a wrong decision, but ended up making a right decision concerning Earl Timmons and the group that he has. I knew nothing about him when I first talked to him, when he first contacted me. But they have the Church of God Worldwide Ministries out of Sevierville, TN. He's a plumber, and Jim and I met him in Dallas and told him that we would let him send out our sermons and CDs, but we're going to do some checking out. He's got a history of things

that involve lawsuits, almost everywhere he goes, so we said, 'No, we're not going to have any association with him.

He's currently involved in a lawsuit right now. He sent me some information on it and I'm going to thank him for sending it, but the situations keep persisting, so we have to bypass any cooperation. I'll just tell him that I hope that God leads him to repentance and change. We don't want to condemn him without any hope.

Concerning women in the Church:

We need to talk a little bit about women, and it really struck me when we were coming over here that there are so many women going around with cropped-off hair, cut just like a man. There are too many women in the Church who are borderlining on their hairdos. We don't need that among the elder's wives. And we need to help discourage it on the others. But we've got to take care of that situation, because they're looked upon as an example. So, we need to keep that in mind.

Then plunging necklines. We're going to end up with dress that will be 'gownless straps'—straps on the shoulders and nothing else. But there is something that, today, the women just have to show as much cleavage as possible

I had some comments to one of the head tellers at the bank when I came in to make a deposit. Here's this gal with cleavage showing, at least six inches of cleavage and about six inches going across the other way and leaning over to take my deposit.

I motioned the head teller over and said, 'Ma'am, I'm really offended that I have to come into the bank, which is a public place, and you have a clerk who has cleavage that falls clear down to the tabletop. I really don't appreciate that.' The same thing happened over at an insurance company, and I suppose I shouldn't have done it, but I told the gal, 'when you work with the public, you know, you need to consider that showing the cleavage in public is not necessarily the way you should dress for the public, and meeting the public.'

I got a call from her boss saying, 'I understand you are upset.' I said, 'No, I wasn't upset, I was just telling her that we don't need to have cleavages and breasts hanging out there in the public.'

I think generally in the Church, in our fellowship groups we don't have that problem, but there sure is in other Churches of God. Whatever it is that inspires women to do that, we need to at least address it.

Church Government—Man's hierarchy vs God's service organization:

That's what it needs to be called, because that's what it is. That's all I have as far as major topics to cover, and some of those we cover as we go through 1st and 2nd Timothy and parts of Titus.

Wayne Stenhouse:

Concerning church government, which I think is very, very important. There is some concepts going on that there is no need for a ministry. One letter was addressed to me and said, 'Just who do you think you are, Fred, and Roger? I have the same Holy Spirit as you have, so guess what, you're actually nobody.'

I find that some brethren—very few, but some—are very insulting to the elders. There's no respect! But there is an authority and there is a structure to the Church, and I think we need to get it across.

Roger Kendall:

I think that what Wayne has said is a subtle attitude. Sometimes it comes out more blatant, but generally there is a sense that coming out of Worldwide—and I've heard this in different ways that anything that denotes of structure or organization is sometimes construed as being the old way of Worldwide, and they kind of come back from that.

It's more than just respect, I like what Wayne said that there is no need. It's like we're all a ministry unto ourselves. In part we are; each of us has a responsibility before God in ministering to ourselves. But as helpers and teachers of the brethren, they accept it but there's this feeling that they are really not respecting what we are trying to do. It's very hard to communicate that in some ways. I've been praying and thinking about that quite a bit lately, how we can effectively show that we are helpers of their joy. That we're here to encourage, edify and build up. We're not here to regulate their lives and tell them what to do at all.

But then the counterside of that is that when something occurs that needs leadership, we don't get the support that we need.

Bob:

I don't know how... I've been around a long time, and I've heard a lot of criticism about a lot of things in the Church. Some of it was well put, but I don't see how we can get anything done if we don't have some kind of a structure/organization, and someone who is 'directing traffic.'

I've found through the years that if you want respect, you've got to conduct yourself in a respectful manner. You must fit the mold and 'walk the talk.' If you talk it, you've got to walk it. I know that with all the people that we're going to have coming our way, everything is for naught if we don't have a lot of other people coming along.

If we don't 'clone ourselves,' you might say, because we must be teaching other people the things that Fred has brought out, the topics, and we've got to know that we're going to have the resources and material. We can't be everywhere all the time. We're going to have to be able to give people something and have them to do something on their own. They don't retain but only about ten or fifteen percent of what we tell them, and half of that is incorrectly understood. They're going to have to do something on their own.

Anything that we offer on the website I think that rather than click on it to get it, they should have to write and say, 'Send it to me.' After a while you're going to drain your resources if you don't. I'm for giving everything away freely, but I think that they should instigate this gift of the Truth by writing in and asking for it.

If they do that, then you know that they're sincere. It doesn't take any effort or thought to just push a button to get whatever you are soliciting over the Internet.

Fred said something about aging. It's terrible to get old! But it's even worse if you get old, and we're all getting older, and we're leaving behind work that we left. We're sowing, what we're doing right now, and down the road, what we sow today, someone is going to come along and pick up on it. I would like to make sure that whatever my presence has been during this timeframe will leave something meaningful behind. In that vain, I notice that in some of the material that we have from York Publishing and it's not Christian Biblical anymore.

Will all the people who follow us be able to get this freely?

Fred:

Of course! They'll all be able to get it regardless of the circumstances.

Now, let me say this: York Publishing is *me*. People in the world do not like to order things from a church. So, it's better to have it published under York Pub. Also, with the arrangement we have with Amazon.com there are some people who would rather *buy* it. So we have that.

As far as writing, they do write. We get lots of people writing in, and we do get them to request a book, whether it is by letter or by e-mail.

Bob:

The reason that I bring this up is because we're bombarded all the time with all kinds of doctrinal challenges. We're moving into an arena now about our publications, and who has a right to that publication.

One of the things that's being circulated now is the lawsuit that the Philadelphia COG has with Worldwide in getting some of the material. In the end, they won in the sense that they had to pay \$2-million to get rights to Herbert W. Armstrong's material.

The other thing, I remember very vividly that Herbert Armstrong dropped Worldwide Church of God in his meetings with world leaders and he developed the AICS. So, that brings the subject up as how is this material going to be circulated down the road.

Fred:

This is not the same comparison between Christian Biblical Church of God and York Pub. Outside of York Pub. and having Amazon.com selling some to the public, everything that York Pub. has belongs to the Church. In the event of my sudden death, my son David will pick up the reigns on the *business end* to make sure that all publications, books and the salaries and payroll keep going on from a *business point of view*. He will have not spiritual authority or anything, but we do have that arrangement at this particular time. It will be all available and there won't be any need for any lawsuits or anything like that.

Bob:

I'm just saying that we're going to see down the road, because of material like this, it's very difficult to challenge the information that you are producing. I know that a little battle royal, that people will continue to try to take you down. It reminds me of the corporate structure—I'm talking about a large corporate structure—that you have the political aspect of it, and people are always maneuvering to get the most information they can on someone to bring them down and put themselves in a better posture.

What you just said about York Pub., that you own York Pub., and that in the event of your sudden death that David—whom none of us have met—we don't know what his psyche is about the Church; we have no information whatsoever regarding that...

I didn't even know it until you spoke it, so I wouldn't have any idea what he would do. I know

that in Church of God International, we had the situation where Ted died, and his wife and sons picked up and started selling tapes. That is something that is going to be dumped in our laps one day, as an elder, what's going to happen when you die.

I see you living to beyond 90 because Herbert did. You look a lot like Herbert, as you get older. One day in Atlanta we were sitting side by side and I looked at Fred and I said to him, 'You're beginning to look more and more like Herbert.' He just kept eating, he wouldn't even respond! He should have responded and admitted it, because he looks at himself every day. {all said in a humorous way}

I do have genuine concern about it, and I have a difficult time functioning without good information. I don't like confrontations, but I don't run from them, and I never lose one when I'm right. I like to be right, and the only way you're going to be right is to have the right information.

I would like to get to know everyone better, know more about them and their families and their time in the Church. I'd like to know the kinds of problems that they have difficulty with, because if 'iron does sharpen iron,' there's no better foundry than an elder's conference. That we get sharpened on how to handle certain things that come up.

Misinformation—you've got to be able to discern when you're getting misinformation in order to handle situations.

Fred:

I'll just mention concerning my son David. He's 38, has his own business and has been a millionaire twice over. He's been run through the ringer because of the corporate structure. I've told him that with the business that he's got going now—which you can go online and look up: consumerdirect.com. That is going to be a big and fantastic thing that he is doing businesswise. He's a hard worker and he will carry out the instructions to carry on the business part of the work.

Bob: What does that mean?

Fred:

That means mailing books, taking orders, everything to do with *business*. Taking care of the payroll, making sure that the things that need to be taken care of *businesswise* continues on. ***Not having any spiritual function.*** It doesn't take any spiritual function to sign a check for payroll.

The spiritual end of it, as far as what would happen if I would die? Well, part of the answer is, conducted with the business, we've got enough stuff to last a long, long, long time. The outfit that had *Back to the Bible* ran 15 years without having another spiritual leader, just by the things that they had.

Now we've got the websites, so what we need to do is pray about that, and ask God to also provide the spiritual answer, so that we know what will happen.

Roger:

Concerning the future of the Christian Biblical Church of God in terms of the events that time brings, that is transition and change: One of the things that, I think, history shows is that you don't know where you are until you get there.

What I mean by that is that we can't predict situations that are so much in transition as they are, but how can Fred know, at this point, how to designate some kind of a spiritual successor? There's no way that he could set down a list of names at this point as to who would be faithful, trustworthy, and be the one.

God is going to have to inspire that in due time, to reveal that either to Fred or to others in a way and manner that we would know that God's will is being done in that manner. It's called *trust, faith and putting it in God's hands*. There's no way that we would know who would be that individually, or even if there would be an individual.

It's God's will! All of this is in God's hands, as far as I'm concerned.

Ken Gee:

In the past I had the unique experience of greeting people at the door for 30 years. That was a wonderful experience, because you got to know people, you got to understand them, and you got to have love and concern for them.

What I continually tell the brethren in Australia is that 'I am your servant, you are not mine.' I continually stress that. I also stress to develop the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the Father. I also stress that we are here to be of assistance to them. If they desire assistance pick up the phone any hour of any day or night and phone us. I am in constant contact with the brethren by phone. I have a relationship with telecom that they do not charge me for the calls, but put it on the standard rate.

I found that you've got to take a deep interest without interfering in people's lives. When you greet people at the door you have to be very sincere, because people can see through you like a sheet of glass.

I would get a man coming to the door, very seriously and prominently, with his family, and I would say, 'I like your tie, would you like to swap?' Then you get a woman coming up with tears running down her eyes, and you say, 'I like your hairdo, it really suits you.' That puts people in the frame of mind to be receptive. It's the same as dealing with the brethren. You don't interfere with their lives, but they know you're there to serve them. They know that you have a deep abiding interest in their welfare. I find that is the best way to deal with people.

I firmly believe that if you start a college or university for the training of the ministers, you are going against Almighty God. I base it on the following:

- Who chose Moses?
- Who chose Moses' successor?
- Who chose Samuel?
- Who chose David?
- Who chose all the prophet?
- Who chose all the apostles?

When the traitor Judas Iscariot betrayed the Savior, what did the men do? *They fasted and prayed!* No doubt the whole congregation did the same.

So, they put these lots in a hat or whatever, but the important thing they said to God, 'You chose!' They chose Mathias, and I think that's important to get across to the brethren. That we are *their* servants, we are there to help them as far as teaching is concerned.

We have to understand that there are people out there that know more about the Bible than you do. We have woman in western Australia who listens to four of Fred's sermons a day. I hope that's been a help.

Marlin Fannin:

I think the topic that we're discussing here today, I think it falls under *old age*. As Bob brought out, people are going to ask what's going to happen? People need to know. I've often thought it would be good to have kind of newsletter, but if you bring up an idea usually someone will say, 'Good, run with it.' I don't have the time, but it would be good to know input from all the elders, what's going on in their area, specific problems where we could help one another.

I mentioned to the group that we had some time back, 'What's going to happen if Fred died? *or* If all of a sudden I dropped dead? What's going to happen?

What I'm trying to do—I know not everyone has a little group where they meet regularly each Sabbath—is to teach those people, letting them give sermonettes. We have one Sabbath a month where I speak. Also, sometimes, two others speak. Give them a chance to speak. Some of these men were never given an opportunity to speak, or never would have if weren't a deacon or elder.

We're all, in that sense, elders. We're getting old, and Paul said, 'You go out and seek out some of the older men.' Why did he do that? That doesn't mean that every older man has the wisdom or knowledge or the right heart to be able to shepherd God's people. But through years of living, through family, kids, grandkids, you name it, you're going to have certain amount of wisdom, world wisdom, and coupled with God's Holy Spirit then you've got something. That's what Moses was told to do, as well.

'You go pick out men who, first of all, fear God.' Their first thought was God. I think that it's very important that the people know, as Fred mentioned earlier, that the elders for the most part is our time and effort. There's no pay involved. I don't want any pay, and I'm sure that most of the others don't either.

But there is a disrespect there, as Wayne brought out. There is a disrespect for the elders. I think that there's a lot of things that go into that, as now some of the people are free to do things they were never free to do before: *freedom to think!* That's what God wants, and says, 'Now you choose! You choose life! You choose good or you choose bad!' All of us have that and have to deal with that daily in our individual lives.

That's what they have got to come to understand, because too many people are lazy. Fifty percent of them want somebody to follow. They want somebody to tell them what to do. Is that the 50% that don't have oil in their lamp? *I don't know! God only knows that!* But we have got to help the people, and that's what I try to do where I'm at; help them to grow up to the fullness and stature of Jesus Christ. And that takes work and effort on their part. They have got to do some of the decision making. Some is going to be bad, and some is going to be good. That's how you learn.

But give them opportunities, there's always going to be 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' There are going to be people who want to start their own thing. There are always going to be tares. There are going

to be demons sitting there. All of these things are in God's Church; where else are they going to be? *Where more of God's Spirit is acting, you better believe that's where they're going to be!* The demons want to know, and where they're going to be, for the most part, is where that spiritual knowledge and God is really working, and allowing God to work in their lives.

The people have got to grow up, and they have to have the freedom to grow up, and we'll deal with problems because of that. Just because the people are free to think, and now they want to feel their 'wild oats' or whatever. That's going to cause more problems in some areas to deal with, but it's good on the other end that some are going to take that and they are going to grow.

It's like the pound. They're going to take it and it's going to grow to five or ten. So, the main thing is that people will have—whether they respect or don't respect—to understand that we are there working for their benefit without pay or any thanks, and to be able to get their focus on God and Jesus Christ instead of an organization or one man. That's up to the people!

Jim Hyles:

I'm just going to say, in people's concern about David, Fred's son. I have met David, and I know David, and I don't think that there's any concern. I think that he's going to do a great job as business manager. He's very professional in what he does. When he came up and Fred went through the legal processes, he came over to our house and looked at what Betty and I do, and I saw no reason to have any concerns.

I think everybody can not worry. I think we're in good hands. I think, as far as that part, we will just progress right on, as long as people pay their tithes and everything, as long as there's money to run the work, it will continue to go. Everything would be done just like it's done now. Requests would come in, things would be shipped out. We might not have weekly sermons to send out, but we can continue to feed the flock as best as that can be done.

Fred: We can recycle sermons.

Jim:

We've got 1600-plus sermons and a lot of them people haven't heard in years. These go back to 1985! Some people haven't been in the Church nearly that long—with CBCG—so there's a lot of things that could be started with 1985 and start working its way. You have a lot of years that you could sent out things that are basically new!

Unnamed Speaker #1

God will handle that end of it. The other two things: the publication end of it and the money end of it. These things will be brought out: who's handling the money; who's handling the publications.

Anse Cates:

I just listen to this group and all of you are talking about aging. As I looked around the table—I've been at several of these meetings—and you're not aging, you're maturing! So, let's not have anymore talk about aging! This same group three years ago would no more have been able to have a discussion like we're having right now than they would have been able to fly. So, you have matured, not aged.

Another thing that I was thinking about was what we will do in case Fred dies? Well, we had another fellow who was in the same business that we're in who picked out 12 men and He taught them for three years, and doggone if they didn't do a good job of keeping the business going after He was crucified—I'm telling you Who I'm talking about!

He took those 12 men and they built the foundation that we're all living by now. So, fellows, let's go back to this textbook that we have and the nine of us here now—I don't know if we would all be in the group that would take care of the job—but it's something to think about. If the head is lost, everybody puts their shoulders together and they can keep the job going. Most of you have shown by your actions and what you are doing in the last few years, that you're interested in keeping the job going. So, trust God and work for Him, and it will go!

Jim:

As far as respect for the elders, you can't really *make* people have that respect. In other words, if people are converted, they're going to respect the elders. They're going to love God, and they're going to love the elders. You can't force somebody to love the elders, God or any of us. It's one of those things, that yes, I get a lot of phone calls working for and helping Fred, and I know that there are some really weird things going on out there. But I also know that the sincere people think totally different of Christian Biblical Church of God than any of the other churches.

Many people call up and say, 'There's no place else that I can go and get what I'm getting from CBCG. Those are the people who are converted, and those are the ones that we need to worry about, rather than those that are disrespectful, troublemakers, constantly bringing in weird

doctrines, weird question and weird ideas. I don't know if you can do anything for them.

I think we have to pray about them. God can help them, but not us!

Unnamed Speaker #2

One other item I would like to bring up and follow up on. I think that the biggest problem that a lot of these people have is that they've got excess baggage and the lack of trust. The lack of trust is so evident out there, that we have to come up with some way of convincing these people, and with the help of God, get these people to gain the trust back that there was at one time.

It's just the same old thing that they have lack of trust of the eldership, the ministry. If Fred would die tomorrow, they would have a prototype there, 'Oh here it goes again.' It's just that pattern. I think we have to get the trust back with the people, with the teaching, just like we trusted God to get us through it. We trust in God and He'll carry on. That's what I think we're lacking right now, trust in the people.

Fred:

There's a Biblical principle that Ronald Reagan instituted against the Soviet Union: *Trust, but verify!* All of those skeptical curmudgeons out there in 'churchland,' you have to verify so you can trust, and that's called in the Bible: *Prove all things!*

(go to the next track)

Comment: This is a teaching church. That's what the Church is to be!

- It is not to be a corporation
- it is not to be a social club
- it is not be for people to come and follow a man

We are under obligation before Almighty God, with our very lives, to:

- teach the Truth
- preach the Truth
- teach the brethren
- to provide things for them

Just like the comment was made about starting another college; we are to learn the lessons. God shut it down for very good reasons. And to try and say that we're going to be accredited by the world is nothing more than pig-swill and vomit coming back into the Church of God!

- The Church is *the school!*
- The ministers and elders are *the teachers!*

That's the way that God designed it, and that's the way we need to do it. I'm happy that Marlin is doing a lot working with those other men; that's great! That's exactly what Christ would have us to do, and that's what we are going to do. I don't think any big thing about me. I'm to teach. If I don't teach and share what God inspires, through His Word, that He gives to me to learn, it's not just for me as a big mucky-muck here or there.

It is to serve the brethren, because the whole goal of everything with the ministry is sufficient *that the disciple become as the Teacher, and the Teacher is Christ!* That's who the Teacher is! That's what it needs to be with us! And the brethren need to understand that.

I can understand why there's a great reluctance to respect ministers and elders. But I tell you what, *forget the past!* If my son David were not qualified to be *business manager* I wouldn't have him come in the door! I've got two other sons and neither one of them are qualified to be *business managers*. But David is an expert business manager. He has run corporations turning millions of dollars. So, he would set it up to run so that sermons would go out, books would go out, everything would go out. His name is on the York Pub. account, on the church accounts.

We have it stressed that in the event of my death that he would manage the business part of it. He's not going to presume to be an elder, and we are not going to fall into the problems that happened with other churches when the main minister, as they would look at it, would die and end up having to try and sell the things. God gave tithes and offerings as a way of financing His work, not by merchandizing, not by selling, not by putting a price on it. We need to understand that.

We still get papers on things concerning tithing! Every time people reject tithing they have to have a system for raising money. That is a substitute for God's way. Now then, the ministry and eldership needs to be responsible with the money that comes in. That's why we always give an annual report to the penny. People don't tithe to me, they tithe to the Church, and I draw a small sum from the Church; all that I need, and it's all I want.

Everything is paid for, so I can concentrate and do the things that God wants me to do, as He leads me. I don't want to go out and do my own thing. I don't want to become some great popular person here or there. *NO!* I need to teach the Word of God, teach the brethren. They need to learn, and we need to grow up in Christ. We've got the whole Word of God now as never before in the whole history of the world.

What do we have? *Churches of God running around fighting each other!* Christian churches in the world have already left God, following Satan head over heels, and here we are, the motley little group that we are, so that may be, but that doesn't mean that God can't use us in whatever way that He desires. That doesn't mean that we get lifted up in some great high flatulent thing.

- we serve
- we preach
- we anoint
- we counsel
- we help
- we write

We do all of those things. My day is not spent on what I think about me. My day is spent on:

- How do we get the Word of God out?
- How do we serve the people?
 - ✓ answering the questions that come in
 - ✓ send out care packages
 - ✓ send out literature
 - ✓ send out books

We have sent—with orders through the Internet—probably 12,000 of *The Day that Jesus the Christ Died!* Those are seeds to be planted in time. There are *two remnants* that God is dealing with:

1. in the world
2. in the Churches of God

Like Marlin was saying, we can't have them bring their baggage into the fellowships and congregations of the Churches of God. We have to, as Bob said, have some organization, which we will have, that should characterize a service organization, because that's what it needs to be. I think all the elders and Jim had some very good comments and input, and I appreciate all the discussion on it. We can elaborate even more on it as we continue with the conference.

I want to finish up by going through some basic things concerning the purpose of the ministry:

1. Our Calling

Our calling begins with the statement that Jesus made: *I will build My Church!* He called 12 disciples to teach them, and then they were to go out and teach, too.

How does Christ build His Church? *Much in the same way that God—the Lord God before He became Jesus Christ—told Noah:* I'm going to destroy the world, but I'm going to save it! 'You build an ark so I can save the world. God had to inspire Noah, gave him the plans, gave him

everything that needed to be done. But *they had to do the work:* Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth! They probably had to hire people who didn't have one clue that what they were doing was to build toward their own destruction, and the salvation of the world through Noah and His family. Likewise with the Church.

How does God build the Church? *He calls and raises up ministers and elders and that's the way He has done ever since He called the apostles!* You go down through the history of the Church of God, and you'll see the way God works. So, we have a *calling* for it.

Let's understand something that is important, especially in the light of some people saying that there is no need for a ministry. That is not true. If there were no need for a ministry then there would be no need for anything.

I will show you a dummy Bible from the printers: *blank pages!* That's the way people would like to have it. Make your own doctrine, and this is truly a Bible for dummies! In every case:

- God did the speaking; *men did the recording*
- God did the inspiring; *men did the work*
- God did the calling; *His servants served those He called*

2. Purpose of the Ministry

God is doing the overall work, and that's why Christ is the Head of the Church and is building His Church. But let's understand something concerning being an elder. Seven years ago in our first conference we went through 1st and 2nd Timothy.

2-Timothy 1:3: "I [Paul] am grateful to God..." God called Saul, who became Paul. No one wanted him; he was an enemy of the Church! God converted him.

God will provide spiritually, but we have to take care of the things physically until we know for sure, by the fruits that God has provided spiritually. What did God provide spiritually for Paul, in his old age, when he was ready to die? *He provided Timothy!* All of those in Asia left him, so he says, "I am grateful to God..."

"...—Whom I have been serving from *the days of my* forefathers with a pure conscience—because I never fail to remember you in my supplications night and day. As I recall your tears, *I am* longing to see you, so that I may be filled with joy; when I remember the unfeigned faith *that is in*

you..." (vs 3-5). God will call *faithful men!* We'll talk later about corporate ministers and hirelings.

One of the reasons there is disrespect for elders today is because too many people have been victimized by hirelings, but they haven't gotten their foot out of the past long enough to understand that God does have true elders who are faithful, converted, love the brethren and do want to serve them. They need to understand that, and they need to respect them, not in a sycophant fawning way. But you don't need to treat them with contempt and come up in an argumentative way, and say, 'I'm in your face!' *Okay, so you're in my face, now what?*

"...the unfeigned faith *that is* in you which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice..." (v 5). They were Jews and Timothy's father was a Greek.

"...and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you..." (vs 5-6). This is what we need to do here in this conference, we need to do in our lives:

"...to **stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands**" (v 6)—because God gives to elders, teachers and ministers, and those that serve them, an extra portion of His Spirit to do so. Just exactly like He did when Moses complained and said, 'Oh, woe is me, it's too much!' God said, 'Select out 70 men and I'll give them of the Spirit that I have given you.' God gives an extra portion of His Spirit!

Verse 7: "**For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.**"

1-Tim. 4—we will see what happened in this particular case was that that Paul led the ordination of Timothy:

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." That was

- praying for him as an elder
- praying for him for the spiritual gifts
- praying for him for teaching and preaching abilities
- praying for him for serving abilities
- praying for him for whatever he needed

So Paul wrote him and said, v 15: "Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all. Be diligent with yourself..." (vs 15-16). That's what all elders need to do. If you can't discipline yourself, you can't be an elder—*period!*

"...and with the doctrines; continue in them. For in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (vs 16)—because they need a teacher. *God designed it that way!* But we all learn with the Spirit of God in us. When we use the Sabbath, both elders and the brethren, as a vehicle that God has given to train us in eternal life—because we are in a continuous educational program—then they will get more out of the Sabbath, and they will learn more.

It tells you this, fellowship is good, but fellowship does not necessarily mean '*socialship.*' Some people say that they get the spiritual food from us, but then they go to their local denominational Church Of God for fellowship. *No they don't!* They go for socializing, and they are socializing on the Sabbath because *fellowship*, first of all, **begins with God the Father and Jesus Christ!** Then each other! That's the kind of fellowship that needs to be. That's what we need to develop in the fellowship groups, congregations and even at home.

If you're at home alone, then you need to keep the Sabbath in a way where you are being taught of God. We'll provide you the tools and the books, and when we send them, *read them!* That's why they're done. There's a lot of material in there, and read them again.

I got a letter from someone that they've read *The Christian Passover* book for the third time through before Passover, to understand it. That third time through they learned more. The way we teach, preach and write, you get heavy duty things. You get deep spiritual material to understand. It's not salvation by pamphlet. The college is the Church. This is all part of it.

2-Timothy 1:8: "Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner... [Well, he deserved it!] ...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...**" (vs 8-9). A *calling* to be an elder is "...a Holy calling..." to serve the brethren. That Holy calling is

- not to uplift us
- not to feed our vanity
- not to feed our ego
- not to give us thoughts of exalting ourselves above the brethren

On the other hand, the brethren need to understand that because of that, in service and humility toward the brethren, that does not give them the right to treat us as though we are hiring servants, which we are not. Most of the elders in Christian Biblical Church of God do it

- for the love of God
- for the love of the brethren
- because they want to serve you
- because they want to see you receive eternal life and be in the Kingdom of God
- with no pay

So, if you don't respect the elders in the Christian Biblical Church of God you better think about it, you better pray about it.

"...—not according to our works..." (v 9). Not because of who we are, what we are and what we've done.

"...but according to His own purpose and grace..." (v 9). Just like all the brethren have been called with a purpose, *all the elders have been called with a purpose*, and they need to make that purpose and calling sure continually:

- by study
- by prayer
- by service
- by dedication
- by everything that they do in their lives

"...which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time... [talking about the Gospel] ...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" (vs 9-10).

Not only that, He's given us *His Word*, all of it; the Truth.

We'll talk about the Bible project. We're not doing this just to do it, we're doing it because there is a need. I'm not doing it to put my name out there to be some big muck-muck. But I tell you what, if we labor in the Word and doctrine of God, then we better do it right and produce something for the brethren.

What's going to happen with this, it's going to take away all the misinterpretations and leverage that the corporate ministers have over the brethren, to keep them dumbed-down and stupid, according to the interpretations of a hired ministry. It's going to be inspiring and help them and uplift them.

Verse 11: "Unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." What was he? A preacher? An Apostle? or A teacher? *All of the above!*

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." Because each one

individually—all the brethren and elders—have something that is committed to God and that is our lives, our heart, our mind and everything about us to the day of the resurrection.

I'm telling you right now, as I'll tell the brethren on the Sabbath, we are about ready to enter into some of the most horrific times that they have ever seen in America, times that they have not ever comprehended! Let me just give you a clue: \$10/gallon for gas! That's only for starters.

Here's the obligation of the eldership, because too many wolves, thieves and false teachers try and come into the flock and fellowships of God to try to change and bring in false strange doctrines. So, Paul told Timothy:

Verse 13: "Hold *as the standard for doctrine* the sound words that you heard from me, in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus."

Verse 14: "**Guard**... [that's the opposite of neglect] ...**the good thing that was committed to you by the Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us.**" Part of the problem with a hired ministry is that they were never taught the right purpose; they were put there to help keep people attending and sending in money.

This is the purpose of the ministry; this is why we're here. None of the men who are here—none of the elders in the Christian Biblical Church of God—are here to serve themselves. I'll guarantee you one thing, if any Church of God anywhere, any minister anywhere who is serving himself, or would-be preachers who come into congregations are there to serve themselves, God is going to reveal them for what they are. That's why Jesus said, '**You will know them by their fruits.**'

Here's the whole purpose of the ministry; Jesus comes to Peter and you know Peter, he's going to *do a work for God*. 'I'll save You, Lord, I'll never deny You.' *Yes, you will, three times this very night before the cock crows!* Jesus was saying very clearly, 'You're not going to lift yourself up to do something for *Me*, I'm going to do something for you, but you need to do as I say.'

Just like when David wanted to build a temple for God, what was the message. *No, I'm going to build a house for you, David. Since you're a bloody man, I'm going to let your son do it!* The moral of the whole story is that everyone who builds temples gets themselves into *deep* 'skubalon'! We even have our modern-day example!

John 21:15: "Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter..." the best way for any elder and minister to do is *put your*

name there! This is the test!

“...‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?’ And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs!’” (v 15). That’s why there’s the eldership and ministries; *to feed the lambs!* God designed it that way.

Just like God was going to save the world through Noah, but Noah had to build the ark. God led the children of Israel through the wilderness, but Moses had to do the leading.

Verse 16: “He said to him again a second time...” This is interesting because Peter denied Him three times, so Jesus has to affirm Peter three times.

“...‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Shepherd My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas...’” (vs 16-17). This is in front of everyone; imagine how Peter felt. He finally got the point, because in 1-Pet. 5 he told all the elders: *Feed the sheep of God!* Don’t take the oversight with constraint, and don’t treat them like your possessions, but be an example to them.

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, ‘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.**’” *That’s the whole purpose!* To shepherd means:

- to guard
- watch over
- care for
- account for
- help

In the case of those who are injured you help heal; those who are sick you help care for. All of those are through prayer, counseling and anointing; all of the things that the ministry should do.

Romans 10:8—Paul says: “...‘The Word is near to you...’” I tell you what, if we don’t have the Word of God near us today we are of all people most miserable! We have the *whole Word of God* right near us. I don’t know how many Bibles you have in your house, but I’ve got about 40 in mine.

Verse 9: “That if you confess with your mouth *the* Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved.” That is **if** you follow the way of Christ completely!.

Verse 10: “For with *the* heart one believes

unto righteousness... [forgiveness of sin, etc.] ...and with *the* mouth one confesses unto salvation because the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved” (vs 10-13).

Since salvation is a process, this is not a simple formula that you throw away all the rest of the Word of God, like the Protestants do.

Verse 14: “How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?” God designed that working with the brethren involves teaching and preaching. How shall they preach unless they be sent after they have been called and taught?

Verse 15: “And how shall they preach, unless they be sent? 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!’” That gives us the principle that there has to be the teachers.

For all of those of you in the Church of God out there—all 374 denominations of you—many of you have come out of the corporate church: Worldwide Church of God, Church of God International, etc., and you have been used to a human hierarchy. You have been used to a corporate Church of God, which God has, in all cases, dealt with and will continue to deal with.

When you have a corporate Church of God, some people love it because they have a man in between them and God, and they can always blame the man, but God does not want the elders over the brethren between them and God; He wants them on the sidelines like a coach, and a coach is responsible to teach, train, keep order, guard, watch over, to have a plan of action, a plan of living and all that sort of thing. *But the coach is in charge!* But not in charge as a hierarchy over them. Rather he’s in charge as someone who is serving, like Jesus said here in Matt. 20. the worst thing that happens in a Church of God and destroys it is politics, favoritism and hypocrisy. Always does!

You look at the history of the Church and the reason why God scattered it. You look at all the problems that the Churches of God are having, and the brethren are having, and ministers are having, and it gets right down to carnality, selfishness and self-serving hireling and socializing by brethren pretending they’re *in the Church* by coming to

church on the Sabbath. The most thing they're interested in is seeing their friends.

Matthew 20:20: "Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons..."—politics, the whole family was involved! It's not wrong to have family.

- James and John were brothers
- Peter and Andrew were brothers
- Christ with His brothers James and Jude

Family relationships are not wrong *if* they do not become political. That's the big thing!

"...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).

Nothing like asking for everything! She had high hopes for her sons. A little motherly influence will touch Jesus' heart; but notice what He said, and they were standing right there with her. They couldn't speak up for themselves and say, 'O Lord, do this for us.' *NO!* 'Mom, you do it; we'll go up to Him and you ask the question.'

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... [He was going to be killed, crucified] ...and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'" They didn't know what they were asking for, but they got 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.'"

Notice what politics does in any organization, v 24: "And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers." Probably some of them thought they would be the greatest. Remember, at Jesus' last Passover they still had an argument as to who was going to be the greatest. With the Spirit of God and conversion they were able to understand it better.

Verse 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.'" That is 'katakuriuo'—*lordship down, authority downward*. There needs to be right and proper authority for stabilization in the Churches of God.

"...the great ones..." means the 'religious

ones' because Simon Magus—the pope in Samaria—was called '*a great one*.'

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; 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). This is the whole teaching attitude that Jesus wants us to have.

- we're here to serve Christ
- we're here to serve the brethren

We do that because we love God!

That covers in a synopsis our calling, our purpose and our ministry. This needs to be the basis for it. And because of that the brethren need to respect us more than all the fawning and sycophanting that they ever did in other Churches of God, because they're dealing with real elders who are dedicated to serving and loving God, and to serve them.

That's why we're here. We're not here for any other purpose. We have no other reason to draw breath, other than to serve God and serve the brethren to the utmost of our ability. With every facility and means put before us.

Just think what Paul would have done with the things that we have today.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Timothy 1:3-7
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:14-16
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:8-14
- 4) John 21:15-17
- 5) Romans 10:8-16
- 6) Matthew 20:20-28

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: 1 Peter 5

Also referenced: Books:

- *The Day that Jesus the Christ Died!*
- *The Christian Passover*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 3-25-15

What is Godly Leadership? I

Wayne Stenhouse

I've had my mind on certain things to do with leadership. I think it's becoming quite evident that the way that the leadership was run years ago is not the way that it should be run today.

- What is proper leadership?
- How do you go about having proper leadership?
- Who are the leaders?

In our own right each and every one of us is a leader in what we do. We'll discuss this more as we go through this, because I think it's a very important subject.

The problem that has been through the years is that many leaders in the Church of God have misused their position of authority by having a hierarchical government from the top down. Of course, this has left in its wake a trail of victims who have become disillusioned and severely wounded. It has caused hardship among many of the brethren, and the brethren themselves feel abused and defiled by the leadership. Some have never recovered from their hurt, the hurt that they lived through and thereby leaving God and returning to the world.

Their destiny is in the hands of God, and judgment is on those who have improperly abused their authority.

One of the things that has happened in that that we see a hierarchical government all around us, everywhere in the world that you look. It's true in government, from the top down. It's true in businesses. We have a CEO and all the officers all the way down to the fellow that sweeps the floor in the warehouse, whom has absolutely no say in the company. Of course, in the churches of the world this is the only government that they have—especially the Catholic Church—from the top down! It's all around us.

What this has caused within the Church of God is a totally different scenario than what happens in the workplace. Let me tell you that there needs to be leadership in everything that is done.

Some people have been left with deep emotional scars, but they've retained their first love and have endured the misused authoritative rulership of those types of leaders. The wrongful use of leadership has left some brethren with a disposition of suspicion, rebellion and contention against any type of leadership. That's an absolute fact!

We'll see what Jesus Christ had to say about this. There are some things that we really need to think of, and by the time we're done with what I'm going to talk about, you'll come to a better understanding of what really should be.

Mark 9:41: "For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he shall in no way lose his reward. But whoever shall cause one of the little ones who believe in Me to offend, it would be better for him that a millstone be put around his neck and he be cast into the sea" (vs 41-42).

A millstone was a great big stone that was used to crush the corn and grains as it went around, and they were quite heavy. Christ warned about the practice of abusing people within the Church; that's brethren to brethren, and of course, it applies mostly to the leadership to the brethren.

The consequences of leadership abuse hangs on the head of those who use such practices to control and manipulate those whom *God* has chosen. *This is not Godly leadership!*

The Scriptures reveal a total opposite meaning to those who are in a position of authority and are chosen to care for God's own possession. The authority simply means *the ability or strength in which one is imbued. That must come from God!* It is not a right to exercise power over others to bring about obedience and subjection. That is God's duty, not man's prerogative.

When one is in a position of leadership, they are not to usurp the authority of God and make it their own. This kind of overlorded leadership is in total contrast and contrary to God.

What we need to develop and learn is what is Godly leadership. We're going cover what it means to have Godly leadership. It's a subject that needs to be dealt with, and I'm going to tell you who these messages are really going to be for. It is a must for those who have been hurt and abused by authoritative leaders so that they may understand what true Godly leadership is.

It is also to be studied and used as an essential tool for those in the position of leadership, now or in the future so that they can develop the mind of Christ and grow into His character.

We're going to cover this all-important subject in its entirety, because it needs to be. We need to understand the qualities and characteristics that must be adhered to. We, those in the leadership positions, have to learn how to handle God's people with love. Not with abuse, not having a dictatorship over them.

These messages are designed to have everyone have the knowledge of true Godly leadership and what to expect from the leaders. This

type of *Godly* leadership properly applied will bring joy to everyone, and the most important thing: *honor to God!*

One thing that we really need to understand—all the leaders of the Church and all the brethren—is what happens sometimes is that we assume and take on the role that’s not really ours. Sometimes we think that God wants us to do this, or God wants us to say that, *when He doesn’t!* The best way anyone can lead is by what the Scriptures tell us to do.

Matthew 16:18: “And I say also to you, that you are Peter... [a stone or small pebble] ...but upon this Rock... [a large, massive rock, which is Christ] ...I will build My Church, and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it.”

What everyone must understand is that *this Church belongs to Jesus Christ!* It’s God’s Church with Jesus Christ at the helm. He is the Head of it, the absolute Head! It is on this Foundation that it needs to be built. Not on the foundation of a hierarchy or a rulership or a dictatorship.

Let’s understand this: Is the leadership with a hierarchy authority from the top down? We’re going to cover that topic, and it will become evident that this type of leadership is incomplete opposition to God. Those who think and believe that authoritative rule is in effect is in for a rude awakening!

One of the things that a hierarchy does within the Church of God is that it rules and holds together the Church by *fear and intimidation*. Control tactics are exercised over the brethren so that a person’s life is not their own. *This is wrong!*

As you know, many brethren know this: they cannot ask certain questions to a hierarchy. They are not included in any decision making, whether it is a social get-together, Feast plans or anything. They are definitely excluded from any type of doctrinal decisions. That’s what a hierarchy does.

The brethren, in effect, are told to *stay, pray and obey* without exception! *This is not from God!* Hierarchical tactics are implemented because of the influence from outside sources, and they bring them into the Church.

Just like today, we have a Laodicean attitude in the world. Who needs God? Who wants to be bothered? Ho hum! And it affects our lives within the Church because we see it and we live with it day after day. That holds true and is why it has crept into the Church that there is a hierarchical government from the top down, and you must be told what to do.

Sadly, brethren, there are things going on within the Churches of God today that are absolutely

wrong! It has been made, in some churches or fellowships that you’re not to talk with anyone unless they’re from your group. The best word I can come up with is *balderdash! Not true!* That’s not what God wants.

Hierarchy is not a form of Godly leadership. It needs to be erased from God’s Church—*period!* God does not want anyone to live in fear and intimidation.

God doesn’t want us to come to services week after week and be afraid. God doesn’t want us to be intimidated. If you’re not here this next week, you will not get a phone call asking where you were; that’s your business between you and God. You will not be phoned and asked why your tithes are not coming in; that’s between you and God. It’s not man’s prerogative, because once that happens then they’ve taken and set themselves in the seat of Jesus Christ and make the judgments. That’s not to be so!

2-Timothy 1:7: **“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.”**

God wants us to do our own thinking. He wants us to use our own mind with the power of His Holy Spirit. He wants us to grow into Godly love. He wants us to be at one with one another. Its quite evident in the fellowship groups that I have seen here and in other places. At the Feast this is practiced. We’ve had some wonderful meetings and you can tell that God is working with these groups and within these people.

However, we still must help others who feel threatened. God does not lead anyone by fear, by the fear factor or intimidation; He leads them with:

- love
 - forgiveness
 - longsuffering
- (thank You, God, for that)
- compassion
 - a tender heart

That’s how God leads! What does that tell us? *That’s the way any leader has to lead!* We’ll cover some interesting things about a heavy hand called *rulership*.

These tools are far more effective than those that are being used today in some Churches of God and that have been used in the past. *Hierarchy is an instrument of Satan to attack the Church*, with the results being the:

- lack of love
- suspicion
- false assumptions
- hurt
- anger

- bitterness

Unfortunately, some people still have this within them. You know what? ***All these are the works of the flesh!*** They are not works of the fruit of the Spirit.

Sadly, many are still under the heavy hand of oppression, with the belief that the leaders operate under the government of God, and if they are opposed to this system then they are opposed to God. That's what they are told.

This is absolutely false! The only results of a hierarchy is the running and control of people's lives. This is not how Jesus Christ operates His Church. It is totally against His very own character.

If you need to study a little bit more on this subject, there's a booklet we have called *Is the Ministry God's Government* by Fred R. Coulter. Brethren, it's eye-opening to understand that that is not the way that God wants the Church to be operated. Authoritative hierarchical leadership does not work, because of what it produces:

- fear
- strife
- hate
- mistrust

These are works of the flesh and not works of the Spirit.

Another form of hierarchical rulership—or leadership—is the misunderstanding of what it means to rule. We're going to examine that now. I think it's important that we understand what it means to rule. Many leaders in the Church have a misconception of rulership and what it really means.

What did God intend about strict rulership and who should be ruling the flock of God. To rule with authority is closely connected to someone having power. If you hear the words that I'm using—*power, rulership, hierarchy, government of God from the top down*—they are all harsh words! They are words that are *powerful* to get you to pay attention to them, to fully understand them by *their* perspective and point of view.

The meaning of rule covers the actual possession or use of power and the legal and moral right to exercise it. That's what it means to rule. That's why a king rules his subjects. That's why the government of Canada tries to rule the people.

Isn't it interesting that it doesn't seem to be the heavy hand anymore in governments all around the world. They're ruling by a different tactic today. They're ruling by allowing things to go on that people want. That sounds funny to be a form of rulership.

- they allow gay marriages
- they allow abortions
- they allow you to do basically what you want

Although they really do have a tight grip on you.

- Do you know why it's a form of rulership?
- How do you know that?

Just try to take it away from somebody! They're ruling that way—whatever the people want seems to be what they should be doing—except when it comes to God:

- *His* way of life
- *His* Bible
- *His* teaching
- *His* commandments
- *His* law

they can be done away with!

So, is there a rulership? *Yes, there is!* We, as God's people, have no say in what the world is doing with God's Holy Bible, or what He said. It's all a form of rulership, and that's a *power* that is exercised.

But the focus on Biblical usage is the authority that belongs to God alone. What has happened is that they have taken God away as the Ruler of all. What they've done in effect or in theory is given the power to Satan, who is 'the god of this world.' They're playing right along into his hand. That's what they're doing.

We don't need this to happen to the Church. Think of it this way: This same Divine authority was exercised by Jesus and claimed by Him for the Church. It's Christ's rule, not man's! When anyone rules with authority over God's possession, then they have taken it upon themselves to sit in the seat of Christ.

- What happens?
- Did Jesus Christ not teach with authority?
- Do they use His words today to try to have people respond to God the Father?
- Do they learn to love Him?
- Do they be obedient to Him?

Absolutely not!

Unfortunately, in the churches of the world, most of the time it's to fleece their own pockets. Brethren, I don't condemn everyone for that, because they don't know. They are duped and deceived.

But besides teaching with authority, what other authority was Christ given? *He forgave people for their sins!* Something that man can never do, and must never do! When they do that they're sitting in the seat of God.

Rom. 13 will enlighten us and help us to understand something a little differently. God has all authority to do it all. He sets everything in this world by *His* authority, not by man's authority. He put leadership in the world where they should be.

Romans 13:1_[corrected]: "Let everyone be subject to the higher authorities because **there is no authority except from God...**" The authority comes from God, because they've been instituted by God. That's the authority that should rule.

Some take authoritarian dictatorship upon themselves, and become magistrates over the brethren, which God is totally against. This false concept is derived from the Scriptures that are in the *King James Version* of the Bible. The translators misused the definitions of these words from the original Greek manuscripts.

For clarity the following verses will be quoted from the *King James Version* and followed by the verses from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, Faithful Version*. The reader will discover the gross errors that people have used and assumed to be absolute truth and have used these Scriptures against the brethren. This is something that has been taught through the years, and some leaders have taken this and they've used it for their own power:

Revelation 2:27 (KJV): "And **he shall rule them with a rod of iron**; as the vessels of a potter shall **they be broken to shivers**: even as I received of my Father."

I've heard it said that God's coming back to *rule with a rod of iron!* He's going to come down and *He's going to smash people!* That is absolutely false!

From the Greek, and it's exactly what it means, (FV): "And he shall **shepherd them** with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father."

To rule with authority and force is not what it means to *shepherd*. I looked these words up myself and I have proven them.

Revelation 12:5 (KJV): "And she brought forth a man child, who was to **rule all nations with a rod of iron**: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." It's the same word and the same thing happened here.

(FV): "And she gave birth to a man Child, Who was to **shepherd all the nations with a rod of iron**; and her Child was caught up to God and His throne."

Another misconception is that a *rod of iron* is something that a person would be afraid of. If you're a little boy and one of your parents came at you with a *rod of iron* you would have been

terrified.

That *rod of iron* means that Jesus Christ and those with Him **will be set in their minds** that that's the way it is. He's not going to be moved, you won't be moved and I won't be moved. That's the way we need to come with the Scriptures before us today, with the understanding that we have, that our minds have to become like flint or iron! When we know the Truth, and we understand the Truth, we need to get the message out to others—like I'm doing today—that there's so many misconceptions of what the Bible says.

They don't want to be told and taught, because they get into this part that *we rule! we're in charge!* Let's hope that God doesn't treat us the same way, because it will never work!

I just want you to understand this, that what is written here is the absolute truth, but the way it looks in the *KJV* is that Christ is coming back and *woe unto everyone!* I've also heard a leading person say that God's coming down to 'smash His people' and 'He's going to beat them with a rod of iron.' *That is not God's love! That's not God's own love!* God's going to do it by nurturing somebody along and by allowing you to make the mistakes that you're going to make. I make them! You make them! And the only thing that I've learned in all the years I've been on this earth is that I find new ways to make the same mistakes over and over. I'm getting pretty adept at it.

But God's allowing that longsuffering. Can you imagine the patience He must have to put up with what's going on?

Revelation 19:15 (KJV): And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword... [the Word of God] ...that with it he should smite the nations... [He's going to teach them with His Word] ...and He shall **rule them with a rod of iron**: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

(FV): "And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and **He shall shepherd them with an iron rod**; and He treads the winepress of the fury and the wrath of the Almighty God."

It's quite a difference when you understand the difference between *ruling* and *shepherding*. It's very, very important that we come to a full understanding of it. It becomes quite evident that the word *rule* is misused in these Scriptures and about what will happen in the future.

Here's an interesting point. I know that some people don't like to hear the Greek, but sometimes it's absolutely necessary, and in this case I do believe it is.

The Greek word for *shepherd* used in these Scriptures is ‘poimanei’—which means *to act as a shepherd or tend to the flocks*.

I can see light bulbs going on because isn’t that exactly what Christ said to Peter? There was a reason that Christ said this to Simon Peter. This is the way that Christ wants His Church to be fed; the people belonged to Him, not us.

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.’ He said to him, ‘**Feed** My lambs.’” Very important!

That word *to feed* in the Greek is ‘boske’ and means *to nourish*. We need to give some nourishment to God’s flock, to the lambs.

Verse 16: “He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘**Shepherd** My sheep.’”

He didn’t say to ‘beat’ them with a ‘rod of iron’ and to ‘rule over them,’ to be a dictator over them. That word *shepherd* means *to tend flocks*.

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, ‘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.’”

Give them nourishment and help them to grow! You don’t go into a herd of sheep with an iron rod and start beating them over the head and say, ‘You better eat more, I want you nice and plump.’ When you see your coming what are they going to do? *Run! Scatter!*

You treat them with love. Anyone who has any type of animals around, they know that you need to treat them with love. You know what,

- an animal responds to love
- they respond to nurturing
- they respond to knowing who is going to feed them
- they respond to the kindness of your voice

I’m not saying that God’s Church are animals. What I’m saying is that is what you would do with animals. The brethren *are the flock of God!* This word *feed* all the way through the Bible means *to be feeding the flock of God*. That’s God’s intention; that’s what God wants us to do.

When the Kingdom of God is established on this earth, how are we going to teach people?

- by feeding them
- by showing them God’s Word
- by teaching them God’s Word
- how to love properly
- how to care properly for one another
- how to grow into the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
- to understand how important the Sabbath is to God
 - ✓ a day of rest
 - ✓ a day of learning
 - ✓ a day of fellowship
 - ✓ a day of being with God
- to teach the Holy Days

All of this extremely important! Brethren, just to teach the Sabbath and Holy Days is going to be a monumental task! People are living through what they’re living through now with keeping Sunday and the pagan holidays, because they don’t know.

I heard a show and a girl was saying that keeping the holidays of the world is wrong. This prominent figure said, ‘Oh, that was 4,000 years ago, who cares? Isn’t this all about family, love, giving and sharing?’

I understand where he’s coming from, and this man is a ‘Christian’ apparently; but that’s not what the Scriptures say. They’re not being taught, and this is what we need to do. It’s not going to be what *we* think. It’s not going to be traditions that have been handed down by men; ***it is going to be what the Scriptures say, the Word of God, and what they stand for! What God stands for!***

Just picture this world if everybody knew what the Word of God said. Could you imagine going to a Feast of Tabernacles with everyone in the world from different places? *It would be absolutely fantastic!* Or how about this room being an auditorium full of people for the Sabbath? There are some TV evangelists who have over 10,000 people for a service. I’m thinking that we can’t even get 50 to go to the Feast. Just absolutely amazing!

There are a lot of things that need to be undone and shown the proper way, through God’s love.

(go to the next track)

This brings a question to people’s mind that’s very important. Should there be authority in the Church? *and if so:* How much? What type of leadership works? ***It’s the type of leadership that should be utilized in the Church of God! Godly leadership ordained by God!***

Godly leadership is the only type of leadership that will work and will be of benefit to all, with the end result being of brethren dwelling in unity and togetherness, and to have love for one

another the way God wants it to be.

The brethren, you and I, are God's heritage, and His desire is for everyone to be edified and uplifted. Not depressed, not demoted to what people think you should be. You're important in God's eyes. That's the whole key to understanding what true Godly leadership is. The basis of Godly leadership is based on God's love, which is *His own standard!* Love is the highest pinnacle of spiritual growth.

Let's see what the Apostle John wrote. All of John's epistles—1st, 2nd, 3rd John—have the basis and foundation of love. It's very important that we understand that. This is the faith that we have:

1-John 4:16: “And **we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us....**”

- God knows what's wrong with the world
- God understands their shortcomings
- God understands that Satan is leading, guiding and directing the world, and those in it
- God knows whom He has chosen

And He has that love toward us! Not that we're perfect in any way, shape or form, but we can stand in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

People must know that “...God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (v 16). You cannot dwell in love and have the love for everyone around you *if* you are ruling with a fist of iron. You yourself will become bitter; it has an adverse effect.

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling, the love of God is perfected within us*, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.”

So, the whole basis of any type of leadership has to be based on love. That's why this Godly leadership that I'm talking about needs to be built by God's standard: *true Godly love!*

In the last section, when we're talking about a hierarchy, we saw that by not implementing God's love in the leadership that one of the byproducts was *fear*. John insures us here that:

Verse 18: “**There is no fear in the love of God**; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.”

Of course, it goes without saying, v 19: “We love Him because He loved us first.”

The duty of every elder who is in a leadership position is required to lead with proper Godly love and to teach the Truth, all for the reason for the brethren growing up in Christ.

Eph. 4—I need to put this in; it must be studied right here because it's very important. It's appropriate to be put in here in this sermon today. This is what people need to come to and understand:

- Is there leadership in the Church? *Yes, there is!*
- Does the leadership have a certain type of authority in the Church? *Yes!*

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” These are *functions* to be done, not a hierarchical government. That's not what God's intention was when this was inspired to be written. Here's the purpose of having this type of leadership:

Verse 12: “**For the perfecting of the saints...**”

- not to 'beat' them up
- not to abuse them
- not to give them a hard time
- not for them to feel useless

It's “for the perfecting of the saints...” *God's people!*

“...**for the work of the ministry...**” That's what the ministry needs to be working at.

“...**for the edifying of the body of Christ**” (v 12). Lifting them up, telling them, ‘You are worthy before God's eyes’—and *you are!*

- we saw what the function was
- we saw what the purpose was
- now Here's the reason for all of this:

Verse 13: “Until **we all** come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God...” Who is “...we all...”? *It's Fred, you and myself*; we're all going to come together unto “...the unity of faith...” To perfect the saints is to help them make it into the Kingdom of God; that's what it's for.

“...unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ... [this is the reason why]: ...**so that we no longer be children**, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the **sleight of men** in *cunning* craftiness...” (v 13-14). The *sleight of men* means:

- I'm in charge!
- I have been put here as the leading person!
- You all must obey me, including the ministry underneath!

Absolutely false! Absolutely wrong!

“...with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up... [that’s process for you and for me] ...into Him Who is the Head, *even Christ*” (vs 14-15). ***The Head of the Church is Christ!***

Verse 16: “From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [we’re all at one with God] ...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.”

- that is spiritual
- that’s growing together unified
- that’s growing together and having the knowledge that we need

Let’s see something else that happened after Christ had dealt with the mother of the sons of Zebedee. Understand that the sons of Zebedee—which were also known as the *sons of thunder*—were the two disciples whose mother went to Jesus and said, ‘Can my sons be granted to sit on Your right hand and left hand in Your kingdom.’ James and John were the sons here.

When Jesus answered them, the rest of the ten disciples became indignant. No different than what happens in the Church today if favoritism is shown to anybody. We are still human.

Matthew 20:24: “And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers.” He doesn’t say if James and John were there, but they may have been.

This is very, very important for anyone, and for us to understand that Christ wanted them to know this lesson:

Verse 25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations **exercise lordship**... [‘katakuriueuo’—*lording over, or from the top down*] ...over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them.” What did Christ say? *This is fine and proper because this is the way that the Church should be run! Absolutely NOT!*

He said, v 26: “However, **it shall not be this way among you**... [very clear; this is not to be like this in the Church] ...but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave” (vs 26-27). I think you see where this is going. ***This is proper Godly leadership!***

Verse 28: “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.” This is the way Christ wants the Church to be operated.

He makes it absolutely clear that ***a leader in the Church is really a servant of His, and also a servant of the brethren***. That is the total key to understanding Godly leadership. A servant is one that is devoted to God just as some of the great leaders of the Bible were: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Nehemiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul and John—just to name a few. They were devoted to God! They were leaders of God! But they were also servants of God, because that’s what a true leader is.

Jesus Christ was absolutely, without doubt, the greatest leader of all times. It becomes very important to understand what type of leader Christ was. *He laid down His life for the brethren!*

John 10:11: “I am **the good Shepherd**. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Verse 14: “I am **the good Shepherd**... [see how the word *rule, feed, take care of, tend the flock* all come into the word *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). Christ was the greatest leader of all time because is this is what He did for you, for me and for the world.

Verse 16: “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold...” I hope that people who are in other groups and think that they are the only ones on this earth will take heed to what Christ is saying here.

“...I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock *and* one Shepherd” (v 16). Not 462 churches all doing what *they feel* is right. It’s going to be *one flock under one Shepherd!* God’s going to make that happen. Christ was the perfect example for all leaders to follow.

Philippians 2:6: “Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, **but emptied Himself**... [gave up His position of glory] ...*and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant” (vs 6-7). A servant means he is a bondservant or slave. Now you can start to see and understand what true Godly leadership is. It’s someone who serves God and the brethren. More emphatically he is a bondservant of Christ’s or a slave.

Verse 8: “And being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross.”

For the elders, the Apostle Peter gave quite an admonition for all the elders or leaders to follow. This becomes of the utmost importance for us to understand what true Godly leadership is, and how we must exercise it and grow into it, and how you

must do your part to become leaders. It's very important that you understand this.

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: **Feed the flock of God...***" (vs 1-2). We read that in John 21:15.

You know how Peter knew that? *Because that's what Christ kept saying to him: 'Feed My sheep! Feed My lambs!'*

Verse 2: "Feed the flock of God *that is among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but with an eager attitude...* [that's what a leader needs] ...not as exercising lordship over your possessions..." (vs 2-3). If we're reading this and we're understanding this, and the Scriptures are very plain, **why is there still a hierarchy in the Church of God, controlling and manipulating people?** Because it says:

".....not as exercising lordship over your possessions, but by being examples to the flock of God." (v 3). They belong to Christ!

Verse 4: "And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory."

Godly leadership is, without doubt, the most loving and perfect form of leadership anyone can practice. Let's cover the idea of a leader being a *slave of God*.

Baptism for anyone in the Church of God was the most awe-inspiring event that took place in their lives. Wouldn't it be nice to have the knowledge that we have now and go back to our baptism. It would sure make it more meaningful—wouldn't it? That's okay because we had to grow into this to understand it.

When you were baptized you were co-buried into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3). By partaking of such a profound event, meant that they were putting to death their own selves and walking in the newness of life. That's what you committed to do before God (Rom. 6:4).

With baptism came the gift of the Holy Spirit from God. When this happened, the person being baptized and receiving God's Holy Spirit, gave up—by their choice—of being their own person. ***You now belong to God!*** I hope you understand that. Paul makes this absolutely clear:

1-Corinthians 6:19: "WHAT! **Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit,** which you have *within you* from God, and you are not your own?" Isn't that interesting, that we *became begotten children of God!*

How can Paul be justified for making such a statement? *Because Paul understood something that we will come to an understanding of!* He understood that when you become a servant of God you are accepting the position as a slave or bond-person because you are *bought with a price*.

Verse 20: "For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Totally belong to God now, because you were *bought with a price!*

Paul wrote a little more about this, about being a slave of Christ, 1-Corinthians 7:20: "Let each one abide in the calling in which he was called." What we were called in, brethren, we need to live by and grow into: ***the mind of Christ!***

Verse 21: "Were you called *as a slave?* Don't let yourself fret.... [don't worry about it] ...But if you are able to become free, by all means do so. For he who has been called in *the Lord, though he be a slave, is a free man in the Lord...*" (vs 21-22). It's like saying that here are the laws, commandment, statutes, judgments and the testimonies to live by.

Someone will go, 'WOW! Look at all this I have to live by.' But there's actually freedom within those laws. It's the guidelines.

"...In the same way also, he who has been called as a free man is a slave of Christ" (v 22). That's a different way to look at the leadership. I don't mean to put them down, that they are nothing, because that's not true at all (1-Pet. 5).

Verse 23: "*For you were bought with a price. Do not become slaves of man.*" In other words, don't do things according to the world's standards. When Christ gave up His glory, He became a servant (Philip. 2:6), which has the definition of being a slave or bondservant. Paul wrote the same thing about himself.

Romans 1:1 "Paul, a **bondservant** of Jesus Christ..." That Greek word is 'doulos,' the same word that was used of Christ, which means *a slave or servant*.

"...a called apostle, set apart to preach the Gospel of God" (v 1). Paul understood that he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Something that we all need to come to that understanding about. He knew that he was *bought with a price*.

Slaves in earlier times in the Bible were sometimes bought and paid for with money. When God was laying out the edicts for Passover and who could and could not take it, He made this significant statement. This is absolutely amazing!

Exo. 12—What God was doing here was laying out who could and could not take the

Passover. This is something I never had come to think of this way before.

Exodus 12:43: “And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘This *is* the ordinance of the Passover...’” Here are the edicts for Passover; this is what we are going to do:

“...**No stranger** shall eat of it.... [very clear, very plain] ...But every man’s servant that is bought for silver, **when you have circumcised him**, then he shall eat of it. A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat of it.” (vs 43-45).

So, if you had bought the servant, he could eat of the Passover. However, if you only hired the servant, he could not eat of the Passover; very interesting when you think about it deeply. God made a clear distinction between the slaves who were bought and paid for from those who were just hired slaves.

You are *not hired into the Church of God*, brethren, *you are bought with a price!* Was Jesus Christ bought and paid for with a price? *Yes!* If Christ was bought and paid for as a slave, so are we.

Matthew 26:14: “Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, *and* said, ‘What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him up to you?’ And they offered him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought an opportunity to betray Him” (vs 14-16).

Judas was going to collect this money and turn Christ over to the authorities. But why *thirty pieces of silver?*

Exodus 21:32: “If the ox shall gore a manservant or a maidservant, he shall give to their master **thirty shekels of silver**, and the ox shall be stoned.” *Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a dead slave!* If you had a slave and he was killed by a neighbor’s ox, or whomever, he had to give the master of that slave thirty pieces of silver.

Isn’t it interesting how the whole Bible really does come together, a little bit here and a little bit there. Judas received this amount for betraying Christ.

I also find it very interesting that when he found out that he had done wrong, he took that money and threw it down. They wouldn’t just accept it and put it back into their coffers. They went and bought a potter’s field with it. And isn’t it interesting that the potter has all authority over the clay, *just as Christ and God the Father has over us!*

Everything ties in when you study and read the Word of God. There’s no doubt that any leader is a servant of God and is a slave or bondservant of Christ. *A servant serves in humility* because Christ gave us that example. *He serves with Godly love,*

and that has to be at the forefront of his leadership.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 9:41-42
- 2) Matthew 16:18
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:7
- 4) Romans 3:1
- 5) Revelation 2:27
- 6) Revelation 12:5
- 7) Revelation 19:15
- 8) John 21:15-17
- 9) 1 John 4:16-19
- 10) Ephesians 4:11-16
- 11) Matthew 20:24-28
- 12) John 10:11, 14-16
- 13) Philippians 2:6-8
- 14) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 15) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- 16) 1 Corinthians 7:20-23
- 17) Romans 1:1
- 18) Exodus 12:43-45
- 19) Matthew 26:14-16
- 20) Exodus 21:32

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Romans 6:3-4

Also referenced: Booklet:

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What is Godly Leadership? II

Wayne Stenhouse

I think it's of extreme importance that we understand just what leadership is, how it's acted upon and who the leaders are. Of course, eventually everyone is going to become a leader, in their own time. Today, everyone today does do a leadership role in their lives, in everything that they do. For parents the leadership role is operating a household, buying things, etc.; all these require a certain type of leadership that you must have within you.

But we're talking about *Godly leadership* within the Church today, and how we can grow into it.

It's very, very important to ask: Is there any type of leadership and/or authority that is prevalent in the Church, and if so, what is it? Unfortunately, the words authority or authoritative—because of its suggested meaning—is misconstrued as being all power given to a leader to have absolute dominion over others. Of course, this is a fallacy and is not true. But this is the way the word seems to suggest.

The authority given to any leader is to set guidelines within the Church and to assure that peace and order is carried out. Let's see what Paul said, which is very important to us. It's a very simple Scripture, but Paul was saying this because this is the way it needs to be done within the Church.

1-Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order." That's the guideline to operate a church. This is the way that it needs to be done. If you have confusion there's no unity. If you have confusion there is dissention. God is not the author of confusion. Every church needs a well-rounded structure that meets the needs of the congregation.

The duties of the leadership include teaching and feeding the brethren. We know that because that's what Christ told Peter: *Feed My sheep! Feed My lambs!* Also, arraigining meeting halls with the help of others and how services are organized in order to glorify God requires structure and leadership to be able to do that. The leadership is also to protect the flock from predators who are seeking to destroy the Truth of God, and in turn, God's people.

Paul was addressing the leaders and elitist and this is what he said, Acts 20:28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock... [he was talking to the leadership of that day, but it also applies today] ...among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to feed the Church of God**, which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (vs 28-29).

That's why it's mandatory that the leadership protect the brethren from predators and to be watching for things that are not Godly and shouldn't be taking place.

Verse 30: "And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves." This has happened over and over.

This admonition that Paul gave was given to those who were chosen as the leaders and overseers over God's heritage. Remember, you and I—and all the brethren in the Churches of God—do not belong to any organization or any person; *they belong to God! They belong to Him!*

We need to take a stand and watch over God's heritage in order that there may be proper teaching and protecting of the flock. It is also absolutely necessary for the leadership to protect the brethren from those who sow discord and introduce false doctrine and bring it into the Church. This has happened in the past, and the leadership is to ensure that this doesn't happen:

Jude 4: "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."

The leadership must protect the brethren from those who stir up strife and from those who have a spirit of contention, because this will result in a congregation of unrest. When Paul sent his epistle to Timothy on how to become a proper leader, he wrote... If all these are written here, they are written for a reason, because this must have been happening in the Churches back in Christ's day and after He died.

1-Timothy 6:3: "If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words... [the Truth of the Scriptures] ...*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).

That's a warning for all of us and we need to

be careful of what's going on around us. Unity is a vital key to spiritual growth. Spiritual growth should be the focal point and goal of any Church of God. The entire focus should be guiding and directing people to eternal life and to the coming Kingdom of God.

When unity is infiltrated with those causing division and unrest, then a person's spiritual life is derailed from its course. That's absolutely true! When something is going on in the background that others don't know about, it can derail you from your spiritual life. It can overtake you! When there is dissention among God's people there cannot be unity.

Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together unless they be agreed?" When you think about that, that's in everyday life. That's within marriages; that's within the Church. If two people cannot agree it's really hard to walk together. Everyone of God's people must be of the same mind in order to accomplish the task that is set before us.

Romans 12:16 "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high ambitions; rather, be accommodating with those of low estate. Do not be wise in your own eyes." Everybody has to be on the 'same page' of the same mind in order to accomplish the task that Christ has set before them. It is absolutely necessary for the leadership to protect the brethren. That's one of their main duties.

It is their duty and Christ has given them the authority to do so. I want to make that absolutely clear, because so many people question so many things that are going on that have nothing to do with the operation of a church going to Kingdom of God under unity.

The decisions that have to be made are essential to the smooth operation in any church area. Sometimes decisions take time. We, as human beings, don't want to take time to do anything anymore. Everything has to be done speedily, at our fingertips and in split seconds, making decisions that sometimes aren't wise.

I know that most of the ladies don't understand hockey, but for the men that do picture a hockey player on his way to the goal, the net, he has a split decision to make and how he's going to approach this. He can't just take pen and paper and say, 'Let me weigh the pros and the cons here and see what happens. You have to make split decisions.

We shouldn't have to do that spiritually. Spiritually we should really take our time and really understand the whole situation. But for some reason when it does take time in the Church to make decisions, people get restless.

Here's what happens in decision-making, and please take all of this into account: When a leader has to make a decision, everything has to be brought forward onto the table. He has to somehow, with God's help and the leading of God's Holy Spirit, make this decision. When that's going to happen, and you get frustrated because decisions aren't made fast enough, you yourself ought to sit down and say, 'If I was making this decision, how would I handle it?'

- How many people want to be responsible for somebody else's spiritual life?
- What happens if you make the wrong decision, and that person turns against God?

That's something very sobering! Something that you really need to think about. It's a very thoughtful situation. One must always consider the outcome, because it could destroy another person's faith, because they've not been given enough time for repentance.

The question we all need to ask when there are decisions being made that are not going our way, or they aren't fast enough: How long does God give you and I to repent? ***Thankfully, a long time!***

We need to always do the same thing. Decisions, brethren, are never easy. They're never easy by the leadership, even yourself when you're making decisions, you know that sometimes that after you've made that decision and you've done something that it has been a wrong decision. Isn't it wonderful that God always intervenes and somehow we always get out of it? He's always done that!

We need to have the same patience toward decisions that are made that sometimes we don't understand, or sometimes they're not quick enough. They could be devastating to the person or persons that are involved. *Godly leadership must take decisive action at times!*

How to Become a Godly Leader

The key to everything is utilize God's Word! When we're making decisions, we need to utilize God's Word. Some people want to make decisions and give their own opinions.

Example: I get a phone call and someone will say, 'I'm thinking of moving to Cincinnati, what do you think?' I don't know! I can tell you that you should sit down and write the pros and cons out, but 'I can't make that decision for you. You need to make that decision on your own.'

If it has anything to do with the Word of God, then that's the most important element that we can use to answer a person's question or make a decision by it. God has provided us His Word, which gives us the entire spectrum for personal spiritual

growth. For anyone in a leadership position it becomes an absolute requirement to utilize the Scriptures, to better oneself and become what Christ expects us to become: *servants of His and servants of the brethren!*

One of the most perfect examples that we've had of leadership is Jesus Christ Himself. This is the pattern that needs to be followed. The character traits that Christ had were the epitome of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is something that we all need to grow into. We can do this by developing the mind of Christ (Philip. 2:5). Of course, there are many Scriptural illustrations that will help us to achieve this goal.

What I want to do for the rest of this sermon is to give seven steps that will help you and all leaders to become a Godly leader. This type of leadership can only be obtained by prayer, Bible study and meditation on God's Word, and of course, from the greatest teacher of all—something that we all have—*experience*. Experience is the greatest teacher than anyone can have.

1. Study and utilize God's Word in order to be able to handle problems and difficulties that may arise within the Church

This can help us all in our own lives, too. This is not only for becoming a good leader within the Church, but for your own personal leadership.

One of the greatest assets that God the Father and Jesus Christ have provided for us is the Word of God. In it hangs everything that we need to do and the knowledge that we need to have in order to make it into the Kingdom of God and to be living in this life. Every decision that you and I have to make can be found in the Word of God. It's the best counselor that we have. We need to learn it and we need to utilize it.

That, coupled with God's Holy Spirit, will help us to study intensively so that we will be equipped to handle situations and problems that may occur, which is the duty of any leader, *and especially God's leadership*.

Paul knew this. He knew that by going through God's Word—studying it and understanding it—that we could apply it to our personal lives, the lives that we need to lead within the world itself, and that we can use it more effectively within the Church.

2-Timothy 2:15: "**Diligently** study to show yourself approved unto God... [not to the politics of men] ...a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth." That word *diligently* means in the Greek *to exert oneself!* It's something that we need to be able to do.

To be approved to God means to exhibit God, that we're showing God, 'Yes, Father, I want to be what You want me to be, so I will study Your Word.'

Do you know why we need this so importantly right now? *To help others!* I just talked to man recently that hasn't kept the Passover in many, many years because he doesn't feel worthy of it. I talked to him for a while. I knew enough of the Bible, I was versed enough to help him through this troubled time. It's very important that we be able to do that.

Hopefully, if everything works out, he may be here for Passover, though he's many miles away. We're working on that, we'll see what we can do to help him to do that.

You may get a phone call; you may get something from a neighbor. We just dealt with this in Winnipeg where someone went to one of our brethren and said, 'I give up. I can't handle this life. I can't do anything anymore. I need some type of help.' That man went to the right person! Here's a man that was down in the dumps; God wasn't a part of his life, but God is now becoming a big part of his life.

This person was versed enough to be able to steer him and to help him. Brethren, you can do that. I know that I have that confidence that you have it in you to be able to do that. You know enough of the Scriptures, you know enough of the Bible to steer them in the right direction. That's what a good leader is, and that's what a good leader does. They use the Word of God!

One of the things that leaders do—and I think we all do—is that we deal with people's feelings and emotions. Emotions can absolutely ruin you. I know that from personal experience.

Emotional intensity can become a catastrophic element when a situation arises. If it is not handled properly, or is not as quick as people *think* it should be handled, then the people seem to get upset. We need to say to them, 'Look, nothing happens that quickly.'

Let's total up the number of years in the Church of God here. Astronomical when you really think about it. All that knowledge, and each one of you have it. But because some people believe that you can't give them an answer right away, or solve their problems right away, you have no idea what you're doing. That's not true!

If we don't handle things properly, it can become a stumbling-block to others around them, because the situation hasn't been resolved. In other words, it's like a sore, and you know what happens with a sore when you keep picking at it. It will never heal. There are people in the Church of God who

keep picking sores and they won't let it heal. You know what happens when a sore festers, it bothers you. It becomes the thing mostly on your mind. You've got to let things heal. People need to learn that.

All situations that do arise should be handled quickly and efficiently, using the Bible as a source of *decision making*, or *correction*, or even sometimes *rebuke*, which is not something nice to have to do. None of us really want to do that.

Every event that occurs is different, and it has to be handled on an individual basis. The one thing you, myself, or any leader, must do is never become a *doctor*: 'Oh, I know the cure for that, take such and such.' Don't do that! We're not to become *psychiatrists*; we must never take the place of a professional psychiatrist. We're not trained in that field. We must not become any other type of counselor, *worldly counselor*, because we are not equipped to handle such situations.

Just think what happens if you make a wrong decision. WOW! You have to live with that. So, the best advice I can give you—to the ministry or any leader, or anybody in the Church—is that we should only handle things pertaining to church affairs. Not people's personal lives. We shouldn't be involved with them, and that's the stand that we need to take.

Too many times people want to pull the Church into their personal affairs, and then they condemn the Church for not doing things properly. They themselves need to handle the situation themselves. You know what that does for the Church? *It makes the church a scapegoat!* 'It's their fault, because they didn't handle my situation properly.' That's what happens.

People always look for a scapegoat from their personal problems. They always do! We were all children once, and you know what happened when mom or dad caught you doing something. 'It wasn't me!' It always 'wasn't me. That's right, it's your fault, not mine.' That's part of our human nature, because we want to pin the blame on somebody else. We don't want to take the abruptness of what's happening ourselves:

- 'I don't make mistakes; everybody else around me does.'
- 'Everybody is out of step but my son Johnny; he's the only one in step.'

That was an old saying that my mother used to tell me about a lady in New York when her son was marching down the road with the army, and she says, 'Look at that, Johnny is the only one in step, all the rest are out of step.' That's probably the way we all handle things.

Everybody is looking for a scapegoat. We try not to get trapped into such things because it's only going to lead to disaster. We've got to stick to the Bible and utilize the Scriptures. Then no one can fault the leadership for their efforts. They may try, but it won't work.

Anyone who utilizes the Word of God in their decisions and strives to live by its contents can never go wrong!

Brethren, it's very true, I have made mistakes in my life, you have made mistakes in your life, and yet, somehow God has always turned it around and He's made lemonade out of lemons. We need to leave that in His hands to be able to do that.

If you're in a leadership position, or becoming a leader, ***always study and utilize God's Word in order to be able to handle problems!*** You'll find it much easier.

2. Practice God's love when dealing with problems or circumstances

Putting God's love into practice will enable any leader, or anyone, to better cope and handle any problem or circumstance that may develop.

1-Peter 4:8: "But above all, **have fervent love** among yourselves because **love will cover a multitude of sins.**" Now, there's a handy Scripture to have when you're a little child and your mother gets you into a corner.

Love is the greatest characteristic of God. As a matter of fact, all the other characteristics He has comes from love. With it all situations can be handled and promote unity within the Church, which is the whole objective and goal of this whole study of what we're doing. Think about it:

- love turns away wrath
- love turns away contentions
- love turns away strife
- love can defuse any unpredictable situation

I remember that many years ago, long before I came into the Church, I worked for the Canadian National Railways, and we had a train come into Brockwell, and there was an unsavory character on it causing a lot of problems. I went into the car with the police and I was truly amazed the way the policemen handled it.

Today, they would probably just drag you off the train, but they sat the fellow down and asked, 'What's the problem?' He said, 'Well, I'm going through a divorce and whatever it was.' The policemen said, 'You don't want to do this. You don't want us to force you off the train, but you are coming off the train. We can either go out arm in arm, down the stairs and into the car and everything will be fine. Or we can take you out.'

He put his arm around the policeman and walked off the train with him. I thought, WOW! What a way to do things? I never forgot that. It's something that I think needs to be practiced within the Church. I think Prov. 15 needs to be practiced in each one of our lives. I'm just as guilty as anybody else about this. This is very true, because *love hides a multitude of sins; covers it.*

Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." That's very true; the Proverbs are full of wisdom.

Love can handle all things and it is a tool that leaders must use, but it needs to be genuine and real, and it must come from within. It can't be something that you put on if it is to be successful in your handling of any situation.

People know—you know and I know—that when you get upset, when the frustration level seems to hit a certain peak, you let go, and it's in anger. Anger only stirs up more strife. Isn't it wonderful to sit here and calmly analyze all of this. Try to analyze this when you're upset.

Try to think of Prov. 15:1 where a "...soft answer turns away wrath..." Or try to handle something as Christ said, 'If your enemy is against you, and he wants your coat, give him your cloak also.' Or love your enemies. That's a tough job, but it's something we all need to grow into. All the love that we need to handle things comes from within.

Jude is the brother of Christ and he gives us this admonition, and it's something that we need to try to steer ourselves toward and ask God's help with:

Jude 21: "...keep yourselves in the love of God while you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." We need to keep ourselves in the love of God, and try to put that at the forefront of being a leader.

(go to the next track)

One thing that will be happening with any type of leadership, there will be always be encountering different types of situations and deal with people's personalities. It takes a time element and a skill to learn different ways to handle situations.

Sometimes it is hard for a leader to realize a person's hurtful past. Whether it is caused by leadership abuse or maybe physical or mental health problems, or other problems or obstacles in their life. So many people have gone through so many abusive situations as young children and young adults that this formulates in their mind and trials throughout their life. We must take that into account when we're dealing with people.

In all cases it is imperative to display God's love and to have compassion on others in helping

them in their situation. Compassion is something we all need; we all need that within us in order to help others. Think of the compassion that Christ had toward others.

When you're dealing with the brethren in handling problems, I urge you to be gentle, kind, show compassion toward them, and this will enable all of us to become better Godly servants before Christ.

3. Be examples to the flock of God

Brethren, that's what we all really need to do! Anyone in a leadership position is constantly being scrutinized by the brethren. They are watched and judged at all times. A leader's actions and conduct become the focal point of their leadership.

We're going to look at something about what Peter wrote. These words are the most truthful and penetrating words if we really look at it. It's something that we all, as leaders, need to be practicing.

1-Peter 5:8: "Not as exercising lordship over your possessions; but by being examples to the flock of God."

- How do we do that?
- How can that be accomplished by any leadership?

If any leader is truly *walking with God*, they will be exemplary models of a Spirit-led leader. Although we as leaders ask people not to follow us as men, they look upon the leadership as the example to follow. Didn't Paul say, 'Follow me as I follow Christ'? We're not to follow Paul as a man, but *we're to look toward Christ!*

The spiritual growth of a leader must be of the utmost importance. Growth comes from prayer, personal Bible study and giving messages to edify the Body of Christ. I hope that is doing this for you, that we're edifying the Body of Christ, as well as getting out what true Godly leadership is.

When we do this—edifying the Body of Christ—it will ensure that any leader is steering God's flock in the right direction; that is *toward Christ!*

2-Peter 3:18: "Rather, be growing... be producing] ...in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...."

Brethren, we need to understand that this is our responsibility, as leaders and brethren, to grow in the grace, the Truth and the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ. This knowledge is not mere intellectual activity, but this knowledge comes from God's Holy Spirit. That's a big difference when we're dealing with people.

Although this admonition was given to each individual person, the leadership must be the example in doing this. So, the more that we have Christ *within* us, as leaders, the more we're able to help the brethren who are becoming leaders. Everyone is a leader in their own right.

The best example that a leader can use is to show others their leadership by utilizing the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, which of course, we all need to develop.

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control**; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23). When God is working *in us* He is reproducing Himself in us by His fruit. We need to look on and work on and develop these attributes of God's Spirit. God's working in us to help others.

Let me make a fair warning here: *Leaders will make mistakes!* When you analyze that, you need to ask yourself: Do you ever make any mistakes? Mistakes, errors, misjudgments that we've made in our lives, as leaders and brethren—we are all are brethren—are effective growing tools. They're very effective growing tools to a leader. It's called *experience!* Each and every one of us live through things, and these are learning lessons for each one of us, and we can help others with it.

For leaders, when they make errors and admit them and go forward, it will become an excellent example of growth and humility before others.

When you repent and go before God and say, 'Father, forgive me for these sins.' *He forgives them!* A lot of the leadership, through the years, has never been forgiven. On the same token, they've never admitted their faults. That's equally wrong!

A leader sometimes feels that if he lets anyone know his faults then he's not a very good leader. That is not so! Everyone is going to make mistakes; it's part of our growing process. It's part of the things that we go through: our trials and tribulations. You go through them; I go through them. But we need to use them as effective growing tools. That's what we need to do.

4. **Judge righteous judgment**

Brethren, this one is so very important! Judgment is probably the most misused and misunderstood element that is in the Churches of God today. Everyone wants to be a judge. Think of your own life: Do you judge others? Do you watch others? It's part of our human makeup—isn't it?

However, there is a proper way to judge. Leaders cannot show partiality nor can they judge by

not having all the facts. That is of extreme importance to the brethren. But most of all, it's of extreme importance before God. When you think and analyze that in your mind, do you want to make a wrong judgment before God? *Absolutely not!*

Too many times judgments are made on emotion. If they are, this is a sure-fired way to impair a proper judgment.

John 7:24, Jesus said: "Judge not according to appearance, but **judge righteous judgment.**" Any leader needs to study and understand proper judgment so that there can be peace within the Church.

This all important subject was covered at the Feast of Tabernacles, 2006. During that time there was an intensive study on *judging righteous judgment*, as well as a booklet to go along with the sermons. This material needs to be gone over many times by the leadership in order to come to a full and meaningful understanding of this subject.

Brethren, to cover all of that subject in three two-hour sermons was wonderful, but did we really delve into it? Did we really study it? Did we go through the whole booklet and all the sermons and really study the elements on *judging righteous judgment*? I think we need to all really do that.

Study *Judge Righteous Judgment!* It needs to be gone over many times by the leadership. Whatever a leader's circumstances, they will be called upon many times to *Judge Righteous Judgment.*

The more proficient a leader can become in comprehending this all-important ingredient, the better their decisions will be. They will be judging properly before God.

Remember this always: ***When we're judging, we're judging before God!*** Judgment is probably the hardest factor to contend with. However, with proper study on the subject, and the leading of God's Holy Spirit within you, judgments can be made correctly.

Maybe not as fast as some people would like them to be done, because in their minds judgment should be handled immediately. But sometimes there are reasons to really look into something, and the question that has to be on our minds is:

- What about repentance?
- Are we giving sufficient time to repent when there is a problem?
- Are we giving them sufficient time to realize that something is wrong?

There comes a time when they won't accept change. They won't accept their part of it. Then

something needs to be done, and I fully agree with that. But what that time-element is for each different situation no one knows! But at some time there needs to be a judgment made.

I guess the biggest thing we need to do, as brethren, is allow those judgments to be made. How long does God allow for repentance? *I'll leave that with you!*

5. Stand firm on doctrinal issues

All leaders must take a firm stand on doctrinal issues when they come about, because ***the Truth of God must prevail above all else!*** When the leadership fails to stand for the firm Truth of God, the consequences of such error will come from God and He will require it from the leadership.

Have we not come to a better understanding of this over the last 20-plus years than we ever did? Any leader needs to read this and understand this.

Ezekiel 34:1: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?’”” (vs 1-2). Two things to notice here:

- 1) Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, *not man!*

I wish, brethren, that most of the leadership would learn this.

- 2) We are to *feed the flocks!*

That’s what Christ kept tell Peter: *three times!* (John 21). That’s what we are to do!

Verse 3: “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, *but* you do not feed the flock. You have not made the weak strong...” (vs 3-4).

- How many people are hurt inside?
- How many people don’t know what to do?

We have a book called *Lord, What Shall I Do?* Very excellent book! If anyone is faltering or suffering, read that book!

“...nor have you healed the sick...” (v 4). People are hurt and we need to get over that. We need to jump that hurdle and go forward.

“...nor have you bound up the broken.... [battered people] ...You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but you have ruled them with force and with cruelty” (v 4). That’s not true leadership! For those who don’t agree with that, I’m sorry for you. ***You don’t rule people with force and***

cruelty!

Verse 5: “And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd. And they became food to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill. Yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none searched nor sought for them” (vs 5-6).

Brethren, I pray and hope that we are doing this. With all the materials that are put out, all the sermons, booklets and books that have been written are all to help the brethren.

Verse 7: “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD, ‘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” (vs 7-8). Think about that!

Verse 9: “Therefore, O shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD.” Any leader, *hear the Word of the Lord!*

Verse 10: “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I *am* against the shepherds... [this is a last resort correction that God has to do] ...and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Nor shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth that they may not be food for them.’ For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out” (vs 10-11).

Is this scattering finished? ***Absolutely not!*** There are still going to be brethren that are yearning, hurting, and feel terrible inside. It’s our duty as Godly leaders to help them. The churches today—and there are many—have their own ideas about doctrine, and they are not always founded on Biblical Truth.

What is a leader’s duty to do? *When there are ideas of false doctrine coming in*, and things are going wrong, it says:

1-Corinthians 16:13: “Be watchful; **stand fast in the faith**... if you want to fight something, **fight it with faith**] ...conduct yourselves with courage. Be strong *in the Lord.*” Standing firm on God’s doctrine will ensure a solid leader before God.

6. Allow others to help and to serve

Let me tell you, there are some brethren who just love to help and to serve. They have nothing in mind of ‘climbing a ladder.’ Where we are now there’s nowhere to go. Or to become the ‘oompa’ leader in the front. There are people who just love to

help and serve. It doesn't mean that they want to take over the ministry or the leadership.

We, as leaders, need to recognize that! These types of people are dedicated to God and the brethren, and they serve to please everyone by making a concentrated effort to serve.

I know that in our own little group—and I'm very thankful for it—we have people who do things; we have people who take care of things. Thank you everyone, and to those out in audio-land that do your part. Do you know how much work that takes off of me? Here are brethren who want to serve. There are those types of people.

Sometimes the leadership squelches their efforts for unknown reasons, but it needs to be remembered that these type of people are not a threat to the leadership, but a support of the leadership. People want to serve! People want to do things from their heart! *We must let them do that!*

Galatians 5:13: "For you have been called unto freedom, brethren... [Did you know that? *Yes, you do!*] ...only do not *use* this freedom for an occasion to the flesh; rather, serve one another with love." We all have the capability of serving—don't we?

There are people who try to undermine the leadership for their own gain. This is an area that needs to be watched for, both by the leadership and the brethren. Paul showed us how to do that. This is how you handle this type of person:

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).

Remember that all these things mentioned here are *works of the flesh, not works of the Holy Spirit!*

By having others to serve, they will also grow in character and become serving leaders in the Kingdom of God, *which is our aim!*

7. Building on the foundation of Christ

Nothing can be accomplished by any leader unless it is built on the Rock Who is Christ! Everything that is to be accomplished is to be done to the glory of God and not man.

I'm going to tell you something, and you can believe this or not, ***a leader is not born to be a leader!*** I've heard people say that they were born to be a leader. Leaders grow into becoming good leaders by developing the mind of Christ, and by exemplifying the characteristics that Jesus portrayed in His ministry. How many leaders do you know like that? *None outside the Church!*

1-Corinthians 3:11^[transcriber's correction]: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ."

So many times, and too many times, leaders try to sit in the seat of Christ and assert their own authority over His. This can only cause people to reject the leadership and be in defiance of any type of leader. This way will not bring harmony and unity to the Church as directed by the Scriptures.

Ephesians 4:13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ"—which is where we all need to be heading.

Look how Paul started this out, v 1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called."

If you're called to be a leader, then you *walk to being a leader*, v 2: "With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 2-3).

Building on the Foundation of Jesus Christ will bring the Church unto the glory of God and will be the epitome of His eternal reign.

Just fair warning, brethren: beware, be cautious! Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armor of God... [each one of us needs to do that] ...so that you may be able to stand..."—stand for God.

Verse 14: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (vs 14-16).

Remember all the leaders and remember all the brethren. Satan is alive and well and he's after the Church of God.

Verse 17: "And put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication..." (vs 17-18). Satan is loose, he's free and he's after us. However, if we stay close to God, he will not hurt us and he cannot harm us.

1-Peter 5:8: “Be sober! Be vigilant!.... [in our spiritual life] ...For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour.”

Some day I would like to do a sermon about a lion, because they study their prey; they watch their prey.

In conclusion: When Jesus Christ returns He will require an experienced and educated body of people who will be qualified to lead with loving authority. This type of leadership must first be implemented and practiced within the Church of God today, as a preparation for each individual to become true and faithful leaders of Christ.

The problems that we have today will be paled in comparison to the results of the Great Tribulation and the devastation that will take place. Those alive at that time will be totally overwhelmed by these catastrophic events and will be in much need of a loving and caring leadership. We, as God’s people, must be prepared! It is our God given duty to become the most qualified loving leaders that have ever existed.

This means that every one of us now, and in the future, must be prepared. We’re in a training ground right now to become leaders and rulers in the world tomorrow. ***This is what we’ve been called to do, and whatever we do we need to do with all of our might! That is what God requires from us!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 14:40
- 2) Acts 20:28-30
- 3) Jude 4
- 4) 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 5) Amos 3:3
- 6) Romans 12:16
- 7) 2 Timothy 2:15
- 8) 1 Peter 4:8
- 9) Proverbs 15:1
- 10) Jude 21
- 11) 1 Peter 5:8
- 12) 2 Peter 3:18
- 13) Galatians 5:22-23
- 14) John 7:24
- 15) Ezekiel 34:1-11
- 16) 1 Corinthians 16:13
- 17) Galatians 5:13
- 18) 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 19) 1 Corinthians 3:11
- 20) Ephesians 4:13, 1-3
- 21) Ephesians 6:11, 14-16
- 22) 1 Peter 5:8

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Philippians 2:5
- John 21

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series/Booklet: *Judge Righteous Judgment* (FOT—2006, days 4-6)
- Book: *Lord, What Shall I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter

WS:bo
Transcribed: 4-15-15

Elder's Conference—2007 Fellowship Group Conduct & Dealing with Problems

Let me just mention a little bit about Church at Home. It was here in Cincinnati about three and half years ago that I first mentioned Church At Home, after reading the book *Christianity Without God* by Lloyd Geering. Can you imagine that, Christianity without Christ? But that's precisely what the world is coming to.

Church at Home will not be church services videoed! It will be just like the videos that you get now. If you watch church services videoed, the minister is preaching from a pulpit, or sitting, and he's looking at the audience. When you're watching the video he never has any eye contact with the people he's speaking to through the camera. If you set it up where you do a video and there's an audience there, and you treat them as if they are not there, then they are not participating.

Any preaching and teaching that we need to do, you not only need to be inspired in it, but you need to ask God to help the brethren be inspired to participate. What I mean by participating, I mean by thinking with you as you're reading and studying and presenting things, so they are part of it. The only way you can understand that is by watching and having eye-contact with the fellowship group.

There comes a time when you say or do something that is hard to be understood, or you misspeak. I'm happy if anyone catches me misspeaking, because I don't want to misspeak. If someone raises their hand and says, 'You said this....' I'll go back and correct it.

The level of mental and spiritual participation... When I'm speaking, if anyone has something that they want to add to it, if they just raise their hand just to give me time to hit the pause button on the recorder, we get a lot of things added to the sermons. We're all in this together. This gives you a gauge, when you're teaching, to know if they are learning.

I hope everyone is going to like this new booklet format. This was Jim's and Betty's idea, because it would be how they would study at home since Jim gets all of the transcripts. They decided to listen to the sermon and read the transcript. As they went along, they would say they're learning more.

So, Jim suggested to follow up on the book *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* why don't I do a book on the Holy Days using the transcripts. We've got them already transcribed? That's how it started. We started out with 17 and it went up to about 22, and then up to 28, and then up

to 32. You'll see a misnomer, I said 32 sermons. But there are 36 now, and that shows how fast that it was moving.

That is also a key! You do not want to teach anything that the brethren cannot understand. Part of the thing in helping them understand things that are more difficult is that you bring it along by stages, and you pave the way. Just like in the *14 Rules of Bible Study*, start with simple and move to the complex.

That way you'll know that the brethren are with you. You have to adjust it according to the brethren that you're teaching. If you know you're teaching brethren who have been in the Church a long time you don't want to bring a sermon on which day is the Sabbath. You've already lost them and have no participation when you begin.

I would highly recommend that when you do preach or teach, use new notes. And if you do preach twice in the same day—I do what I call the north/south—if I give the same sermon, I'll add different things to it or change it from the time I gave it the first time.

Let me just mention this about sermon/sermonette preparation: When do you prepare? **All the time!** With what I'm doing, I'm able to keep my mind on the Scriptures and think about different things all the time. It would be a little more difficult with those of you who have jobs and doing things that you are doing, but nevertheless there will be key times in the day that an idea will spark. It will be something that you will want to hang onto. That's the way you prepare, *all the time!*

Paul is writing Timothy, and not only is he giving instructions, but God saw fit that these instructions were preserved for us today. We are following the teachings of Christ, Who also inspired the apostles and they wrote the epistles. There are things that are here that apply directly to us today, because:

- human nature is no different
- Satan is no different
- his tactics are no different
- God is no different

1-Timothy 3:14: "These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you shortly; but if I should delay, *you have these things in writing...*" (vs 14-15). I added that because Paul was *writing*. Isn't it interesting that God gives it to us *in writing*. He wants us to know!

“...so that you may know how one is obligated to conduct oneself in *the* house of God...” (v 15). There's a proper conduct when you come to church. That doesn't necessarily have to do with a dress code.

But I find, especially on this trip, I saw so many women with men's haircuts that it was hard to find a woman with a regular woman's haircut. It blew me away! There was a stewardess that looked so much like a man, with her hair cut the way it was, it was unreal! I see it more and more!

Then another thing that bothers me, which I have had words with the head clerk at the bank about. I came to make a deposit in my bank and here's this new teller and she's got a plunging neckline going down about ten inches and the top of her blouse goes over about ten inches and then comes up. I said, 'Why do I have to be assaulted with the pornography in the bank.' I didn't say that to the banker. I didn't want to offend the lady, so I know the head teller and motioned her over and she came over and I said, 'Please, why do I have to come in, and other customers have to come in, and see a plunging neckline getting close down to the navel, when they just come to make a deposit in the bank? You know, it offends me!'

I didn't say, 'Besides, those things are done by women that way *knowing* that it attracts attention from men and—when they are blessedly endowed—other jealous women! Isn't that true? If you don't believe it's true, just look at your checkout stand!'

Sometimes we just have to; I don't know whether it endeared me to her or not, but the head teller had her change her behavior, because the next time I came in she only had a two inch cleavage.

Likewise in the Church of God. There's a way to conduct ourselves. The way a minister is to conduct himself and the way the brethren are to conduct themselves, and all of it's in the Bible, and it all starts out with loving God and loving each other. Don't make Sabbath services a place of judgment against other people. Don't make it a gathering to talk about other people: 'Did you hear that So and So...? Did you hear that...?' There are times when that can be important information that is necessary to know. But I don't want to know everybody's business. I don't want to plow into everybody's lives, how they live their lives. I don't want to know if and when they sin; they know and they can repent to God.

If they don't, then that can be handled later in a different way. I don't ask people questions, butting into their personal lives, such as, how much do you make a year? Do you get overtime when you work overtime? Or if you're retired: How much

retirement money do you get? Oh, you just got Social Security, do you get the minimum or maximum?

I don't ask people personal questions. If they want to volunteer things then that's fine. But those are some of the things when people come to church. There are some people who dread to come to church, because they know that So and So is going to corner them and ask them some question about something they don't want to be asked.

There's a conduct for the elders, deacons and brethren. If we love and serve each other and do the things that are pleasing in God's sight, let's not be 'buttinskies' into their lives.

There was one minister who prophesied years ago saying, 'Well, the way that the women's dresses are going now, the final modern thing is going to be 'gownless straps.' It's getting that way! It's *not* okay!'

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith..." This is talking about those who are in the Church. This will happen and we need to be able handle it as it comes.

But let's also understand that the brethren need to be strong enough so that you don't have to nip everything in the bud. Sometimes you need to let the situation develop to the point that the person exposes what he/she is thinking and doing. Then you don't go off half-cocked and make some judgment on their behavior or what they are doing.

It is better to let difficulties go a little further than may seem really comfortable so that you give them enough rope to either recover themselves or expose themselves—either way! This is important from this point of view:

In the world today a lot of people are sue-happy. If there are difficulties and problems in the Church and someone has difficulties and problems, **do not** stand up in front of the Church and tell everybody their problems. Those who know the problems *know the problems* and will be glad it's solved when it's solved.

What you do is you let them have enough rope so they disfellowship *themselves*. Then you acknowledge their disfellowshipment of themselves. We've done this in several cases, mostly down in Australia. It was such a legal situation that they had the legal numarity and the government is not going to judge between legalese *and* Truth and Righteousness.

So, rather than sue and get in the middle of a

suit, because anytime you get in the middle of a lawsuit you're going to be in trouble, and everybody is hurt and you're all going to spend a lot of money, and it's going to be absolutely no good. What we did is that they had between 90 and 100,000 Australian dollars and because of their conduct—after many warnings—I wrote them and told them that they had an opportunity to repent and change their mind and return the property and money and the church name.

They chose not to, so I wrote a letter to them and all the brethren and acknowledged their *self-disfellowshipment* from the Christian Biblical Church of God, and said, 'You are in God's hands. May God lead you to repentance, but if you do not, know for sure the judgment will sooner or later come!'

In the three years of taking down the money by finagling extra church expenses, etc.—this is public knowledge because it's recorded with the security department in Australia, and anybody can go online and get their yearly public report. It is evident that God's judgment is upon them in many different ways. The judgment that God gave them was better than any of us could think of!

It says that *it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!* That doesn't mean just at the final judgment.

The second way that it occurred was life-threatening illness. So, this health issue could be very severe, maybe even lead to death. Hopefully, in the pain and suffering that this person will go through, they'll repent. That's the whole scoop of it. Now, here's how to pray for enemies:

1. pray that God will grant them repentance, that they will see their sins and repent
2. pray that God will deal with them in a way that will help them to understand that they can't go against God

and from the Psalms:

3. if there is no repentance—as David prayed—that God would deal with them and execute His judgment even unto death against them

That may not sound very loving to some people, but they do not understand the tremendous high calling that God has given in giving us His Spirit to become His very sons and daughters. We are dealing with very grievous things, and we're going to have to face them.

"...and shall follow deceiving spirits..." (v 1). Not all of these things come out of the mind of the individuals. We need to have discernment and understanding.

"...and doctrines of demons... [you know

them by their fruits] (Here's what they do): ...speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*.... [then he lists the ones that they had at that time]: ...Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even by those who know the Truth. For every creature of God *designated for human consumption is good*, and nothing to be refused, *if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*" (vs 1-5).

So, *the Word of God sets aside what is clean and unclean, Holy and unholy*. This is because we live in a Protestant world today that says, 'everything is clean.' How many in the Church of God have fallen from it?

Verse 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... [faith, doctrine, love, Truth all go together] ...that you have closely followed."

Here is what we are to refuse. If anyone has a fellowship group, you have full authority to refuse these things. You do it in a personal way. You talk to the individual personally, first.

Verse 7: "But **refuse** profane and old wives' fables; rather, exercise yourself unto Godliness... [that's what we are to do] ...For physical exercise is profitable for a short time..." (vs 7-8). We all know that if you don't exercise then it's going to catch up with you.

Verse 11: "These things command and teach. Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers..." (vs 11-12).

Here is how you are to be an example. You're not come along and say, 'I'm to set the example so I'm going to do this, that and the other thing.' *NO!* What you are speaks louder than what you say at all times. You have to have your heart and mind right with God, and that will come through. That will be your example, because it's what you are.

"...**in word**..."—whatever you say

"...**in conduct**..."—based upon loving God and each other, keeping the commandments of God

"...**in love**..."—that you genuinely love the brethren, and you love each other.

"...**in Spirit**..."—that you're led by the Spirit of God so you can lead the brethren with the Spirit of God. Teach them to respond to God.

"...**in faith**..."—that you believe

"...**and in purity**" (v 12). You're not out there living your life in the filth of this world.

Verse 13: “Until I come, **devote yourself to reading, to encouragement, and to doctrine.**” Notice how many times doctrine is used:

- good doctrine (v 6)
- doctrine (v 13)
- doctrine and demons (v 1)

Doctrine means *teaching!* This is really a tight knit instruction book for all ministers.

I would like to have Wayne Stenhouse and Roger Kendall come forward and they can talk about some of the problems in the Allentown fellowship group in Pennsylvania, and what they had to do, and what precipitated some of the problems. It was a situation that they handled, as far as I could tell, very well. I would like them to relate to you what they went through when they went there.

Wayne Stenhouse:

One of the things that I have always thought about, and I am very adamant about is Isa. 58 where we ‘make the Sabbath a delight.’ That’s what God wants us to do.

We had a visitor up to Canada during the Holy Days who was very, very discouraged, almost to the point of withdrawing and staying at home. There was a group of men—four to be exact—that were bringing in doctrines contrary to the teachings that we have. It started a number of months ago and the first doctrine that I understand that they came up with was that there’s only 6,000 years since Gen. 1:1.

Someone brought that up to me when we were in Allentown, and I said, ‘Is it a point of salvation?’ I think that’s one of the biggest keys that we always have to think about: **Is it a point of salvation?** If it isn’t, why is your head into it so deeply, because it really takes you away from the Word of God.

With visiting some other brethren, I was told that there was a 30-page letter coming to myself about doctrine, especially about tithing. I said, ‘All righty then!’ What happened—because I knew of this a month or two before I got the letter—and what absolutely irritated me was that they were going to send it to me because I’m ‘an easy touch.’

Well, I talked to Fred about it and discussed it, and something had to be done. What was basically happening is they would come in with their Bibles and decide that ‘we’re going to look into the Bible today and we’re going to look at all the doctrines and never mind the teachings that we’re being taught.’

Just for a little bit of background, when I first met Fred it was in Rochester, New York. We had approximately 35-40 people and we enjoyed going there. It was about a three-four hour trip for us, but we enjoyed going once a month anyway. They were a great group.

Until one day—and we weren’t there that day—someone came in with the Bible and says, ‘I’m going to prove to you that tithing is not in the Bible.’ They slammed it down! Within a month 35 people were gone. There is no group in Rochester, N.Y. Totally gone! The next doctrine they came out with was *the tithing doctrine*. They were going to prove that there is only one tithe, and that’s for you to go to the Feast; that’s the first and only tithe there is.

Of course, I had my dander up against them before I even got the paper, but, as I explained and talked to one of them on the phone, there was a couple of problems with it. First of all, I got mine (the letter) on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. I don’t need this the day after Passover!

When we went to Manchester to meet Fred, and Roger was there, there were a number of ladies pretty weepy because they were very confused. They didn’t want this to be brought to them, and how do we stop it? What do we do?

Well, for those who know what I’m talking about and have followed the website, I wrote them back a very quick short note and explained to them, ‘How dare you do this to the people of God?’ After a few e-mails back and forth—mine went out on their website—I finally phoned one of them. They sent me an e-mail and said, ‘Would you talk to me on the phone?’ I said, ‘Absolutely!’ I phoned and we were on the phone for over an hour:

I said, ‘Why didn’t you send it to Fred? Or the other elders, and let us look at it?’ *Who are you, I have just as much Holy Spirit as you do!*

So, you see where this was going. Roger and I took a trip and went to Manchester; Fred said to go down there and see what we could do. We did go down, but on the Thursday before I was talking to one of them and they said, ‘I don’t see why we can’t come in and sit down with our Bibles and discuss the Bible. I said, ‘The problem is not everybody wants to hear *your* doctrine.’ They said, ‘They seem interested.’ I said, ‘Yes, but let’s face it, *a man changed against his will is of the same opinion still.*’ They sat there and listened to you, but we got the feedback after; they didn’t agree with you.’

He said, ‘What am I going to do?’ I said, ‘You tell me.’ He said, ‘I guess I’m going to have to withdraw myself.’

What did Fred say earlier? *This man just disfellowshipped himself!* He said, 'I want to go on the weekend and have a say.' I said, 'It's absolutely not going to happen! Absolutely not!' Fortunately, we went down, Roger talked to some brethren privately, I talked to some brethren, and everything seems to be pretty good now. We didn't know it, but there were ladies later that said, 'I was going to leave.'

That's what happens when apostasy comes in and things happen and people decide that they're going to change the doctrines of the Bible. I told them that I would look at their 30-page paper on tithing. I will give my opinion of it, and I said, 'The problem with it is I've tithed all my life, and to me this is an issue of *faith!* And you want to take my faith away from God! I'll never let it happen!'

They said, 'That's your opinion, and that's fine.' But I said, 'But you want everybody to believe your doctrine. So, we had to step in and do something.' But when we left Pennsylvania I felt very, very good over it. We're going to go again and see that everything is just fine.

Roger Kendall:

I want to just add a few comments to what Wayne has said. The situation in Pennsylvania was that about a few weeks before I was in New England, and one of the ladies had some brethren in on the Sabbath; we only meet once a month because of the distance involved. She commented on the fact that other people are coming into their small fellowship wanting to discuss issues dealing with new moons, sacred names, elements that are really dissentionary and are off from doctrines we know to be true and we understand.

She basically asked: What can I do about this, because they come and stay late and basically impose themselves? You want to be polite, kind and loving on the Sabbath. We began to think about that and we went back into our files and there was a statement card about rules of conduct in a fellowship group. We took that and began to work on a one page document that would be more relevant to today in keeping the Sabbath.

What's happening is that people come in and want to talk about their pet ideas about doctrine, about the Bible, and they want followers, people to agree with them. So, they use the Sabbath and use the opportunity to draw people together as an audience.

That was happening and we were working on that, and then this situation came up in Pennsylvania. I'm going to digress a little more, because in December Fred and I went to Phoenix to

do some counseling with one of the individuals that was involved. I'm not going to go into the details of the counseling, but what really came out of it is that this individual has some very serious spiritual problems in his life.

Fred basically counseled him to repent of some deep, underlying sin patterns in his life, that he really needed to go back and take a look at what he was doing. One thing led to another and that same weekend I was approached by one of the individuals about Gen. 1:1-2 about how Fred translated it that it became void and desolate. They were objecting to the word 'became' because they were trying to argue for a six thousand year history of the earth.

There are many factors involved here, but I believe the situation in Phoenix, looking back on it, was almost a catalyst to push this thing over the cliff in some respects. Here are individuals telling us that we're dealing with sin, and it was a matter of they didn't like the counseling that they received.

The consequence was that they went out not only with a bad attitude, but they wanted to launch, if you will, their own agenda. So, we went with several things in mind: to encourage the brethren, to let them know that the elders... I went down especially because prior to that, the Sabbath that they were there, they used the counseling that was given in Phoenix as a kind of jab at both myself personally, and against Fred particularly, and that they basically went through the whole counseling session to the whole group.

Now they were just telling the whole group there about their personal counseling and some of the things that were said, and they were all upset about that, that somehow Fred was not being kind and gentle and understanding, but instead was saying it was time to repent and to recognize what their life has been in some respects.

The main thing was that they used this as a growing area to now launch their attack and to pull anybody out as much as they can.

Our concern was to go down and fellowship and to help the brethren with any questions about that situation, about what they were doing, why they were doing it, and to overcome the confusion and the dissention that was sown. We found that when we first got there, we fellowshipped, had two messages: Wayne spoke about making the Sabbath a delight, and to fulfill the Sabbath. I spoke on unity. I had not looked at this topic for some time, and when I began to look at it in more detail, and Paul has a lot to say about unity of the fellowship of the brethren, and to be of one mind and one spirit.

I gave some key Scriptures and also pointed out: Is Christ becoming divided? (1-Cor. 1). I went

through some Scriptures and clearly showed them that there were many coming in who have other agendas, and is to cause problems and issues, and that we have to be on guard and have the means and wherefore to protect the flock from this kind of fault.

There are some key Scriptures showing that Christ and God the Father, and the true believers in the faith are united with one mind and one spirit. What you find is that the membership has different functions and different duties to perform, and they get confused about their importance and relevance, the fact that they're not being heard, their emotions and baggage that they're carrying. Pretty soon you've got a little bit of this going on: vibrations of misunderstanding.

So, it's important for us as elders and deacons to be able to make the Sabbath a delight, that they can come together without this kind of 'background noise,' and the rattling around of dissension and new ideas and doctrines coming in.

Out of that then I put together *a statement of fellowship*. This is a work in progress, so your input is welcome and this is focusing primarily on the Sabbath, and the Sabbath is a time of delight; not a time to bring in new ideas and a dissension of things that you don't agree with. 'Let's talk about this doctrine because I'm not sure that this is really there.' People will say, 'Is that right?' So, you throw in something like that and it puts a question mark on the board, and that leads to confusion. Confusion leads to 'Well, I haven't studied that for a while'—it kind of causes problems.

This particular document—a statement for fellowship groups—particularly those who may not have an elder or deacon, where you just have a few people in your home at the time, this focuses on the Sabbath is a time of learning, growing in the true Word of God and preparing for eternal life, and to recognize that it's not a time to bring in alternative thinking or other doctrines or issues that would lead to confusion.

This is basically a statement that individuals can have, and we tried to put it in language that it is stating:

- Is it wrong to have questions?
- Is it wrong to have further discussion?

No! It is okay to have questions and discuss, if it's done with the right attitude and focus, that's okay. But sometimes it's better to put those kinds of things off away from the Sabbath. If you have questions. Write it up and send it to the elders, send it to Fred and let us discuss it in other ways. Don't bring it in on the Sabbath and try to make it a forum.

Take a look at that and maybe Fred will have some comments as to where we'll be going from there. We're going to put one together for our group, and maybe we can modify it and have a unified copy that we can all agree with. There's a lot that can be put into this document, but we're trying to make it one page. We don't want to make it a multi-page document. As you can see there's a lot of things that could be added, but *it's the basis of who we are, what we believe and how to conduct ourselves on the Sabbath and how to proceed with issues* that may come up.

The point is, the person who comes in and sees this, he knows that he's not going to have 'fair game' of the brethren to bring his attempt at false ideas and other things. Can't do it! It's not going to be allowed!

With that we left Allentown and I think the brethren were very encouraged and edified, and we were very pleased to be there.

(go to the next track)

Fred:

The more exposure we get to the public and other Churches of God, we may end up with more episodes like this, because some people are ready to bring their own agenda.

Please understand that if they infiltrated Worldwide Church of God and sat in the hierarchy, that's why God doesn't want a hierarchy. You can't come in and sit in a hierarchy and then spring *your thing* later. That's important!

The host, deacon or elder needs to know that in case of problems like this, you have full authority to handle the situation as God leads you with His Spirit to handle it in a proper way, to keep it down to a minimum.

All the rest of the brethren need to grow up in Christ, because, as Stan mentioned: How can people who have gone to church for years and years begin to be swayed by these things? *Part of the answer is that they are not as grounded as you think!* The other part of the answer is that they are not studying and praying. So, these things come along.

Why do they come along? Why does God allow this? *Because God has given choice! He's not going to stop it!* We have to choose that when we are confronted with these things: Are we going to do things God's way or not? That's what it's all about.

Deuteronomy 12:32: "Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it."

Deuteronomy 13:1: “If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder...”—or doctrinal paper. Some doctrinal papers are good. Some of the best ones written are by Ben Ambrose. Since he doesn't have a computer or typewriter, he hand-writes them all out. He has sent some really good stuff, and I appreciate that.

- not all doctrinal papers are wrong
- not all studies are wrong

Sometimes when someone sends me something, I'll send it back to them and say, 'I want you to go over what you have written and I want you to find out what you have missed.' I wait for the reply back. Sometimes I get it, sometimes I don't.

“...And the sign or the wonder, which he foretold to you comes to pass, saying, ‘Let us **go after other gods**... [or other doctrines, other teachings] ...which you have not known, and let us serve them,’ You shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God *is* testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (vs 1-3). We're going to be tested. That's one of the ways that we're tested:

- Will we stand *for* false doctrine?
- Will we stand *against* false doctrine?
- Will we stand *for* the Truth?

Verse 4: “You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

We do not have the administration of death, so we can't take them out and do what the Old Testament says. We are a *spiritual* church. However, if they go out and reject good counsel and are in the hands of God, if they don't repent *they're walking dead men* anyway! Always remember: **Wherever there's life, there's hope!** Even Manasseh repented after 55 years! So, let's hope that whoever is in difficulties and problems repents. We're not eager for their destruction. On the other hand, we're not interested in them coming in to fellowship groups and congregations and wreak havoc and destruction.

We need to remember that Satan and the demons have been going to church a whole lot longer than we have. They know all the ins and the outs—don't they? *Yes, keep that in mind!*

Notice that in Gen. 1:2 we left it “...was without form and void...” with a star—Hebrew: ‘hayah’ can also read *became*. Michael Heiss says that either one is correct.

Proverbs 6:16: “These six *things* the LORD

hates; yea, seven *are* an abomination unto Him: a proud look, a lying tongue... [which brings false doctrine] ...and hands that shed innocent blood” (vs 16-17). If you cause someone in the Church to stumble because of your heresy or selfishness and lying tongue, what does Jesus say? *It's better to have a millstone hung around your neck and cast into the middle of the sea than to offend one of these little ones!*

Verse 18: “A heart that plots wicked imaginations...” Talk about what they said concerning tithing: *You keep a festival tithe*, but they said *you're not to tithe because we're not under the Old Covenant*. Well, where did they get the **second** tithe? *From the Old Covenant!* What you do is you learn to *think with God's Word* to understand what's right and what's wrong. They're reasoning in circles and are ludicrous and are really only intent on getting the money for their own use.

They also said that they don't believe in the Levitical priesthood. Well, God has a greater priesthood today, and it's not restricted to it. But he said to Wayne in a phone conversation that when you go the Feast we'll remember you because the Bible says, ‘Remember the Levite.’ Talk about convoluted thinking! *Do not let these people bluff you!*

“...feet that are swift in running to evil...” (v 18). Today they can do it even faster. You don't even need your feet. All you need is a cell phone and a flapping mouth and it goes faster than any bird can fly!

Verse 19: “A false witness *who* speaks lies...” The individual in question I never ever, at anytime, divulged one word of the counseling—period! Not even to my wife. I was accused of doing that, and yet, they were the very ones who were doing it.

You see, don't sit back and be afraid of them. Remember that whenever they come out with guns blazing it generally has two barrels—one going out and the other one curving back, so when they aim and shoot the second shot gets them right in the head!

“...and he who sows discord among brethren” (v 19). What happened there, every one of these things in Prov. 6 was done.

6,000 Year Theory:

Let's just use our heads a little bit. I saw some of the video presentations of the 6,000-year theory. It's based upon a theory that the magnetic field of the earth does not regenerate. ‘What we do is we follow along with the decline of the magnetic field, that's how we know that it's only 6,000-years-

old.'

However, he had to admit that there are times when the magnetic field regenerates itself. Aha! You just blew your theory! That means you have no absolute way of counting back on the magnetic field of the earth to determine 6,000 years. Isn't that true? We need to learn to *think* and catch them in their own trap. They're saying that the earth and the universe is only 6,000-years-old. If the chronology that we put out, the chronology from creation is correct:

- 4025_{B.C.} is a very accurate chronology
- 4004_{B.C.} is Unger's chronology which most commentary scholars follow

4025+1975=6,000 years, which passed by 1975, if that is correct. That takes care of the 6,000-year prophecy that God gave man 6,000 years. We don't know God's timetable. That's only an assumption. So, many of these things are assumptions

1996+4004=6,000 years: We've already passed 6,000 years. Oh, 'but the earth can't be more than 6,000 years old.' How then do we have chronologies that have already passed 6,000 years? How can that be?

Let's use a little science. What is the speed of light? *186,000 miles per second!* They have verified that over and over again. They even have on the moon in a special place that was put there by one of the moon missions a target where they can sight up there and send up a laser beam that goes up and bounces back and they can tell the exact distance of the moon from the earth; it varies slightly all the time. That goes 186,000 miles per second.

This tells us that light in space travels 186,000 miles per second. Put that on the shelf and we need to put our *thinking caps* on. Think of the sun in the middle, and the earth 93-million miles from the sun. Let's take the spring equinox and on a clear spring equinox let's measure the angle astronomically to the North Star—because that's the most stable—and note that angle.

You come around six months later and you are 186-million miles difference from one end of the orbit around the sun to the other. You come six months later to the fall equinox.

Now you take another angle shot at the North Star and you have precise angles that now you can determine from the angles how far away the North Star is from the earth. So, this would be astro-trigonometry. It's millions miles from the earth and you calculate the speed of light from there, and you're way beyond 6,000 years.

The way that it says there in Genesis, "*In the beginning...*" *The* is in italic because God the Father

and Jesus Christ existed before the beginning, as we understand it, *we don't know how far bad the universe goes*. When they are dealing in so many millions of light-years, even billions of light-years, even if you discounted 60-70-percent you are still dealing with the fact that the universe is far older than 6,000 years.

The way we've understood Gen. 1:2 through the years has been correct. That's just a little bit of insight into it so that you can have an argument for them.

- Is God the same yesterday, today and forever?
- How does God deal with the sins of men?
- Is He kind, patient and understanding?
- Even though He judges as things go along?
- Does He get out the Holy Angel Howitzers to shoot everyone instantly when they sin?

Like the man who got rid of the fly on the wall with his 105 Howitzer. He killed the fly, but he blew up the house!

- How does God deal with sin?
- Does He reveal it to us?
- Does He give us an opportunity? *Of course!*
- Would God have dealt with Lucifer and the angels any other way?
- Would not He have given them warnings?
- And warnings?
- And warnings?

Maybe that's why we see what appears to be very likely true, millions of years involved in the age of the earth.

- Did God bring upon Lucifer and the angels many things similar to what He brings upon human beings when they sin?
- In hopes of turning them back?
- Would God be interested in the angels who sin, that they have some means of correction? *Of course, He would!*

This tells us that we really don't know the true age of the earth. Take all the things that science says about evolution and discount that however much you want, and you're way beyond 6,000 years.

One other thing concerning magnetism, which has been discovered and is true: Take clay pottery that is made with soft clay, when you bake it that locks in the magnetic alignment of the cells of that baked clay pot. So, you can tell which way the magnetism was; it also can be a clue to understanding its age.

They know that in the depths of the ocean where they've gone down with cores, they have the

magnetic field reversing itself many, many times over. The reversing of the magnetic field could be part of some of the correction that came, that God exercised against Lucifer and the demons before they finally committed the unpardonable sin. I don't know, but they can document by the solidifying of the lava that comes up out of the ocean and the lava is spreading. All they need to do is get a sample of that and they know exactly what the magnetic field of the earth was. They can tell the number of years—generally speaking—between the shifts in the magnetic field.

You can't take a simplistic approach and say it's only 6,000 years old.

- Is God the everlasting God?
- Did He sit out there for all eternity and do nothing?
- Only 6,000 years ago decide to do something?

That's why it's important that we learn to think correctly. That's why it's important that we get knowledge, facts and understanding, so that we're not going to get emotionally carried away: 'Did you hear that the earth and the universe are only 6,000-years-old?'

- Is that salvational? *No!*
- What is the solution? *Be faithful until the resurrection and when you're resurrected God will tell us!*

TITHING:

There have been probably the greatest rash of papers *against tithing* that I have ever experienced. You probably notice it in some of the things that I have taught.

- If God is fair and just and right—which He is—do you suppose that He would only add the burden of tithing to those who are engaged in agricultural or ranching or herding things?
- What would those who don't engage in that...?
- How would the ones who would be burdened with tithing feel toward those who got off scot-free?

There are several things in an overview that we need to consider. We'll look at some of those. You need to have an overview.

- Does everything we have come from the earth? *Everything!*
- Why does God zero in on crops and animals in tithing, as differentiated from perhaps other things? *Because there are*

special considerations toward God in that life!

Such as the firstborn, or the animal for the sin offering. Same way with the firstfruits, and all of those are to teach us lessons. Let's see what else God says, which is an overall principle that ties it together.

Acts 15—here we have the conference in Jerusalem in 49_{A.D.} They were talking about the Pharisees demanding that all of the disciples must be circumcised in order to receive salvation. {Note sermon series: *Circumcision Wars*} There's a total difference between having a proselyte join Judaism vs a convert to Christianity who repents.

The circumcision is of the heart, not of the flesh. You will notice that it was the Pharisees who said that, and after this conference you will notice that the Pharisees no longer participated in the Church.

Acts 15:6: "Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter. And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days, God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe'" (vs 6-7). That's the Cornelius incident (Acts 10).

Verse 8: "And God, Who knows the heart... [literally in the Greek it is the *heart-knowing God*] ...bore witness to them *by* giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith. Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (vs 8-10).

That's has nothing to do with physical circumcision alone. It has nothing to do with the commandments of God. *It has everything to do with proselyting circumcision and the code of Jewish law.*

Verse 11: "'But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also.' Then all the multitude kept silence 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, as it is written'" (vs 11-15). I want you to read this and I want you to understand that this is a very broad interpretation:

Verse 16: "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” (vs 16-17).

Today if any of us gave that kind of broad interpretation, we'd have our hides nailed to the wall!

Amos 9:11—where this is quoted from; the Lord says: “In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that has fallen, and close up its breaches; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.” Is that not a Millennial Scripture? Look at how broadly that was applied.

My whole point is that there are certain principles that God has inspired to be that are not necessarily restricted to the small little picky things that people may look at in any doctrinal setting, and also in a tithing situation.

We've gone over this again and again, but here's a great principle. Let's see what Moses talking about; they're going into the land.

Deuteronomy 8:7: “For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey” (vs 7-8). All those things are titheable.

Verse 9: “A land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness. You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper.” Coming out of the land. Does not God deserve tithing on that, too. But you don't figure it like cattle, because you have to process it from ore.

Verse 10: “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes...” (vs 10-11). That's all inclusive. Does that not include everything that God taught them? *Yes, indeed!*

“...which I command you today, lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage” (vs 11-14).

Verse 17: “Beware lest you say in your

heart, ‘My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth’”—which includes anything under the ground and above the ground. Today that would include oil.

Verse 18: “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He Who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant, which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day.”

{Note sermon series: *Tithing*} Regarding *Jesus and the Forgotten City* by Richard A. Batey. That's the forgotten city of Sepphoris. That reveals that during the days of Jesus, that because the Jews and the Israelites who were there were under the hand of the Romans, they worked for the Romans who confiscated the land and made them serfs. They received money and did not have crops to take up. It's very important to understand.

Matthew 22:17—this is the one of tribute, involves money: “‘Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, ‘Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.’ And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription *is on* this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar's.’ And He said to them, ‘Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.’” (vs 17-21).

That's all inclusive of anything, including money. Have to be. Did they receive money at the treasury? *Yes, they did!* You can say, it is true, that in many aspects of tithing we do not tithe like they did under the Levitical priesthood. We're not dealing in land, we're not farming, not vineyarding.

Luke 20:46: “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in robes, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and *the* chief seats in the synagogues, and *the* chief places at the suppers; who devour the houses of widows, and as a pretext pray at great length. These shall receive the greater judgment” (vs 46-47).

Luke 21:1: “When He looked up, He saw the rich men casting their offerings into the treasury.” Granted, it doesn't say *tithes*, but what do you do with your tithe when you bring it to God? *You offer it to Him!*

Verse 2: “Then He also saw a certain poor widow drop in two small coins.... [the widow's mite] ... And He said, ‘Of a truth, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all *of them*.’” (vs 2-3). That's probably all she had to live on for a certain short period of time.

Verse 4: “For all these have from their abundance cast into the offerings to God; but she, out of her poverty, did put *in* all the livelihood that she had.”

What is Jesus saying here? *Those who had a lot of money didn't give what they were supposed to give!* Isn't that's what He's saying by degree and comparison. Remember when the Church started, it started with money, selling of property, way beyond a tithe. Can you imagine the furor that would be if any minister in the Church of God sent out a letter saying that 'if all of you want to help in this project, sell your houses and give your money to the Church.'

He would be blackballed, cursed at every foul name you could get. But that's what they did in the book of Acts. What happened? Remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira? That's based upon the fact that Jesus said, 'Let your *yes* be yes, and your *no* be no.' That was the greater issue rather than the amount. They said, 'Oh, we'll give whatever we get.' And they got a whole lot more so they agreed with each other, 'Well, we'll say it was sold for such and such.'

Aren't you glad that God only uses one instance like that to teach a lesson in the Scriptures. Where on earth would many people be today if He still executed that kind of judgment that happened to Ananias and Sapphira because they were dishonest in what they should give to God? There are lessons that we need to learn!

- What did Jesus say of the Old Testament? *The Law and Prophets are not done away! Live by every Word of God!*
- What does that include? *Everything that is not ritually bound!*
- Was tithing and offering rituals?
- Was the casting of the money into the treasury a ritual?

or

- Does God require that because we live on the earth He is due something from everyone to acknowledge that He is God and He provides for everyone. all the physical things that they need?

We have nothing we haven't received!

1-Corinthians 9:11: "If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things? If others participate in this authority... [that has to be given by God] ...over you, much more surely *should* not we? Nevertheless, we have not used this authority..." (vs 11-12). Just because he didn't use it, doesn't mean it didn't exist. He didn't use it to shame them because they were not properly doing what they should do.

"...but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple,

and those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel" (vs 12-14).

When did Jesus command that? You can't say He didn't command it, because Paul wrote it. Otherwise, you would have to say that Paul lied. What does that include? *Everything!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Timothy 3:14-15
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-8, 11-13
- 3) Deuteronomy 12:32
- 4) Deuteronomy 13:1-4
- 5) Proverbs 6:16-19
- 6) Acts 15:6-17
- 7) Amos 9:11
- 8) Deuteronomy 8:7-14, 17-18
- 9) Matthew 22:17-21
- 10) Luke 20:46-47
- 11) Luke 21:1-4
- 12) 1 Corinthians 9:11-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 58
- Genesis 1:1-2
- 1-Corinthians 1
- Acts 10

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Christianity Without God* by Lloyd Geering
- *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Jesus and the Forgotten City* by Richard A. Batey

Study Paper: *14 Rules of Bible Study*

Sermon Series:

- *Circumcision Wars*
- *Tithing*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 3-25-15

Duties of an Elder

Wayne Stenhouse

I wanted to cover something that was very inspiring to me, and is going to be very inspiring to you (from the ministerial conference) and that is *the duties of an elder*. I'm not doing this just because I'm an elder. I'm doing this because if I'm the teacher, you're to become as the teacher. What I want you do is be inspired and include yourself in all of this as we're going through it.

This is very important, and I want you to look at this as if you were the teacher, because that is what you are becoming. Your responsibility is just as heavy as my responsibility. If you look at yourself as becoming a teacher. When a person goes to college or university to become a teacher, they have to be taught to become a teacher, it just doesn't happen out of your head.

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." That is something to you personally.

When I read Scriptures like this, it sobers me to know that this is quite a responsibility you and I have. That's a personal command from God, **to be charged to do something!** This is my responsibility.

Here's something you can add to that responsibility; you are also accountable for what you teach. You're not only responsible, you're accountable. It's my responsibility, but I also have to account to God for what I'm teaching.

If anything, I hope that this gets out to the ministry so they understand what their job is. It's not to be taken lightly. It doesn't make you better than anybody else, but you have been given a responsibility.

Verse 2: "Preach the Word!..." Is there going to be teachers in the Church? *Yes!* What Word? *The Word of God!*

"...Be urgent in season and out of season..." (v 2). This shows you that there are Holy Days, because they are 'seasons of God's' (Lev. 23).

"...convict..." You need to be convicted in your mind that what you're doing is right.

"...rebuke..." If someone is not preaching the right thing, or they're not telling you the right thing, then you need to stand up for that.

"...encourage with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine..." (vs 2-3). In other words, they won't tolerate the true Biblical teaching.

They're going to change it a little bit here, a little bit there to make it come around to where they want it to be.

"...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)—doctrines, prophecies. People with prophecies have got them, 'this is the way this is going to happen.'

- Are you sure?
- How do you know what God is thinking?
- How do you know what God is going to bring forth through the prophecies?

You've got to be very careful because we're kind of stuck in our old ways and say, 'that's the way I've been taught for years, that's the end of it.' Well, that's okay, but you've got to go by what the Bible says, which is more important.

If you think back 20-plus years, did we ever think this was going to happen the way things have happened? **God is in charge!** *Man is not in charge!* Man is not sitting directly under Jesus Christ as His representative on earth; I don't care who you are. Talk about showing partiality if that happened. *We're all under Christ*; that's the way it's got to be!

Verse 4: "And they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths." Why is that going to happen? *Because they're not working under the Spirit of God, but the spirit that they have within themselves!*

Romans 8:5: "For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit." There are some people that believe that they're taught directly by God, and they're not listening to any man. Whoa! Dangerous waters! I have to be taught, and how does God teach? *Through His servants!*

Verse 6: "For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.... [Christ's, of course] ...Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is

dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies... [bring them to life] ...because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God” (vs 6-14).

Another thing to think of: Christ said, ‘My sheep will hear My voice.’ How are they going to hear it? *Through the Word that’s being taught!*

Verse 15: “Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

This is why they turn away; 2-Timothy 4:4 “And they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths”—because they’re not allowing the Spirit of God to guide them and direct them.

Verse 5: “But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist... [that’s still an elder (1-Tim. 4:14)] ...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). Those are the duties of an elder.

Let’s get something straight about anybody who is teaching. They don’t know it all! We’re always learning, all of us! We don’t know it all, so don’t expect us to give answers all the time. We don’t know! I haven’t studied this book from one end to the other over and over that I know everything in it. I’ll never know everything in it. I don’t think anybody is ever going to know everything in it. But what I do know, that God reveals in His own time, the more that we have to learn. That’s important. If you’re looking for perfection, you’ve picked the wrong place. It’s not going to happen!

1-Timothy 5:21: “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.”

That becomes a bit of a problem, because when there are arguments and things going on, one wants to always take the other’s side. But an elder’s job is to try to remain neutral and the brethren won’t

allow us to remain neutral, because they want you to be on their side.

Verse 22: “Do not be quick to lay hands on any man; neither take part in *the* sins of others. Keep yourself pure.” That’s why we don’t lay hands on people over and over, because they have to prove themselves. We have to see some proof! We have to know!

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; speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*; forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful... [clean meats, not unclean meats] ...even *by* those who know the Truth” (vs 1-3). Your Word is Truth (John 17:17).

Verse 4: “For every creature of God *designated for human consumption*... [the clean ones] ...*is* good, and nothing to be refused, *if* it is received with thanksgiving.” These were meats created by God for eating. They’re done by creation, not prayer. In other words you can’t take something unclean and pray over it and say that it is clean.

Verse 5: “Because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.” So, it’s set apart by God (Lev. 11; Deut. 14).

Verse 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.” We’re being nourished at all times.

Verse 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. 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... [by letting it lie dormant] ...which was given to you by prophecy with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood” (vs 7-14).

2-Timothy 1:6: “Or this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God... [that God gave you] ...that is in you by the laying on of my hands.”

1-Timothy 4:15: “Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them 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).

Brethren, I’m not saying that mankind and all the teachers have it all exactly right. But if they are preaching the Word of God, then that’s their duty to do that. How do you know if they’re teaching the Word of God? *You need, yourself, to prove all things!*

Verse 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. Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all” (vs 14-15). That’s what we’re to do, *grow in faith!*

I’m not saying that’s the only thing you need to do in life, but it’s very, very important that we do that.

Verse 16: “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.”

That applies to the eldership—I understand that—but it also applies to each of us individually when we’re dealing with people in the world. We have to know what we’re talking about in order to help them.

1-Timothy 5:17: “Let the *ordained* elders who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor... [everybody wants to become an elder—you think] ...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). That doesn’t happen! One makes the judgment and tells everybody else.

It just amazes me that everybody believes what everybody else is saying. They never come to the source to find out what’s true and what’s not true, they just accept what was said. That’s the way it is, but it shouldn’t be.

If you think *double honor* is such a great thing you have to tie it in with James 3:1: “My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, **knowing that we will receive more severe judgment.**” As I said before, with responsibility comes accountability for me and for you. When James says ‘we’ he includes himself; he doesn’t exempt himself.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” These are roles that need to be covered. It’s not a hierarchy or controlled government. You see nowhere in here that God says that He gave some apostles to be in charge, and some prophets to prophesy, and some evangelists to be leading or presiding evangelists, which are names made up by men. And some pastors; so the teachers are below the pastors. That’s not the way that this was sorted out. These are functions that an elder does.

There are no living apostles on the earth—that’s my opinion—and there hasn’t been since the beginning of the Church. A prophet can also be one that teaches. It doesn’t mean that one that prophesies all the time. It could be one that teaches.

Verse 12: “For the perfecting of the saints...” That’s the purpose of it. It’s not so that we have this government from the top down and say... What was the old joke: How many people does it take to change a light bulb in the Church? The lay member has to ask the deacon and the deacon has to ask the local elder, and the local elder has to ask the pastor, then the regional... Just to change a light bulb. It’s not for anything else but:

Verse 12: “For the perfecting of the saints for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the Body of Christ... [the Church] ...until we all come into the unity... [the oneness] ...of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ” (vs 12-13). That’s the reason to help everyone make it to the Kingdom of God.

That’s why, brethren, you’re not going to get a phone call about the place of safety. What are you going to do if the minister doesn’t like you? *You’re not going!* It’s not going to happen that way! This is the way we need to think now, compared to what we thought years ago when we were all waiting for the telephone to ring to go to the place of safety. There were people with ‘Petra boxes’ in their trunks.

Verse 14—another reason: “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.... [following a church tradition] ...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, 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).

That’s the whole purpose of the Church. It’s not to set somebody above somebody else.

Absolutely not!

Deut. 18 is very important for anybody that teaches; this is a must! Whenever I'm going to speak, this is my prayer. Where does the inspiration come from? *From God!*

Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet... [in the flesh] ...from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me. To Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well what they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth....'" (vs 15-18). How was Christ inspired? *From God the Father!*

"...And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, whatever man... [a teacher] ...will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him" (vs 18-19). Please read Ezek. 34:1-11 where God says that He is against the shepherds because they 'destroyed My flock.'

Verse 20: "But the prophet... [anyone who speaks] ...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."

So, we're not to teach false doctrine. We are to go on our knees and say to God, 'Utilize me, speak through me, give me the inspiration that I need today, and help me put it forth to the brethren.'

If there's something we don't know, we'll find out, if we can. That's all we can do. We're not always right. That's something you never heard from the pulpit before. The goal is for everyone to become like the teacher. That's the whole goal!

John 21:15: Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love... ['agape' love] ...Me more than these?' And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.'.... [he didn't answer with 'agape' love; he spoke with 'phileo' love; he didn't understand 'agape' love] ...He said to him, '**Feed**... ['bosko'—*to nourish!*] ...My lambs.'" What's the work of the Church? **Feeding the flock!** This is the purpose of the ministry.

Verse 16: "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'"—Greek: 'poimen'—*tend to them!*

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, 'Do you love... [this time it's 'phileo' because He knew Peter was not getting it] ...Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things. You know that I love... ['phileo'] ...You.' Jesus said to him, '**Feed**... ['bosko'—*nourish*] ...My sheep.'" A shepherd is put here to shepherd the sheep:

- to guard them
- to protect them
- to help them
- to teach them
- to love them

so that they will begin to serve and understand the true way of God. That's all a teacher is supposed to do. That's our duty! That's our God-given duty to do!

You need to become like the teacher, so you will need to do the exact same thing. That's how we grow into that 'agape' love that Christ was talking about when He talked to Peter. Peter did learn his lessons, if you read the Epistles of Peter you will understand that.

Brethren, that's what the elder's conference was all about; teaching us to teach you so that you can teach others ***so that we can all come into the unity of the faith together! That's what God wants from us all!***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 2) Romans 8:6-15
- 3) 2 Timothy 4:4-8
- 4) 1 Timothy 5:21-22
- 5) 1 Timothy 4:1-14
- 6) 2 Timothy 1:6
- 7) 1 Timothy 4:15-16, 14-16
- 8) 1 Timothy 5:17-19
- 9) James 3:1
- 10) Ephesians 4:11-16
- 11) Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- 12) John 21:15-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 23
- John 17:17
- Leviticus 11
- Deuteronomy 14
- Ezekiel 34:1-11

WS:bo
Transcribed: 4-15-15

God's Teaching Methods

Wayne Stenhouse

Every day we think on the Word of God and what God wants us to do, and how we should do things, how we understand His Word, and what we can do to truly get to the depth of God's Word. It's much deeper than most suppose. The problem with most 'Christians'—I'll just blanket us all in there—is that they don't look at the Bible. They hear it from somebody up front, whether a priest, minister or rabbi, whomever it is, and they say 'That's gospel.' Yet, they never search it out themselves!

That's where things have gone wrong throughout the years. Instead of living by the Word of God, they're now going to be living by the *tradition of men* what's passed down to them. If it's been passed down for 400-600 years, to a person it can't be wrong. You grow up with it.

So, God says, 'Well, that's okay, however, there's more that I want you to know than what you know. Today I want to run through God's teaching methods: how He does it and how you're to apply yourself to understanding God's Word even better.'

We'll cover some of the things that are the pitfalls that we seem to fall into, because there's one thing about our brain—and it's really true—sometimes our mind and brain want to believe a lie. How many people have ever heard of the 'tooth fairy'? But it was big thing when we were kids to lose a tooth and wrap it up and put it under your pillow and the next morning you were looking for a nickel, dime or quarter; whatever your mom and dad could afford.

We were believing a lie that there was a tooth fairy. It meant that we were going to get something out of it. I remember laying in bed when I was a boy, and I heard some bells outside and thought that that must be Santa Claus, never knowing that my father drank the milk and ate the cookies. It was phases that we seem to go through that we wanted to believe this lie. And even when one of our friends says that Santa Claus is not true. You walk away and say you're not playing with him anymore.

We believe these lies and our mind liked it. Of course, the people that were telling us these things liked telling it, too, for the excitement they would see in their children. However, none of that in the Bible! The big thing is that we want to believe certain things, but the only thing we can truly believe is what God puts in His Word.

It's going to be very important to understand that Jesus Christ and God the Father work in a special way. Once we believe this and truly

understand it in our heart, then we can continue on and do the things that are necessary in life to show God that we understand His Word, and we want to keep His Word. That doesn't mean that you're locked into something that you can't get out of.

What I'm saying here is that God's laws are God's laws, but there's a lot of freedom in those laws. There are a lot of different things we can do in our lives that is quite permissible before God, because He wants us to be happy. They're not stringent! They're not things that come along and He says, 'If you don't do this and that, then I'm going to do this.' *NO!* And He always gives lots of room for repentance, and lots of room to overcome any situation that we're in.

1. Directly by God:

Let's look at a parable given by Christ that has a lot of meaning. It has a lot of meat here, and although we can't cover it to the nth degree, we can certainly cover it so we have a true understanding.

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 means that people are trying to get around Christ to achieve the goal, instead of going through Christ.

Verse 2: "But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep." There is a specific group of people that God wants to work with. The problem is they won't respond to God, although at times they believe they are. They're very sincere in their beliefs; however, God wants and expects more from us.

Verse 3: "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice..." Christ doesn't yell down from heaven. Christ doesn't come and sit next to you and whisper something in your ear. So, there's got to be methods that God uses in order for anyone to hear the voice of the Shepherd.

"...and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (v 3). God knows who they are; He knows who is really for Him; He knows those are not called right now. That's fine, because they will be given the same chance, and He leads them out.

How does God lead people? *By His Spirit!* Did you ever do something wrong in life and you sit there later and think, 'Whoa! Did I ever make a goof! And it's a big one!'

If you had no conscience, no thought of God, that wouldn't bother you. You would just say, 'Another day' and move on. When you really think

of what I'm saying, think of this way: Somebody goes in and robs a convenience store and shoots the owner. It doesn't bother him, because the conscience is not toward God; the conscience is toward crime and getting ahead.

If you and I would go in to rob a convenience store, I'm sure that we wouldn't be able to pull it off. God's going to work on us right there! He's going to say that what you are doing is wrong!

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 for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers" (vs 4-5).

If somebody comes up and tells me there's an Easter bunny or there's a Santa Claus or tooth fairy, I know that what they're telling me is not the truth, and so do you. It's the same with anything that we look at that has to do with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

If it's not the truth, then it is simply *not the Truth!* The best way to handle that is that someone will come up and say, 'I believe the Bible says....' Well, that's fine, show me where it says that. If you can show me I will change and live that way.

But if you can't show me, are you willing for me to show you where things have gone wrong. I know this personally because my brother is a Baptist elder and he was out fishing with me a number of years ago, and he says it doesn't matter whether you keep the Sabbath or not; it doesn't matter if you keep the laws of God, they're all *'nailed to the cross.'*

I said, 'If you can prove that to me and show me that I'll believe it. But if you don't, I'm going to sit down and I'm going to show you where God said this, this and this.' He's never come back! I talk to him and I still see him, but there's nothing. The last time we visited they said, 'We don't believe there's such a thing as the Sabbath.' That's not what God said, because that's one of His commandments—#4—keep the Sabbath Holy. Very simple, but they don't want to accept it.

Verse 6: "Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them. Therefore, Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep'" (vs 6-7). That's an entrance way and you can read that in Rev. 3 where Christ says, 'I'm standing outside and I'm knocking on the door and no one will let Me in.'

Verse 8: "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. **I am the door....**" {Note sermon: *I AM that I AM*} There's only one I AM! 'My laws and what I say is right, not what man says.

"...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. 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" (vs 8-11). That's what Christ did!

This is interesting and this is where you can see that people have gone off of the track, because Christ said it right here:

Verse 24: "Then the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, 'How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.'" I don't know how many times He told them throughout the Scriptures.

Verse 25: "Jesus answered them, 'I have told you, but you do not believe. The works that I am doing in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep....' (vs 25-26). They weren't of the sheep of God because they wouldn't accept Christ as their Savior.

"...as I said to you My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (vs 26-27). Now, this brings us to the subject of *how the sheep hear His voice*. When Christ says, 'You do not believe Me, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.'

John 6:28: "Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?'.... [the works they're talking about here are the works of law] ...Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe **in...**' (vs 28-29)—'eis'—into. That means you *believe in Christ, not on Christ*. Many, many people *believe on* Christ, but they don't believe *into* Christ.

Someone in our group told me that it is interesting that everyone wants a savior, which Jesus Christ is. But they don't want a Lord, because

- a Lord tells them what to do
- a Lord shows them how to live
- a Lord teaches them
- a Lord corrects them

Nobody wants that. They love a Savior but they don't want to take the other side of that.

Believing *into* Christ is believing everything that He has taught and shown, and that He has preached throughout His ministry. His words weren't idol. You've got to believe what He was doing; you've got to believe into Christ to truly understand. So, we hear God's voice through His teaching. That's how He does it.

Isaiah 54:13—this is what God says: "And all your children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and

great *shall be* the peace of your children.” God’s going to teach *His* way.

For a lot of people this sounds strange what we believe in and what we’re doing. However, we want to do the very best before God.

- Do we know everything? *No!*
- Those that are teaching, do they know everything? *No!*

I tell you one thing—and most of our group knows this—what we’ve learned in the last 10-11 years has been astounding! We want to believe the Truth of God, *not what we want* to put into the Scriptures to justify what we’re doing. Anybody can justify anything that they’re doing. It’s very easy to justify, but we want to show God that we want to live His way and we want a peaceful life, too. That’s what He said, “...great *shall be* the peace of your children.”

Jeremiah 31:33—these are God’s words: “‘But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel... [spiritual Israel] ...After those days,’ says the LORD, ‘I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts...’” How does God do that?

- by His teaching
- by our understanding what is in front of us
- by Him pointing things out and showing us
- by Him writing it in our heart

For those who think the Law has been done away, why would He do this? Why would He write His Law in our heart? *If the Law is done away with, it makes no sense at all!* “...and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (v 33).

Hebrews 10:16, the same words: “‘This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.’”

This is the way that we can understand the teachings of God. God didn’t lay it out in a book and say, ‘Verse one, you should do this; verse two you should do that.’ There was a reason that He did it the way that He did.

Isaiah 28:9: “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts.” There is a time that we can learn the milk of the Word—which we all did—but there’s a time that we have to be weaned and get into the ‘meat’ of God’s Word.

I don’t know any of us that are still on pabulum, today, at our age. That was a phase that we had to go through. We were on mother’s milk, on

pabulum, but we had to grow up sometime to get into the real meat. This is the same thing.

This is the reason why, v 10: “For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept... [this is a double emphasis] ...line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.” You have to put the Scriptures together to have a true understanding.

Verse 11: “For with stammering lips and foreign tongue He will speak to this people.” This is to the host that will not obey the Word of God.

Verse 12: “To whom He said, ‘This *is* the rest He gives to the weary,’ and ‘This *is* the refreshing,’ yet, they were not willing to hear. So then, the Word of the LORD was to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken and snared and taken” (vs 12-13).

There are some people that we have learned through the years who will take the Word of God and they will put their own mind into it. What happens—and it’s a very dangerous point—it’s something that we all need to understand—is that when we’re growing spiritually, we don’t want to get a puffed-up attitude. We don’t want to start thinking that we’re the next thing to Christ. What was Christ?

- He was full of humility!
- He always recognized the Father!
- He loved the Father!
- He did the Father’s will!

What did He say when He was on the cross? *It is finished! I have done the work of My Father!* Everything was glorifying God the Father.

We don’t want to get to the point that we know the Bible and nobody else does, because it’s taken us decades to get to this point, but only by the grace of God has that happened. Not from my doing, but from God’s doing.

Psalms 32:8: “*You said, ‘I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you.’”* That’s a pretty exciting promise to me, that God’s going to guide us and direct us along the way.

- we’re not here to ‘beat’ people up
- we’re not here to force you to believe what we want you to believe

We’re here to guide and direct you toward Christ! If we’re not doing that then we’re not doing our job, it’s that simple. I’ll leave it up to somebody else to ‘beat’ people up. I have enough trouble with me, never mind worrying about how to get everybody else to the Kingdom of God; that’s your duty to do.

Verse 9: “Be not like the horse, or like the

mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.”

God says in v 8 that He will instruct us. This is our choice. We can either put the bit and bridle in and hold back, or we can be stubborn as a mule or horse, but it's *our choice*. God's not going to force you to learn anything that you don't want to learn. That's just the way it is.

Let's look at David's view, because I love David—not for his sins and what he went through—because *he never turned his back on God!*

Psalm 71:17: “O God, **You have taught me** from my youth; and until now I have declared Your wonderful works.” One thing about the knowledge of God, when you learn it you will see blessings come with it. That's the way God does it. It can be *spiritual* blessings, *physical* blessings, or some other type of blessing, but God will do that.

Verse 18: “But now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me until I have declared Your strength to this generation, and Your power to everyone who is to come.” Why would David say that? *Because the natural fact is that when we get older and gray-headed, we can't remember the things like we use to remember.*

Don't let that scare you, because if I sat down alone with you, you know more about the Bible than what you think you do. Some people have trouble bringing the Scriptures back to mind, please don't worry about that. When you have the Holy Spirit of God, it shows that you are sealed with the promise of God.

Psalm 119:102: “I have not departed from Your ordinances, for **You have taught me.**” Did we read where God said, ‘I will put My laws in your heart’? That's the ordinances, the laws, the commandments, the statutes, all these things God is going to teach us as we're going through. Teaching will be ongoing; even in the future it's not going to stop.

This teaching, brethren, is not going to stop! People can try to stop the Word of God, but it's not going to be stopped! Many people say, ‘Why do we need a new Bible? The *King James* is the most accurate Bible that was ever written to this point; it was 95-96% accurate. There's a few things that had to be corrected, and that's been done through this version. *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order!*

Try to buy a *King James Bible*, especially with a margin, they're becoming very scarce. The last one I bought was \$176 and I had to order it special, they don't carry them.

So, are we not only making it a little clearer,

we're preserving the Word of God. God's Word will always be preserved to the end. God's Church will always be preserved to the end, whether we do it or someone else does it, it's going to be preserved.

This Church of God didn't just spring up in the 20s or 30s. *NO!* It's been going on since the apostles started the Church. God will always preserve His Word and that's what He's saying here:

Micah 4:1: “But it shall be in the last days *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.” That's the Millennium, the Kingdom of God when it's here on this earth. That's what's going to happen.

Verse 2: “And many nations shall come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And **He will teach us of His ways...** [the teaching is never going to stop] ...and we will walk in His paths’—for the Law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

That's what we're in training for, brethren. We're in training to teach. That's what I'm in training for, to help and teach you, but that doesn't mean that I know everything, because you teach me. In my own group some of the talks we've had are very, very advantageous. I learn just as much as they are learning. And I don't think there's a day goes by that I don't learn something, and I need to do that.

John 6:45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they **shall all be taught by God.**’ Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me.” We're all *going to be taught* by God; we are *being taught by God*, but how does God do that? How does God directly teach us? *By the use of His Holy Spirit!*

When John was written in the original Greek it is a lot different than what is in the *King James Version*, because the Holy Spirit was given a gender, but it is not! The Holy Spirit is neutered, neutral—not a he or a she—and you can read Appendix K: *Exegesis for the Translation of the Phrase “the Holy Spirit.”*

John 14:17: “*Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you.”

- that's how God teaches us
- that's how God sears our conscience

Acts 2:37: “Now, after hearing *this*, **they were cut to the heart**; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’” That's by God's Spirit. They didn't just come

up and say, 'I've been wrong.' Then they were all baptized at that point.

John 14:26: "But *when* the Comforter *comes*, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that One shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you."

A lot of people don't understand how God works with His Holy Spirit. It is a power given by Him. It comes forth from the Father. I did a whole series on the power of God and it shows how God works doing this, and how He can work with us and lead by His Holy Spirit. If they desire God, God desires them.

The Comforter is from the Greek word "paraklet" that means something that *exhorts, strengthens or comforts us*.

Funerals are very hard even for those you don't know and loved through the years. They're very difficult to do if a friend. I said to my wife after that I felt crushed. She said that I did fine because God 'led you through it.' It's such a hard thing to do, especially on a loved one that you know.

John 15:26: "But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, **which proceeds from the Father...** [that's where it comes from] ...that one shall bear witness of Me."

How do we know what God's saying in the Scriptures is absolutely right? *That's the Word of God! If you don't believe in the Word of God there's a problem right there!*

John 16:13 "However, when that one has come, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, **it will lead you into all Truth** because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come." There are a few things that we can glean from this that I've heard people say: We don't have to worry about prophecy; we don't care what's coming.

Well, brethren, we need to care what's coming; we need to watch what's coming. This is our eternal life and we have to keep our eye on things. What we've learned over the last ten or eleven-plus years can only be inspired by God to learn.

For years and years we had all the booklets and we understood the basics, but it was time to move on to the meat of the Word, and that's where we are today.

That's the way God teaches directly, but He also teaches another way:

2. Through His Word; the inspired Scriptures that are written

You can take all the books written all over the world from the Library of Congress or all the great libraries, but nothing is going to give you the entirety of life that the Scriptures are going to do. We don't need anything else.

This is something that you and I need to do, 2-Timothy 2:15: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God..."

Brethren, let's admit this. I have a lot of family in other churches. I'd never seen any of them study. I'm not talking about Churches of God, but other churches. This word *diligently* means in the Greek—'spoudazo'—*to exert oneself!* We need to put something into it. **Unto God**—to exhibit to God, 'yes, I want to learn, please teach me.' "...approved unto God..." not unto men. In other words, we need to put something into it.

"...a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth" (v 15). We do that by studying together or by studying alone. That's the way we can grow.

Verse 16: "But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness."

I've seen it in the Church for many years, that someone will say, 'There's no more of this. I've read it! I've studied it! I now know this is wrong that you've been teaching.' They send you some papers. You look at them and they don't make sense. However, that's their decision.

The next thing you hear is that 'Christ took the Law to the cross.' Why do you need Christ then? You just lead an open life, just go for it. Then they're not keeping the Sabbath or the Holy Days, they're not doing anything. Is that the type of person we want to follow? Right out the door? *Absolutely not!*

Proverbs 15:28: "The heart of the righteous studies to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things." What we need to do is be able to give an answer to anybody who asks. If we don't know it, get the sermons, the booklets, we'll help you in every way we can.

Your job—"The heart of the righteous..."—is to study to be able to answer others. That's what we're to do; that's what God wants you to do.

(go to the next track)

Understand that it's through God's Word that we can get to know what God wants us to do. I thought it would be advantageous for us to start at the bottom ground, and understand why God teaches us and His methods, because there are certain things

that He does.

Isaiah 34:16—here's a little instruction: **“Seek out of the book of the LORD, and read...”** Just reading the Bible doesn't seem that you are inspired or get anything out of it.

The first time I read the Bible through from cover to cover it made no sense to me. But now when I'm reading, a light will turn on, and it's just hits like a ton of bricks. You're reading something that God wants you to read.

Verse 16: “Seek out of the book of the LORD, and read not one of these will be missing, none shall lack its mate; for His mouth has commanded, and His Spirit has gathered them.” When you're being taught by God, you're being taught by His Spirit.

- we need to think on God's Word
- we need to meditate on God's Word
- we need to study His Word

We have Biblical aids:

- sermons
- booklets
- books

There's nothing that we haven't basically covered such as Baptism. For the new people, when you study this book along with the sermons you will be ready when the time comes that you decide to become baptized. The problem was, years ago, most of us were baptized not really comprehending the whole picture.

One thing about Bible study is, and I think it's one of the most difficult things people go through:

- What do I study?
- How do I get the thought and the ideas and what to put together?

That should come from God, for one thing, and secondly, there's nothing you can't study. For example, in the New Testament we have sermons on every epistle, every Gospel {sermon series at cbcg.org} There's nothing that we don't have that will help you to improve.

The other thing is that we have to look at the Bible as a living thing. It's not something that's dull. It's not something that you just read through page after page and get nothing out. To read the Bible from one end to the other may be a great thing, but if you're not going to glean anything from doing that, then you're actually wasting your time. What do you remember about reading through the Bible? *Not very much!* So, you're better to pick subjects to study about.

Put on the Word of God! It's like putting on the armor of God. It's the exact same thing, because that's what Paul is talking about, because the more armor we put on the more we will resist the devil. The Bible says to 'resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

It's no different from a computer when you think about ourselves; what you put in the computer is what is going to come out. The more spiritual you put in the more that's going to come out. And prayer and fasting are two of the greatest tools that we have in order to study and understand the Word of God. If that doesn't happen and you're just listening to a sermon or something, you may not get the fullness of that message.

One thing about listening to sermon—on tape, CD, etc.—you can go over it again and again and you often say, 'I don't remember him saying that last time.' I think it's because we can only retain so much of it.

Ephesians 6:17: “And put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” If you want to fight against Satan you've got to use the Word of God.

Don't ever think that Satan doesn't know the Word of God, because he quotes it. We need to constantly put on the Word of God as part of our lifestyle.

Hebrews 4:12: “For **the Word of God is living and powerful...** [*'dunamis'—dynamite*] ...and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, and of both *the joints* and *the marrow...* [*the life of our being*] ...and *is* able to discern *the thoughts* and intents of *the heart.*” When we're studying, God is looking at us:

- at our heart
- where we're going
- knows what we're all about

3. Through the ministry

I take this as a personal command from God, 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)—teach it to people. Isa. 59 says to 'spare not, lift up your voice'; that's what we are to do.

“...Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine” (v 2).

I'm not only responsible for teaching; I'm accountable. We talked about that before. You can be responsible for something, but you're going to be accountable for it, too. That gets into a point that you

really have to be careful.

Verse 3: "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." What satisfies a person? *They always have itching ears to try to point something else out! We want something new.*

Verse 4: "And they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths. But *as for you*, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the work of an evangelist*; fully carry out your ministry" (vs 4-5). That's what God wants us to do. Through that we can learn the Word of God.

Luke 9:1: "Then He called His twelve disciples together *and* gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases; and He sent them to **proclaim** the Kingdom of God... [to teach] ...and to heal those who were sick" (vs 1-2). That's what God did. He didn't do it all Himself. I hear from people who say, 'God always works through only one man.' How many disciples were there?

Luke 10:1: "Now, after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others... [Now how many do we have? 82!] ...and sent them two-by-two before His face, into every city and place where He Himself was about to come. And so, He said to them, 'The harvest *is* indeed great...'" (vs 1-2).

He didn't choose one man to go out and do a job. If you hear that, is that the Truth of God? *Absolutely not!*

Did they have a Council of Elders in the book of Acts? *Yes!* Why would they come together if there were only one? Was John a teacher? Was Peter a teacher? Was Paul a teacher? It goes on and on. God works through *teachers*, not just one. 'Iron sharpens iron.' When I go to a ministerial conference I come back loaded, just loaded with:

- thoughts
- ideas
- things that I'm not doing right
- things I need to change
- things I should be doing

My responsibility, because I'm accountable for that responsibility. Every one of us are going to be held accountable for our responsibility. Where is that going to lead us in the Kingdom of God, I have no idea. But if we teach false doctrine we're going to be corrected by God; somewhere, somehow, God's going to correct us. He has to!

Matthew 28:18 is a Scripture that has been

taken far out of context: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [from God the Father] ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; **teaching them**... [that's our duty] ...to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.' Amen" (vs 18-20).

Some churches have taken this out of context and said, 'The only thing we need to do is go out to the world.' **NO!** You have to maintain your flock. If we give the analogy that we're sheep, do we need food? *Absolutely!* Do we need a nice combing once in a while? In other words, we need to be taken care of and the brethren need to be taken care of. You can't just pass it by and say 'you're on your own and I'm going to go out and get some new people.' It doesn't work that way.

The greatest work, as we covered in the beginning, was the work that God can do within you. Yes, we have a commission to do. Radio is out; sorry, it's done! Nobody will turn the radio to a religious station; not very many anyway. When the Church was on television there were how many channels? *8-12!* But that, today, is done! Today there are over 400 channels that you can watch. Some of the Churches of God, I'm sorry to say, are on at 5 o'clock in the morning. Who is awake at 5 o'clock in the morning? So, why would you spend that kind of money?

Today it is probably the Internet. That could be a very bad tool for a lot of people, but with the right things, this could be an invaluable tool. What does it cost us to have the Internet? *Very little!* If you want to get up at 2 o'clock in the morning it's there. If you're on the other side of the world, then it's night over there, it's day over here—*it's there!*

- you can have all the teachers
- you can have everything that needs to be done
- you can be taught directly by God
- you can be taught by His Holy Spirit
- you can be taught through the ministry

However, brethren, *we need to have the desire* to be taught. Without that then where are we? *and* What do we have?

Psa. 86 better be a part of our prayer. Prayer and fasting are the greatest tools to have God teach us, because it's *our desire* to be taught. I want to learn! Have you ever thought of just asking God to help you to *think*? Not just spiritually, but to get things right in your head? *Help me to think, and think logically and properly!*

Psalm 86:10: "For You are great and do wonderful things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your Truth; unite my heart to fear Your name" (vs 10-11).

- that's a real desire to want to learn
- that's a real desire to want to be here
- that's a real desire that I have within me
 - ✓ I want to know the Word of God
 - ✓ I want to live a life
 - ✓ I want to be happy
 - ✓ I want to have a few laughs

There's nothing wrong with that. I would rather be up here than dragging myself all time saying, 'Oh, I've got to get up and do Bible study. I've got to pray.' Right away the attitude says *forget it!* Whatever you do, whatever you did, however you act to God, He wants it from the heart.

- It's not easy to get up every morning to do that.
- It's not easy to train yourself to get out of bed in the morning.

Some mornings it's pouring rain and I just want to pull the covers up closer and say, 'Oh, I hope the people don't miss me in Toronto.' *NO!* You have to get up and do what you have to do. This is most important; Christ said, 'I've come to do the will of the Father.' Psalm 143:10: "**Teach me to do Your will...**" What is God's will?

- to be happy
- to be in the Kingdom of God
- to become one of His children

That's all God wants. In a way this is almost too simple, because it's called *the simplicity of Christ!* But we complicate it so badly. The whole thing that God said was: **Obey My voice!** That's all! Very simple thing to follow and do.

"...for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground of uprightness" (v 10). Brethren, if we do all of these things, we must be careful to keep it in the right and proper perspective at all times. This really sums it up:

2-John 8: "Watch out for yourselves 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. *But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not say to him, 'Welcome!'" (vs 8-10). We don't have to be rude.

When certain people knock on my door, I just say, 'I'm sorry, you don't believe in what I do.' *Oh, tell us!* 'No, you won't listen! I've been there and done that.' *Oh, yes, we will listen!* 'No! You won't listen! I've had you in my house before, so we

won't do this anymore.'

Verse 11: "For anyone who says, 'Welcome!' to him is partaking in his evil works. I have many things to write, but I do not wish to *convey these things to you* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face in order that our joy may be *completely* full" (vs 11-12).

- Here's my purpose for traveling
- Here's my purpose for meeting people

We can come face to face and enjoy the joy together, and to be at peace, to learn to love one another with the help of God and to be truly in God's corner, as we all are.

Verse 13: "The children of your chosen sister salute you. Amen."

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 10:1-11, 24-27
- 2) John 6:28-29
- 3) Isaiah 54:13
- 4) Jeremiah 31:33
- 5) Hebrews 10:16
- 6) Isaiah 28:9-13
- 7) Psalm 32:8-9
- 8) Psalm 71:17-18
- 9) Psalm 119:102
- 10) Micah 4:1-2
- 11) John 6:45
- 12) John 14:17
- 13) Acts 2:37
- 14) John 14:26
- 15) John 15:26
- 16) John 16:13
- 17) 2 Timothy 2:15-16
- 18) Proverbs 15:28
- 19) Isaiah 34:16
- 20) Ephesians 6:17
- 21) Hebrews 4:12
- 22) 2 Timothy 4:1-5
- 23) Luke 9:1-2
- 24) Luke 10:1-2
- 25) Matthew 28:18-20
- 26) Psalm 86:10-11
- 27) Psalm 143:10
- 28) 2 John 8-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 3
- Isaiah 59

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *I AM that I AM*
- From *The Holy Bible in It's Original Order*: Appendix K: Exegesis for the Translation of the Phrase "the Holy Spirit"

WS:bo
Transcribed:4-15-15

A Preacher Preaches to Himself

Fred R. Coulter

There's a very important principle that Paul wrote of in Rom. 2. Then we'll look at some other important things that Jesus said. Every minister, teacher or elder has got to ask: Why does he do what he does? Every teacher elder or minister—we'll just say teacher from now on—must also learn and be taught of the Word of God. He also must realize not to make the mistake of lifting himself above the brethren. *The brethren are God's property.*

- God called you
- God is dealing in your life

Paul is talking to the Jews in Rom. 2, and let's apply this to Christians, Christian teachers.

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. **You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?....**" (vs 17-21).

I think there is a crisis within the ministers and teachers in the Church of God that every man is going to have to address his own. It's not for me to go point the finger at anyone unless they are influencing brethren to the point of false doctrine or whatever.

Then they need to, as Paul says, 'Mark those who cause division.' That doesn't mean that you disfellowship them. It means that *you pay attention to them, and that you know who they are.*

"...do you not teach yourself also? 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? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written" (vs 21-24).

And through the dirty deeds of the ministries of the Churches of God, the Word of God is blasphemed by those who should be teaching the way of God.

We are to teach the way to eternal life. We are to teach the way that the brethren can have—and if a minister doesn't have it he can't teach the brethren—a relationship with God, to teach the

brethren to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and being.

We're not to think of men above what they ought to be thought, and we can use a slogan that Ronald Reagan used with Mikhail Gorbachev: *trust but verify!* The Bible says, '*Trust no man!*'

Let's look at another principle, which is true, concerning what God desires in teaching. This is the goal.

- Who is the great Teacher?
- Is it not Jesus Christ?
- Are we not to come to have the mind of Christ?
- Isn't that why we do what we do? *Yes!*
- How do you come to have the mind of Christ? *With God's Spirit by growing and overcoming!*

Jesus explained it this way, Matthew 10:24: "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his master...." (vs 24-25). That's the whole goal of everything; that we become as the great Teacher Jesus Christ.

Anyone who is teaching the Word of God should *teach the Word of God!* I ring a cowbell when I give my own ideas so that you know it's not dogma. Another thing for anyone who is teaching, remember this:

1. there is nothing better than the Word of God
2. the ideas of men cannot bring eternal life, even if they are ministers of God.

Verse 25: "It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his master..." That's what God wants. If we all yield to God He's going to elevate us in knowledge, understanding, spirituality and the relationship with Him. Not only will we grow in grace and knowledge:

- we will grow in understanding of repentance
- we will grow in understanding of human nature
- we will begin to understand and see even how *we*—and I include *me*—need to be on guard that we don't deceive ourselves

Let's see what else Jesus taught. It's part of what we go through with the Passover Ceremony.

This is very, very important: When you're dealing with the Word of God and you speak the Word of God, or teach the Word of God, you're speaking on God's behalf, which means that *you better get it right*.

John 13:12—this is for foot-washing, the very reason why He did it: “Therefore, when He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, *and* had sat down again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and you speak rightly, because I am. Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also are duty-bound to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, *to show* that you also should do exactly as I have done to you. Truly, truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, nor a messenger greater than he who sent him” (vs 12-16).

Very self-explanatory! Remember the prophet who was sent out of Judah to Bethel to prophesy against Jeroboam at the altar. God told him, ‘You go! You do not eat; you do not drink. You go one way and you come back another way.’ He did that. The altar cracked and fell apart because of his prophecy. The arm of Jeroboam shriveled up and then he pleaded with the prophet that it would unshriveled and it came back.

On his way back, there was a false prophet who said, ‘I am a prophet of the Lord, and the Lord has told me to come in and eat and drink with me.’ But you see, that directly contradicted the words of God that were told to him directly. So, he went and ate and drank with him and was killed by the lion with the donkey standing by him, and the lion didn't eat him.

The message with that is, you follow what God tells you, and your ideas—or someone else's ideas—really don't count. We can learn from that.

Jesus goes on saying, v 17: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of you all; *for* I know whom I have chosen, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’ I am telling you at this time, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you may believe that I AM” (vs 17-19).

Whenever you read and study the Bible *know it is the Word of God* inspired, God breathed. That's how we need to take it. It doesn't mean that you're going to understand it all. I don't understand it all. No human being is going to understand it all, because it's all inspired by the mind of God.

Verse 20: “**Truly, truly I tell you, the one who receives whomever I send is receiving Me; and the one who receives Me is receiving Him**

Who sent Me.” God has chosen to use human beings. He expects those whom He uses to teach and preach exactly what He inspired to be written, and not take unto themselves things that they ought not do.

We're going to look at some things that will help get us grounded. Go through all 1st and 2nd Timothy and read and study it and apply it to yourself, because what are you going to be in the Kingdom of God? *You're going to be a teacher of some sort!* The truth of it is, if we have the attitude of Paul, that Paul was admonishing Timothy, we're not going to get lifted up in vanity, we're not going to go down the road proclaiming things and demanding this, that and the other.

2-Timothy 1:3: “I am grateful to God—Whom I have been serving from *the days of my* forefathers with a pure conscience—because I never fail to remember you in my supplications night and day. *As* I recall your tears, *I am* longing to see you, so that I may be filled with joy; when I remember the **unfeigned** faith...” (vs 3-5)—unpretentious, true, believing.

The worst thing that a teacher can do is to take advantage of believing brethren to leverage and merchandize to themselves. *Faith demands obedience!* Your faith is reflected in your actions, and your actions reflect your faith. It's just like an automatic circle.

We are saved by grace through faith. I even had a Sunday-keeping minister up in Alaska call me when he got some of our books. He has a ministry that he has on helping people overcoming health problems and so forth. He finally got the point that Protestantism teaches a lawless grace and that's what's the matter with churches today.

How far he'll come along I don't know; we'll just have to wait and see. But nevertheless, he understood *we are saved by grace through faith!* It is that faith that requires action:

“...*that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands” (vs 5-6).

- God's Spirit
- God's Way
- God's Word

Brethren, we're living in a time when we have *all of God's Word!* How zealous ought we to be? How passionate should we be?

It's wasn't until William Tyndale that the Word of God in the whole form—Old and New Testaments—was available to mankind the way it is

now. It was locked up in one of those cupboards on the altar of a Roman Catholic Church. Only the priests could read it.

Verse 7: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.” Not given over to weird, wild ideas in prophecy and how important that a person is. The only importance of a minister or elder is to properly feed the sheep of God; that’s what Jesus told Peter.

- if you love Me, feed My sheep
- if you love Me, feed My lambs
- if you love Me, feed My sheep

God is interested in everyone growing to the utmost knowledge, character and spirituality as possible. We had 93-year-old Martha Anderson pass and her daughter said that her mother, until the last two weeks, was still learning.

Even if your memory is kind of failing because the old body is kind of sagging and getting a little rusty and creaky, and all that sort of thing, it’s still there. Remember this: The older you get and the weaker you become, ***the more that God loves you and will not abandon you!*** People will, *but God won’t!* You need to have that *sound mindedness*.

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—...” (vs 8-9)—everyone that God calls! How does that happen? It’s really quite a thing.

{note sermon: *Spirit of God, Spirit of Man, Seven Spirits of God #s 1-2*}

God is active in this world and He’s got His seven eyes, which are before the throne of God, and they are the ones who go throughout the earth seeking those who are seeking God. God is interested, and even people that He is not calling to salvation, if they pray to Jesus and ask for help and forgiveness of sin, He will for that instant. Now, if they respond and come further, then God’s Spirit will be *with* them.

When that happens the Father begins to draw them, as long as they respond to God. So, God is involved in the lives of people before any minister ever meets them anywhere and says, ‘I’d like to talk to you about baptism.’

God is involved in every one of our lives. If all the brethren all at one time all got on their knees and all prayed to God at the same instant of time, around the world, be it day or night, God could hear and answer every one of those prayers individually, because He has the power to do it.

It’s “...a Holy calling—not according to our works... [or who or what you are] ...but according to His own purpose and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time” (v 9). That ought to humble every one of us. God had His plan *before* the ages of time! He has called us and brought us into that. That’s a marvelous thing! That’s something!

Verse 13: “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...**” (vs 13-14). That was one of the words that was used of God telling Adam to dress and keep the garden.

Verse 14: Guard the good thing that was committed *to you* by *the* Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us” (v 14). You have to *guard!* There are a lot of people out there trying to steal crowns. If it’s not according to *this Word* don’t believe it.

Let’s see something on how we need to view what we do. There are many Scriptures that you can tie in with it, but I’ll let you do that. 1-Tim. tells us an awful lot. This tells us

- how Paul thought
- how we need to think
- how we need to respond

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.” There are going to be troubles in the Church, so Paul tells us how to handle them.

Verse 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.*” Everything in the Bible is based on ***prove all things and hold fast to what is good!*** Besides, if you are preaching the Truth:

- Why would you want to preach anything else?
- What good would that do any minister, or anyone who is hearing it? *No good!*

But they were doing it. Even some saying that the resurrection is passed!

Verse 4: “Nor to pay attention to myths... [Christmas, Easter, New Years, etc.] ...and endless genealogies, which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith. Now, the purpose of the commandment... [of Jesus Christ (v 1)] **...is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith**” (vs 4-5). That’s the whole thing, brethren! That’s it in a nutshell.

You might know some brethren who are suffering from things that are being taught that are

not correct, and their lives are in an upheaval. The worst trauma to suffer—and you and I know it—is that you see sin in the Church of God in high places, and low places; especially in the ministry. You find out that the truth of the matter is devastating! It was for me! It was for you!

In cases like that, sometimes you're even forced to stand alone and you don't know if anyone else in the world is going to stand with you or not. But it "...is love out a pure heart..." and having that relationship with God.

Everyday you go to God and pray to the Father and Jesus Christ. You understand the magnitude and greatness of what They are doing. Think in your mind of all the ages past, and the ones that God has dealt with. Think about the fantastic blessing of having the Word of God, having the peace to study it, live by it, to preach it, which others have given their lives for.

Understand this: *99% of all of those who are going to be in the first resurrection did not understand prophecy as we do today!* Which tells us to keep prophecy in perspective.

- *Loving God* is more important!
- *Believing in hope* is more important!
- *Walking in faith* is more important!
- *Loving each other* is more important!

That's the whole purpose!

Verse 6: "From which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling; 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, 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 kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing **that is opposed to sound doctrine**; according to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted" (vs 6-11).

The stewardship of God, of the Word of God! We're all stewards of it, every one of us.

Verse 12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry." You didn't get there because you're some big deal! If you got there because of politics, you'd better repent. Most of those who got there because of politics are no longer ministers, because God got rid of them!

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. 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).

You look at the world today and in the churches, the priests are halfway between the people and God! When you read *The Tribute to William Tyndale* (cbcg.org) I have quotes by the popes who say of themselves that they are 'above everyone and I am God.'

A minister is to serve the people, teach the brethren, and that's what it has to be for, and this is the attitude that we need to have for it. Paul says that he was the 'chief sinner.' I have my faults and sins, and I have my difficulties that I struggle with, just like you do.

- How can I help you overcome unless I'm overcoming?
- How can I give you encouragement unless God encourages me?

Everything that a minister does is to serve the brethren; that's what it's for.

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. Now to the King of eternity, *the* incorruptible, invisible, *and* only wise God, *be* honor and glory into the ages of eternity. Amen." (vs 16-17). This is what God has called us to. Isn't that marvelous? Notice what Paul follows up with:

Verse 18: "**This charge**... [here's what God charges every minister to do] ...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, 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 18-20).

There's a time to name names; when it comes to a point of effecting the brethren.

THE CHARGE:

There are ten specific charges:

1-2) 1-Timothy 1:3, 18 (just read)

3) 1-Timothy 5:7: "Now these things command... [or charge] ...that they may be blameless."

4) v 21, a charge to all elders: "**I charge**

you... [notice the severity of this charge]: ...**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”

That’s quite a charge! *No politics! No favorites!* If God loves them—which He does—you love them, too. If God forebears and helps them overcome their sins, you do, too.

5) 1-Timothy 6:13: “**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...” (vs 13-14)—which goes back to 1-Tim. 1. So, this whole book of 1-Timothy is *a command from God, through Paul, to every elder in the Church of God down through time!*

6) Verse 14: “That you **keep this commandment [charge]** without fault *and* without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

7) Verse 17: “**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 17-19).

8) 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....” (vs 20-21).

9) 2-Timothy 2:14: “See that *they* remain mindful of these things, earnestly **charging them in the sight of the Lord**...” Notice how many times Paul says,

- before God
- before the Father
- before the Son
- in the sight of the Lord

It’s a sacred duty and responsibility.

“...not to argue over words that are not profitable in any way, *but which lead to the* subverting of those who hear. Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth” (vs 14-15). That’s how every ministry needs to be conducted. That’s how we need to study the Bible.

10) 2-Timothy 4:1: “**I charge you,**

therefore, in the sight of God...” I tell you what, if you really want to get the impact of this, and if what I’m saying reaches out beyond those in this audience—which it will—and you are teacher, let me suggest that you do something, which I do with the Bible: **get on your knees before God, open up 1st-2nd Tim. and Titus and you read it and pray over it!** When you read the charges, especially pray about those because **this is a direct command from God to you and to me!** “**I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God**...” Notice the power with which Paul backs up this charge,

“...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 Word of God!* How does the Gospel of John start out?

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” You preach the Word of God. You preach about the life of Christ. You teach them the Word of God. Don’t get up and quote a Scripture and tell nice stories. We need the Word of God so that we can grow in grace and knowledge. Nice stories may tickle the emotions, but it doesn’t edify the Spirit to action,

2-Timothy 4:1: “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).

One of the first signs that you can see when false doctrine is about ready to be introduced is *doctrine divides and love unites!* Have you heard that? **Doctrine is meant to divide Truth from error** “...with all patience and doctrine.”

Let’s come back to the word *convict*, 2-Timothy 3:15: “And that from a child you have known the Holy Writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus.” Do word studies with different Scriptures, and you will see the beauty of the unity of Scripture—Old Testament and New Testament.

In proofreading the book of Psalms, I saw that I had to outline that and compare all of it with the New Testament. There is so much New Testament doctrine in the book of Psalms. You need both the Old and New Testaments.

- Anyone who says that you don’t need to read the Old Testament, *false prophet!*
- Anyone who says that everything in the Old Testament has been fulfilled, *false prophet!*
- Anyone who says that the Law of God has been done away, *false prophet!*

Can you imagine the Lawgiver getting rid of it for the sake of people who want to sin?

Verse 16: “**All Scripture**...” Every bit, every part, *everything*; even those boring chronologies that give historical substance to the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament actually ends with the books of Chronicles and the chronology in 1-Chron. is picked up on the very next book in the Bible, the book of Matthew. It starts out with the chronology of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of David and ties it together.

“All Scripture *is* God-breathed...” They are the words of God. Do you want to know what God tells you? *It's all here!* It's already here.

“...and *is* profitable for doctrine... [teaching] ...**for conviction**...” (v 16).

(go to the next track)

Verse 16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, **for conviction**, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work” (vs 16-17)—the work of serving the brethren.

CONVICTION:

You *know* that you know, that you *know* it is true!

How can you convict anyone else if you yourself are not convicted? That comes through the Spirit of God, through the things that Paul wrote to Timothy: “...**for conviction**, for correction...” Just like we read earlier:

- *You who teach*, don't you teach yourself?
- *You who correct*, don't you correct yourself?
- *You who instruct others in righteousness*, do you not instruct yourself in righteousness?

This is so important because God wants all of us to have the conviction of Truth unto death. Not that I'm saying that we're all going to become martyrs, we're not, but some of us will. Even at that, you have to have the conviction that:

- God is right
- His way is right
- His Word is true
- His laws are good
- His way is perfect

And that's why He has called us!

2-Timothy 4:3: “For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine...” This runs in cycles all the way down through history.

Remember:

- deception by incrementalism
- deception by tradition

“...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 3-4). We've seen that!

I remember one minister, years ago, said: ‘I don't know why the books of 1st-2nd Corinthians are in the New Testament, that doesn't apply to us today.’ Whoa! Lo and behold, we *are* the Church of Corinth today more than anything else. Every problem there is, is ripe within the Churches of God.

A lot of it comes because they don't have conviction and the love of God the way that they ought to. So, let's go to what Jesus said concerning loving each other. Here's what we need to concentrate on.

Note our sermon series on *Love*, and the first sermon is *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You*. When everything else fails—men, people, relatives, job, neighbors, husband/wives—remember that God loves you! That's why you take it to him in prayer, *He'll work it out!* It may not work out the way you desire, but He's going to work it out for the best, because ‘***all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.***’ Put it all in God's hands!

John 15:1: “I am 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, in order that it may bear more fruit” (vs 1-2). The fruit in our lives is:

- love
- joy
- peace
- longsuffering
- gentleness
- goodness
- kindness
- meekness
- self-control

and

- loving the brethren
- Does God love us in spite of our faults? *Yes, He does!*
- Can we love each other in spite of our faults, and forbear? *Yes, we can!*

Verse 3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me...” (vs

3-4). This is where our Christian life really functions. It doesn't function coming to a church meeting. It doesn't function because you belong to an organization. ***Your life functions because you dwell in Christ!***

The greatest grace that God can give you in this life is *His Spirit*. The Spirit of God the Father is the begetter of eternal life, and the Spirit of Christ to develop the mind of Christ. That's why Christ says, 'If you love Me then WE—My Father and I—will come and make Our abode with you'—that is dwell in you. That's why we're brethren of Christ. He's called:

- all of us who are the weak of the world
- all of us have problems
- all of us have difficulties

But He still loves us! *Yes, He does!* It's right here:

Verse 4: "Dwell in Me, and I 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." Have you not seen those who have left the vine were cutoff from the vine, and when they never came back they were grafted in again. That's why we have the sermon: *Your Second Calling*.

As long as there's life, there's hope! Even though there are those who have been cutoff because they have quit dwelling in Christ temporarily, they can be grafted back in if they repent and come to God. ***As long as there's life, there's hope!*** Never forget that!

When you get down low and you have a problem that's overwhelming—and we're all going to have problems that are overwhelming; that's what life is about; we live in an evil world, so when we live righteously there are going to be problems and difficulties—

- don't let your emotions get the best of you
- don't let it take you down and become depressed

Obviously, you're not going to be joyful, but ***let God lift you up!*** Get a perspective on what the problem is. Put it in God's hands and let Him work it out.

- Is God greater than you?
- Is God greater than me?
- Can He work it out?
- *Yes!*

Verse 5: "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. ***If...***" (vs 5-7).

Men like to put the conditions upon God, but there are no conditions on God because He is perfect. ***The conditions are upon us!***

Verse 7: "***If*** you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." Think about that in relationship to the New Covenant, where the laws and commandments are written and inscribed in our heart and mind. The words of Christ are dwelling/living in you and me, that it's a part of our very being, a part of the way that we think, act, talk and breathe.

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). Provided you are not asking for your lusts. ***It's God's will!***

Verse 8: In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples."

Grasp this next section because this is very important. This will carry you through everything. That's why the love of God is called *the greatest*.

Verse 9: "***As the Father has loved Me...***" Can there be any more perfect love than the love that the Father and Christ had for each other? ***No!***

"...I also have loved you..."

- Jesus Christ loves you!
- He is in you!
- He has called you!
- He is dealing with you!
- He wants you to be in His kingdom!

Never forget that! Do not let any trial or difficulty come to where you doubt God!

"...live in My love" (v 9). We can look at it this way: We are to:

- ***walk in faith***
- ***believe in hope***
- ***live in love***

The love of God; ***"...live in My love."***

Verse 10: ***If*** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love..." Provided you are keeping the commandments in the *spirit of the Law* with

- understanding
- mercy
- kindness
- forgiveness

That you do not use the Law to 'beat' other people over the head because they don't understand it.

"...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full" (vs 10-11).

Not that you're going to be exuberant with happiness and bubbling over with joy every minute. It means that in the lowest part of the depression of your trial that you are going through that you *know* that God loves you in spite of everything. This gives you relief and joy from the stress and lifts you up.

Verse 12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you." Brethren, that's what needs to be with the Church of God, *loving each other as Christ has loved us!* Very important.

Let me tell you another thing, *love is work!* You have to work at it, and love helps you to overcome the carnality and selfishness of the self. When things don't work out the way you think, then you start treating other people in a mean and nasty and unloving way by getting your own carnal way.

Loving each other means at all times, under all circumstances, in every difficulty and trial. That's a lot of work! How far does it go?

Verse 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 13-14).

Again remember that when all else fails, God loves you and that you are a friend of God. Also remember the other side of the coin, all the rest of the brethren are also friends of God, too. Do you want God mad at you because you offend a friend of God? *Think on that! NO!* That's not to say that we accept false doctrine. That's not to say that we fall for willy-nilly myths, fairytales and things like that. NO! That's another subject.

But that we truly love each other. I think that part of the problem that we experience in being scattered and alone is that when we get together that we really love one another because there are not too many occasions when we can get together.

- love each other
- pray for each other
- think of each other'
- call each other

because we are the friends of God the Father and Jesus Christ!

There is no one else that can do any more for you than God the Father and Jesus Christ. I don't how you felt when you got a job and the boss said that you did a good job. Remember this: *If you're on God's side, you have the Sovereign of the universe and His Son as your friend:*

- to *fight* for you
- to *bless* you
- to *guide* you

- to *strengthen* you

Can't get any higher than that! No one can break that bond.

Philippians 1:2: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God on every remembrance of you, always making supplication with joy in my every prayer for you all, for your fellowship in the Gospel from *the* first day until now" (vs 2-5).

- whenever you get down
- whenever you get low
- whenever you're going through a trial

Remember v 6: "**Being confident...** [having conviction] **...of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**"

- Is that a promise? *Yes!*
- Is that a guarantee? *Yes!*

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections 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)—attaining to eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 3: "*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 3-5). That's what has to happen.

Look what He gave up to save His creation. *Everything!* Verse 6: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself..." (vs 6-7). Gave up His glory! Gave up almost all of His Divinity! He kept just enough of His Divinity so He could be God manifested in the flesh.

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men..." That's why we were created after the image of God in the first place, so that He could do this.

"...and took the form of a servant... ['doulos,' which means *slave*] ...and being found in *the* manner of man..." (vs 7-8). He had to breathe, and eat, sleep. He sweat, stunk, perspired and had all the bodily functions of a human being. For God to do that, to humble Himself to do that, is marvelous! Think about how absolutely ludicrous it is for a man to exalt himself over the brethren and 'what a great thing he is.' Or for the pope to say, 'what can be said of me when I'm God.' The very antithesis of Christ.

“...He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross” (v 8). What did He say of Himself? *I lay My life down! No one takes it from Me! I have authority to receive it back, for the Father gave Me this commandment!*

He did it because He loves you, He loves the world, He’s going to save the world in His time, according to His plan. But He’s not going to do it without all the saints and the first resurrection to take care of it. That’s a fantastic thing to look forward to!

Verse 9: “Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father” (vs 9-11).

That’s the completion of all God’s plan! You can read in Rev. 5 that the angels were singing, and every creature on earth was saying, ‘Worthy is the Lamb of glory, power, riches and honor.’ All are going to bow!

Verse 12: “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God... [the great Sovereign of the universe and His Son Jesus Christ] ...Who works in you both to will... [to give you the desire] ...and to do... [the energizing of His Spirit] ...according to *His* good pleasure. Do all things without complaints and disputes; so that you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in *the* world, holding forth the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain” (vs 12-16).

A preacher to himself!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 2:17-25
- 2) John 13:12-20
- 3) 2-Timothy 1:3-9, 13-14
- 4) 1-Timothy 1:1-20
- 5) 1-Timothy 5:7, 21
- 6) 1-Timothy 6:13-14, 17-21
- 7) 2-Timothy 2:14-15
- 8) 2-Timothy 4:1-2
- 9) John 1:1
- 10) 2-Timothy 4:1-2
- 11) 2-Timothy 3:15-17
- 12) 2-Timothy 4:3-4

- 13) John 15:1-14
- 14) Philippians 1:2-6
- 15) Philippians 2:1-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-2 Chronicles
- 1-2 Corinthians
- Revelation 5

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- ✓ *Spirit of God, Spirit of Man, Seven Spirits of God #s 1-2*
- ✓ *Love Series (#1—Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You)*

Sermon: *Your Second Calling.*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 4-15-15

Binding and Loosing Respect for the Ministry

Fred R. Coulter & Wayne Stenhouse

We're going to talk about binding and loosing. Matt. 16:19 is the very foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. No one today is challenging it, everybody just accepts it. In every Mass they have this lie repeated again and again.

Matthew 16:19: "And 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."

Here is what it is based upon the Greek, and this is to Peter. Put that together with the sermon on *what were the binding and loosing powers of Peter*. {Note study paper: "*Binding*" and "*Loosing*" in the *New Testament* (cbcg.org)}

When it comes to the brethren, and there is an agreement between the brethren (Matt. 18:18) it's exactly the same thing, exactly the same verbs in the Greek that are used only to the second person in Matt. 18, it's to the third person.

Matthew 18:18: "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth **will have already been bound** in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on the earth **will have already been loosed** in heaven."

When brethren cannot come to an agreement, even among themselves, on an issue that they may have—whether a personal problem, a financial problem or whatever—and come to a decision separate from what is in the Scriptures. That's important to understand.

Rome's Challenge to the Protestants—and their challenge was over 100 years ago—is this: *You either quit being Protestants and become Catholic, or become Seventh-Day Adventists and keep the Sabbath!* Now they have changed their tune and it's going to hook them in. Now they are saying that Sunday is 'rooted in the Sabbath commandment.' That's now going to help bring the Protestants along because they agree with the Catholics^[transcriber's correction], because that's what they say. Having this follow Rome's Challenge to the Protestant fits just perfect:

"Binding" and "Loosing" in the New Testament (cbcg.org)

Do Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 give churches the authority to make decisions contrary to the Laws of God?

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Jesus gave to the apostle Peter and his future successors the powers of binding and loosing so that whatever they would bind or loose on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. They further contend that this authority grants an infallible pope the power to bind and loose contrary to the Word of God—thus making the Word of God void—and that this authority was given to Peter by Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18.

Let's think about that for just a minute. If you have an infallible pope who is able to make decisions on doctrine and Scripture, what does that say? *He's claiming he's God!* Everybody has missed it all these years: *They are saying that God is fallible!* 'If God made a mistake in the Scriptures—which He didn't—and we have to change it with an infallible pope, therefore, God is fallible.' That's even more blasphemous when you understand it.

However, an exegetical study of the Greek does not support such claims. In *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, William D. Mounce gives a clear and insightful explanation of the underlying Greek text showing that what Jesus taught is entirely different from what many religious authorities assume, teach and practice. He writes, "In some translations of Matthew [16:19 and] 18:18, it sounds like Jesus promised his disciples that whatever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatever they loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven. In other words, they had the power to bind and loose, and Heaven (i.e. God) would simply back up their decrees.

What do you have? *Man commanding God what to do!* Thus Job won the argument against God! I say that rather facetiously, because Job did NOT win the argument with God; *he lost the argument!* That's why it's so important that the things we have here—in the *Holy Bible in Its Original Order*—it's imperative that we have the chapters in the beginning and the appendices. ***Please encourage the brethren to read them through!*** If you need to, take them as Bible studies so that brethren can go through them. Because what the brethren need to have in grounding in the Truth, they need to understand the

Word of God *is true!* The Word of God is preserved in the original *is infallible!* We don't need a pope!

We're not to add to; we're not to take away from. Paul commanded Timothy: *Preach the Word!* This is what we are to do, and this is what the brethren are to follow. We're not above the Word of God, they're not above the Word of God. We don't need a great hierarchy to tell us what to do.

- We need the Word of God to tell us what to do.
- We need the Spirit of God to lead us.

That's how God wants us to deal with the Word of God and with the brethren. That way we're not creating a hierarchy and exalting ourselves above anybody. We all have to be subject to the Word of God.

But the matter is not quite so simple; the actions described in heaven are future perfect passives—which could be translated 'will have already been bound in heaven...will have already been loosed in heaven.' In other words, the heavenly decree confirming the earthly one is based on a prior verdict [God had already made—"Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in the heavens" (Psa. 119:89).]

"This is the language of the law court. Jewish legal issues were normally decided in Jesus' day by elders in the synagogue community (later by rabbis). Many Jewish people believed that the authority of Heaven stood behind the earthly judges when they decided cases based on a correct understanding of God's law. (This process came to be called "binding and loosing.") Jesus' contemporaries often envisioned God's justice in terms of a heavenly court; by obeying God's laws, the earthly court simply ratified the decrees of the heavenly court" (p. 121).

This gives us greater understanding of how we need to serve the brethren, and how the brethren need to view the Scriptures. If everyone understood this, and all the brethren understood this, then men would not rise up desiring to be teachers of the Law and try to affirm something of which they know nothing about.

Jesus **did not** give His apostles and disciples the authority to make binding decisions regarding anything on earth that had not already been decreed in heaven.

Let's look at a couple of these things about binding and loosing and understand. What does it say in Gen. 3:15? *That's the first prophecy of the*

Messiah right after the first sin! So, it was *already decreed* in the Word of God that there was going to be a Messiah to come, by the One Who was going to be the Messiah.

What do we have in Rev. 13:8? *The Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world!* So, the decision was already made in heaven before Christ came. It's the same way with *bind and loosing*.

Look how many problems and difficulties and troubles that ministers have caused upon people in the world and the Church because they *presume* to do something contrary to the Word of God. In many cases they don't even know the Word of God.

Jesus specifically taught that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (Matt. 5:17)....

Concerning the Law and the Prophets He said that 'before one jot or tittle pass away, My words shall not pass away.' That's important. This is going to help the brethren with a lot of issues.

...Therefore, whatever is bound or loosed cannot be contrary to the laws and commandments of God, the revelation of the prophets or the teachings of Jesus Christ. Christ **did not** give His apostles the authority to loose any of the Ten Commandments or any of God's laws that are not connected with the priesthood and Temple ritual. However, Jesus **did** give His apostles the authority to loose man-made religious **traditions** of the Jews...

And we find that by His very words. What is the warning concerning the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians: *Beware of the leaven of them, because that's their doctrine!*

Then we come to Acts 10:28 where Peter was led by God through this vision to go with them to Cornelius' house. What was the lesson that he learned? *That he should call no man common or unclean*, which was a Jewish traditional law. That loosed that law! In order for God to demonstrate that He was going to give the Holy Spirit to uncircumcised Gentiles, He poured out the Holy Spirit upon them *before* they were baptized. Otherwise, Peter would never have accepted it. Those in Jerusalem of the circumcision party would have been beside themselves if it hadn't been done that way.

What God was doing was showing that it was already decreed in heaven, that the uncircumcised Gentiles will be saved, and that is confirmed in the prophecies in Isa. 56 concerning the Sabbath.

...(Mark 7:1-13; Acts 10:28) as well as pagan religious traditions (I Pet. 1:18; Acts 14:8-18). New Testament teachings that were foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament and were “bound” or decreed in heaven before Jesus Christ came in the flesh are as follows: to love the Lord God with all one’s heart, soul and might (Deut. 6:4-6; Matt. 22:37-40); for Jesus to magnify the Law and make it glorious (Isa. 52:14; Matt. 5-7); for Christ to die for the sins of the world (Psa. 22; Isa. 53; John 1:36; Rev. 13:8); forgiveness of sin, upon repentance, without temple animal sacrifices (Psa. 32:1-2; 51:1-17; Rom. 3:20-24; Heb. 10:1-17); circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; Rom. 2:28-29; Col. 2:2-13); Sabbath and holy day keeping for uncircumcised Gentiles (Isa. 56:1-6), taught by Paul (Acts 13:42-44; Heb. 4:9; I Cor. 5:8); and many others.

There we have it. Do you know what they’re saying in some of these ‘purpose driven’ churches today? *You don’t even have to repent! Just believe in Jesus! Repentance and baptism was for the Jews!* Well then, why did Paul baptize Gentiles?

When I was traveling, across the aisle, one seat up, there was a man reading his Bible. He was reading it all during the trip. So, I had a New Testament there that I hadn’t marked up, so I thought I would just give him one. I said, ‘How would you like to have a new translation of the New Testament?’ *Oh, that would be great.* So, I gave it to him. About three weeks later I received in the mail the torn off cover of the New Testament: *heresy, baptism; heresy, laying on of hands; all you have to do is believe!*

This is how they are filling the churches with thousands and millions. There’s nothing for you to do but believe. When the final pope and the miracles comes on the scene, I tell you they’re going to fall for it ‘hook, line and sinker’!

How many of you have read the books *Left Behind*? This was all of the Protestant Christians that believe in Christ; they would be raptured up to heaven and spared the Tribulation. Well, it was such a success that they wrote another book, and there are sequels and they even have a movie. In one of the books, guess who was raptured because ‘he was a good Christian’? *The pope!* If the pope is raptured, what does that say they are endorsing? *The whole system!* Amazing!

Any Christian-professing ministry or church that promotes sin—the transgression of the Law—in its binding or

loosing decisions is operating contrary to the Word and will of God.

Note: Matt. 7:21

Its decisions are simply **inventions of men** and do not have the authority of heaven behind them. Examples of these are: adding to or taking away from the Word of God (Deut. 12:30-32; Rev.22:18-19); worshiping other gods or goddesses (Ex. 20:2-3; I Cor. 10:20-21); endorsing the making and worshiping of idols (Ex. 20:4-6; Isa. 42:8, 17; 44:9-20; I Cor. 10:14; 12:2; Rev. 9:20-21; 21:8); worshiping dead “saints” (Isa. 8:19-20); and exchanging the Sabbath and holy days of God for pagan Sunday worship and occult holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, New Years, Lent, Easter, or any other so-called holiday of the religions of this world.

All binding and loosing decisions made by the ministry and brethren of Jesus Christ must be in complete accord with the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ. These decisions are authoritative because they have “already been bound or loosed in heaven.” As Jesus said, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me**” (Matt. 28:18). All binding and loosing **must be based** on the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

This is the confidence that we can have, and this gives us the conviction and understanding that we need in preaching the Word of God. This gives confidence to the brethren that what we’re teaching is faithful, true and right. They need to have that; they need to be built up in Christ.

A man e-mailed me from England and he asked me about my translation of Luke 4:21 as “...is being fulfilled in your ears.” He said he checked many other translations and they have “it is fulfilled in your ears today” or “has been fulfilled in your ears today.” The translation of the *Faithful Version* was the only one that said, “...is being fulfilled in your ears.”

Why did I translate it that way? *Jesus says, v 18: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”* (vs 18-19). This was Jesus’ mission statement as prophesied in Isa. 61.

So, I brought out that after he said these words he wasn't finished. As a matter of fact in Luke 4 what was He doing? *He was just getting started!* So, that's why I translated it "...is being fulfilled in your ears today."

Basics in Biblical Greek Grammar by William D. Mounce:

Talking about the passive perfect indicative. We won't get into all of the exact meanings of that:

Meaning in English: English has no exact counter-part to the Greek perfect tense.

- The English past tense indicates that something happened in the past, whether it was continuous or undefined. "I wrote" means I did something previously, but it does not say whether I completed my studies.
- When you use the helping verbs "have" or "has" the action described was done in the (recent) past and the statement is accurate up to now ("I have written").

The English present can describe an action current consequences ("It is written"). This is close to the Greek perfect.

That's important to understand. Why is it translated "It is written"? *Because that is present perfect!* We find an example of it:

John 5:42: "But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. **There is one who accuses you...** [a present tense participle] ...*even* Moses, in whom you have hope" (vs 42-45).

What He's saying is that the words that Moses recorded are living and effective and judgmental today, because they're the living words of God! That's why it's translated *it is written*, and that's in the perfect tense. It is something that was done in the past, but has continuous effect. That's what we have here.

The Greek perfect is one of the more interesting tenses and is often used to express great theological truths. The Greek perfect describes an action that was brought to completion and whose effects are felt in the present....

As we discussed with the problems with the Catholic Church, that's exactly what we're dealing with— isn't it?

Because it describes a completed action, by implication the action described by the perfect verb normally occurred in the past.

For example, "Jesus died" is a simple statement of an event that happened in the past. In Greek this would be in the aorist [tense verb].

An aorist verb is called *punctilious*, meaning that it *happened at a point in time*. That's it, it was done in that point in time and doesn't carry forward.

But if we use the Greek perfect to say, "Jesus has died," then we might expect the verse to continue by spelling out the present significance of that past action. "Jesus has died for my sins."

Another example is the verb "to write." When the Bible says, "It is written," this is usually in the perfect tense. Scripture was written in the past but is applicable in the present. That is why some translations choose the present "It is written," instead of "It has been written."

If everything said that "It has been written," then someone could say, 'Yeah, it has been written, but that doesn't have any meaning for us today.' That's exactly what they do with *the binding and loosing* through the papal traditions and other 'religions,' too.

This emphasizes its abiding significance. The Translation "It stands written" would state this nuance even clearer.

Translation [of the perfect]: It can become somewhat complicated to translate the perfect tense because of the absence of any exact English parallel.

Choose between the two possibilities below, depending upon the needs of the context.

Use the helping verb *has, have* or *had* and the past participle form of the verb *has written*. Be sure that to remember the true significance of the Greek perfect. This will help you differentiate between the aorist "I wrote" and the perfect "I have written."

Using the English present tense with the current implications of the action of the verb are emphasized by the context "it is written."

That's why I translated it: *it is being fulfilled in your ears today*. Because today those words were fulfilled in their ears, but the continuous effect was that He was just starting His ministry, so it was on-going. If it would have been translated: *this has been fulfilled in your ears*, Jesus' ministry could stop then and you could say that it has been fulfilled, which some of them do. Then I explained why I translated it that way.

This is why we have questions and things that come up, but I think this will be really helpful in understanding the Word of God and giving us greater authority. I think in updating those translations and having that new appendices will strengthen everything in the Bible.

Now let's see what Paul wrote to Timothy. This is important to understand, because Frank Nelte has a couple of taped sermons out where he says that not all Scripture is inspired. As a matter of fact, someone sent me a tape on it. I tell you what, the worst problems of doctrine we have to fight are different ones in the Church of God. We're not having to fight the Catholics; they're out there doing their thing. The Protestants are out there doing their thing. But where are the wolves in sheep's clothing coming from? *From within!* That's based upon the translation of the NIV or one of the modern translations.

2-Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child you have known the Holy Writings... [Old Testament] ...which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus." That goes right along with what we were discussing concerning *binding and loosing*. It was already decreed in heaven.

Verse 16: **All Scripture... [which includes New Testament] ...is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**"

One of the modern translations translates it this way: *All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable for doctrine, conviction...* That one little shift, and this is what Nelte is preaching on. Even the historical documents, the genealogical tables, are all inspired of God. Some may be more inspiring spiritually, but they're still all important.

Verse 17: "So that the man of God... [all the elders and teachers and anyone who studies the Bible] ...may be complete, fully equipped for every good work." Then Paul goes on in 2-Timothy 4.

I remember the book *Hurlbut's of the Christian Church* by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, where he lamented: *a dark curtain came down over the*

church. That was after John died, and it did—which *we try to peer through vaguely*. *When finally the veil is lifted, we see a church entirely different than what it was with the apostles.*

A profound statement, but he didn't even understand what he wrote. He went on and described how the church developed into the Catholic Church, and on down to our day. There's another subtle difference that has come along with the Catholics. In the past they used to say—if you asked them if they were Christian—"I'm Catholic." Today, they are claiming to be Christians.

We have a lot of things that we need to be on guard against, but notice, here's one of the charges. When I ordained Norbert I went through all of the charges in Timothy:

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." How binding and authoritative is that statement? *That's absolute authority, inspired and God breathed by Christ* so that we would have it today and we wouldn't get caught in any of the difficulties of preaching something else.

Verse 2: "**Preach the Word!...**" That's what they were to follow. When it was canonized by John that was it. That's why you find a few letters by Polycarp and Politiques, but we don't have anyone writing Scripture after John. Only those apostles, and their secretaries, were the ones that God used. So, when you take the whole of the Bible and put it together, God only used 40 people to write the Bible—Old and New Testaments. For the N. T. He only used eight men. If God cannot control 40 men—32 for the O.T. and 8 for the N.T.—then He's got to be the weakest, most puny thing that has ever existed, much like this thing they have in Star Wars: Yoda. Of course, that's a take off of Yahweh.

Verse 2: "Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine." This calendar thing is one of those; whatever doctrine that comes along.

Verse 3: "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 3-4).

That's exactly what has happened in the Church of God today. Not only in the world, but the

Church of God, unfortunately! We're confronted with these things. This means that it's incumbent on us to *really know* the Word of God so that we can handle the gainsayers. We won't be intimidated by them. We can know the Truth, and more importantly, we have to teach it to the brethren. We've got to have these things in print, because none of us know how long we're going to live, and we don't want to have a lying legacy or the half-truth legacy that came from Worldwide, and all the problems that came with that, and leave that for new elders and new people coming into the Church to have to cope with it.

We have got to have the Truth and we have got to have it in a way that we know what we are talking about, and God has to inspire us to know that we're doing that. That's the important thing that we need to realize.

I tell you what, that will also help us a great deal with our prayers and help the brethren a great deal with their prayers, because ***God made us to believe absolutely in Him!*** That's how He has created us. And when people do not believe absolutely in God and have full faith and confidence in God, what happens? *Their lives go into a tailspin!*

Look what's happened in society. Get rid of God and we have lawlessness increasing everywhere: terrible murders and stupidity. And like this woman who said, 'I just had a hang up and I just had to go to Las Vegas and Reno. I couldn't go to the wedding.' It's typical of the thinking that people have today, because they are not anchored in the Truth, and they are designed to believe absolutely in God and have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. If they don't, then look what happens! So, our job as elders is to really:

- uphold the Word of God
- teach the Word of God
- have confidence in the Word of God
- teach the brethren
- encourage the brethren
- up-build the Church
- give the brethren the tools and ammunition that they need to fight the warfare of faith

That's what we're trying to do. This is not glory to any man. If we can't glorify God through what we do, and let the Spirit of God work through us to do and accomplish what *He* wants us to do, to help the brethren of God...

They've got to be straightened out because God is just not going to add a whole lot more people to a mass of confusion! But He will add to where there is ***faith, Truth*** and the ***righteousness of Christ***

in us. This is where it's all at. That's the whole sum of ***binding and loosing!***

Comment: It's interesting the #40. Of the men who wrote the whole Bible, 40 is the number of completion. Look at it this way: for the Old Testament it was four sets of eight. For the New Testament it was one set of eight. So, you have five, which is grace, times eight, which is a new beginning, which then is 40. When did the children of Israel enter into the 'promised land'? *After 40 years!* So, we see some parallels there.

Question: Did each of the writers have personal contact with Christ, either physical contact, or like Paul who saw Christ and heard His voice? Mark did, Luke was under the supervision of Paul, so whatever Luke wrote was really what Paul wanted him to write. So, yes, that is true, all of them saw Christ. That's why they were chosen.

(go to the next track)

2-Peter 1:12: "Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always mindful of these things... [the growing in character, forgiveness of sin and so forth] ...although you *already* know them and have been established in the present Truth. For I consider it my duty, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by causing *you* to remember *these things*" (vs 12-13).

Consider the shortness of human memory and the willingness to change it. That if it was written down, how quickly this would have been changed to something else rather than the Word of God.

Verse 14: "Knowing that shortly the putting off of my tabernacle *will come*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has signified to me. But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure, you may always have ***a written remembrance*** of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves, for we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory" (vs 14-17).

That's why Jesus took them up on the Mt. of Transfiguration: Peter, James and John. That was to show, with that transfiguration, that they were in an office equivalent to, or greater than Moses, to see God glorified. When they saw Christ transfigured in the glorified form, that was to establish their authority to write the New Testament as Moses wrote the Law. That's something to really know and understand.

Verse 17: "Because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to

Him from the Majestic Glory, '**This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.**' And this *is* the voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain" (vs 17-18).

The following verses are the key important thing concerning the New Testament, and also a reference to the Old Testament:

Verse 19: "We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word... [the words of Jesus Christ that were prophesied to come and was confirmed by Him] ...to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place..."—going back to what we have in the Psa., that the Law 'is a lamp unto my feet' and Christ is the Light.

"...until the day dawns... [the return of Christ] ...and *the* morning star arises in your hearts" (v 19). That's when you are resurrected and you become a spirit being and will shine like the stars of heaven.

Verse 20: "Knowing this first... [primary knowledge to understand] ...that **no prophecy of Scripture** originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation." We've seen a lot of that!

- private calendars
- private interpretations of doctrine
- private binding and loosing
- etc.

It didn't originate that way!

Verse 21: "Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will..." Moses didn't say, 'Well, I'm out here tending these sheep. I've got to have a good cause to go back to Egypt and get the people out of Egypt. Ah ha! The burning bush, that's a good one.' NO!

"...but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit." (v 21). That's what we are to be. We are to be *Holy men of God!* When we speak, we are to be moved by the Spirit of God.

For them it was far more important that that happened to them in writing the New Testament, because that was to come down to us. That's why we are to preach the Word. None of these things are of any private interpretation. Some of them are difficult to understand, that is true. Some of them need a clarification of interpretation, that is true. But nevertheless:

- God used those men
- God used their minds
- God used their vocabulary and understanding of the language

That's why you find a variation in the quality of the Greek in the New Testament. God used every one of them, moved by the Holy Spirit.

Is God able to move someone by the Holy Spirit to do whatever He wills? *Yes!* Even those who want to do contrary to the will of God if need be. Look at Balaam. He took the money and was paid to curse, but all he could do was bless. Balak 'went out of his gourd'! Then Balaam taught him privately: All you have to do is just have a nice feast over here and have all of your young women come out and you seduce them, and God will have to curse them.

How about the men who crucified Christ? Stop and think about it, Jesus orchestrated everything that He did to lead to His death by the miracles that He did. The last one, of raising Lazarus from the dead finished the whole story with the Jewish leaders. That was more than they could handle.

That's how we need to view the Word of God. When we can have that faith, confidence, and impart this to the brethren, then they're going to grow in grace and knowledge; we'll grow in grace and knowledge. We will be elders, indeed, in serving the brethren, and then we can do the work that God wants us to do.

Topics to Bring up at the Conference

Wayne Stenhouse:

I had a few concerns that I have been facing, and maybe as elders we are all facing. I believe that some brethren do not trust the ministry, because of the past hurts and abuse by many elders. I am convinced that this has led to a great disrespect for all elders and that we are not trusted. Unfortunately, the authority given to the elders by Jesus Christ has been abused in many areas by both the ministry and the brethren.

Fred:

We need to be careful with that, because they took authority to themselves that was not given to them by Christ, and that's why the difficulties ensued.

Wayne:

That's exactly right. However, in my travels around Canada, with dealing with people in the Canadian office, there is a great disrespect for any elder in the Church today.

I've been told filthy jokes at services and over the phone. I've received letters that I can't

believe would come from a professing Christian. It scares me, and I'll tell you why. I look back and ask:

- Why aren't we growing?
- What's happening?
- Why aren't we expanding our horizons?
- Where are the people going?
- What are they doing?

So, I suggested to Fred, through a letter—and I put into practice the commands of God regarding the Church, using the cliché: by whose authority? We may discuss why and by whose authority did Jesus Christ become Head of the Church? *I really believe that a lot of brethren have forgotten this!* It's not the elder's church; it's the Church of Jesus Christ, and we are acting here on earth, which is a privilege, under the authority of Jesus Christ.

I think Fred hit on it, that we have to be *led* by the Holy Spirit of God. I think that's a key. But the brethren also need to realize to allow that to happen, because if you're looking for perfection, and everything to be perfect, it's not going to be. We have to grow into this—there will be mistakes made—but God will help us to do that.

- By whose authority do the elders function?
- What are their duties?
- Do they have the authority of Christ?
- By whose authority do the brethren come together as a church?
 - ✓ Is it something that we've just got use to doing over the years?
 - ✓ Do we just come together to meet as a social club?

or

- ✓ Are we coming together to learn the Word of God?

This idea of 'once saved, always saved' is not good.

- How do we develop character?
- How do the brethren develop character?

if we don't come together and learn more of God's Word?

We're only going to develop the mind of Jesus Christ by putting in what the Scriptures say and developing His mind. Remember, Christ's mind was connected to His heart. He believed God the Father with His heart. He was here on the authority of God the Father. He always did the Father's will. I think that's what we need to do as elders. What are the brethren's responsibilities:

- to God?
- to the ministry?

- to other brethren?
 - How is this trust built?
 - What can we do as elders to show that there is trust?
 - Where do we go from here?

I think the elder's conference is great place to get this springboard to be uplifted, and to go home and try to serve and help the brethren a little more.

I may be wrong, but for some reason we are not growing the way we should be. That doesn't not only mean in physical numbers, it's also *spiritually*. I think that's very important. I'm not saying that nobody in this room is growing spiritually, but from the people I talk to, through our office, it's very obvious.

Are people relying on Fred or others to do their Bible study for them? I wonder if that's where we're going? I wonder also, because we live in a world that is really Laodicean—I've had really hard thoughts about this recently—do people need God? *They don't need Him!* Right now in the world, people do not need God! They have everything at their fingertips; it's a fingertip society.

When you turn the TV on, you use a remote and go through 200 channels and do whatever you want for hours. Everything is so convenient. Everybody has two cars sitting in their driveway. Not everybody, but a majority of people do.

I'm really wondering if this is why the world is getting further and further from God and into a 'Christianity' that they don't have to do anything. 'I just have to believe in Jesus Christ and everything is just hunky-dory'—everything is taken care of. *I don't believe that's what God wants.*

- Why aren't we growing spiritually?
- Why aren't we growing by brethren?

This can be a result of the way that people are viewing the Church. We seem to be in a quagmire; we're either too soft and lenient, and therefore, people do what they want or, for some, they don't want any type of leadership. *They* are the authorities of the Bible.

Recently, I have found that more people are the authorities of the Bible and brethren, yet, what they're talking about or defending is not even in the Bible.

We need to grow as servants of God and of the brethren. So, we all must look within and examine ourselves to see how we can grow, and ask God to give us more of His Holy Spirit to help us grow.

Example: We recently got rid of our animals, which was the hardest thing we've done in our life; or seems to be; after 26 years, because:

- A. we want to be free to serve the brethren
- B. for our own health reasons, our home and environment

Somebody was visiting us and said, 'Where are your animals?' We said, 'We've gotten rid of them in the last month.' The response was, 'I will never get rid of mine, *never!*'

If you remember a few years ago at the elder's conference, we talked about health. It takes a crowbar to move me around a little bit, but eventually I saw that we couldn't do what we wanted to do with the tie-down that we had. So, we decided to do what we had to do.

But what I'm getting at is the negative response: *I will never do this, I will never change, I won't do this—period!*

- How can we help brethren and be examples if they want to close that door to us?
- What are our priorities?

Fred:

Let's just tackle these questions/problems:

1. never giving up 'my animals'

That's a personal choice and decision. If you have unclean animals living in the house, then you need to examine how they may affect or impact your life. If you've read anything by Hulda Clark, you will know that unclean animals in the house can lead to a lot of sickness and illness, in particularly *cats with kitty-litter boxes!*

I've got an article: [Pet Hamsters, Mice and Rats Pose Disease Risk:](#)

There are 30 people in at least 10 states were diagnosed with dangerous multi-drug resistant bacteria, health officials were warning.

These come from hamsters, mice, rats, ferrets, lizards and snakes, where they have salmonella and things like this. They're just bringing them into their houses. I know of a man whose boy had terrible asthma, and he's not in the Church, but I suggested that he check out and see how his son would do if he got rid of the pet hamster that he had. He got rid of the pet hamster and sure enough his asthma cleared up.

There are times when it's necessary to get rid of animals, but we can't make that a salvational

or authoritarian issue. That's something that each one will have to evaluate.

Obviously, if you tend cows, sheep, goats, chickens and so forth, you need to be clean about the situation, but having some of these unclean pets in the house...

One of my favorite commercials is about having a pet in the house and you don't know what he's doing when you're gone to work. You come in the door and he's drinking water out of the toilet bowl, then rushes to meet you at the door and licks you all over the face.

This is the kind of thing that those who give human characteristics to their pets, this is where they can get themselves into a great deal of trouble. But that's a minor issue.

2. Christ is the Head

I think part of the problem is that they were in a system where a man was pointed out to be the head of the Church, much like the Catholics have. Eph.1 shows why Christ is the Head of the Church and no man can be head of the Church. This is why we are to preach the Word; we're not to assume authorities of Christ, but we do bear the authority of Christ in what we teach and preach, and not to run people's lives for them. But to show them the Truth and then they have to make the choices what they want to do.

If it gets to a point that they decide they don't want anything to do with the Church, well then, that's their decision. On rare occasions you may have to tell someone that they can't come any longer. But here's why Christ is the Head of the Church.

Ephesians 1:19: "...according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, **when He raised Him from the dead...**" (vs 19-20). That's what qualifies Him to be the Head of the Church, because of His perfect life and sacrifice, and "...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 [God the Father] 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 20-23). That's why He is the Head of the Church.

Heb. 4 talks about the same thing, and gives us a connection between the Word of God and

Christ, which is very important in how we handle our eldership and ministry in serving the people. We are not to assume any prerogatives of God or Christ, but we are to teach and preach the Word of God. If they have problems and difficulties, they have to go to Christ. Our part is to help them, with the Word of God, to see what they need to do.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, 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. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (vs 12-13).

Notice how the Apostle Paul wrote this and put it. He's teaching the direct relationship that each individual is to have with Jesus Christ and God the Father. That is what he is doing, and this is what we must do.

I think that if you have any problems of needing to gain the respect of people, if you can just point this out them, that they need to have a relationship with Christ, that will help solve a lot of the problems that they have had with the ministry. But when you look at a corporate minister and his job—of course, Carl helped run those under Rod Meredith—what his job is to do is to keep everyone in line so that they pay their tithes and keep the Church going.

When we were under that, if you made 30 visits a week you were a good minister. It had nothing to do with the quality of the visit. If you only made 15 visits, well then, you were 'lazy and slothful' and subject to interrogation.

That kind of thing coming down to the brethren does not encourage them, does not edify them, does not build them up. Some people we just wore out with visits, especially convenient widows. I tell you, it was really a great day when that whole system... Carl had the pleasure of burning all the dossiers on the ministers and brethren, because they had a file on everybody! God doesn't want that!

Paul is teaching here a direct relationship between the individual, Jesus Christ and God the Father. One of the ways to build the confidence in helping the people have respect for the elders is to always point them to Christ. Always teach them through the Scriptures. This way then we are not giving *our* opinions. If we do give our opinion, make sure that it's *your opinion*, and say:

- my experience has been

- I've learned this
- this is something you need to consider
- it's your choice

The best way is to *never take the choice away from them*, whether they choose right or choose wrong. Does not God give us the liberty to choose? *Yes!* Therefore, since God has given the liberty and commands us to choose, then we should not interfere on their choices. However, if they choose things that are contrary to the Word of God, contrary to the Scriptures, then we have the full authority of Jesus Christ to ask them to leave.

Here's why, v 14: “Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet, *He* was without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 14-16).

What this is teaching all of us to do is to *pray to God!* Bring your problems to Him; ‘cast all your cares upon the Lord for He cares for you’ (1-Pet. 5). Rather than solving your problems,

- He does point out the problems, *yes He does*
- He does point out the solutions, *yes He does*

The solution is to come to Christ, because He is the Head of the Church. We will see how this overlaps into what we are to do, as elders, in serving the Body of Christ. This is really the great mission statement that we are to have. This will get into *trust*.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave **some as apostles...** [we have their writings] ...and **some prophets...**”—those who speak and are inspired of God to move and cause people to change their lives in accordance with the will of God. This does not necessarily mean the foretelling of future events, though it can. But in most cases this means a telling forth of the Word of God.

“...and **some evangelists...**” (v 11). We need to have some evangelizing. Evangelism can come in many different ways:

- public meetings
- semi-public meetings
- personal one-on-one

Example: When I was in Phoenix I took ten of the books *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died* and a

went to the Bible museum and took them over there. Don Callahan was there, and I just put them there and said, 'I'll just leave these here and if you want them for some of the seminars that you have, you're welcome to them, and there won't be any charge.'

He picked one up and read it, and he was absolutely 100% for it. He called the office and ordered a whole case of 36 for their next seminar that they were going to have.

Well, part of the problem in evangelizing is that we have been so busy repairing the 'wounded' and helping them along, that we haven't had much of a chance to get and do any evangelizing, nor to produce very much material in the way of an evangelical thing, or evangelizing.

So, the book *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died* comes about as close to that as anything that we have.

"...and some, pastors... [which is what we all are as elders] ...and teachers..." (v 11). We are to teach the Word of God, and here is the goal in v 12.

If the brethren see this, and if they see this in us in helping and teaching them, this is going to do a great deal for the restoration of trust, or respect toward elders. Of course, a lot of it gets to our own conduct. It's not going to be a matter of we *say* and not *do*, but that *we do and we say*. That's the only thing that's going to help turn some people around.

Verse 12: **"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith..."** (vs 12-13).

That's part of what we've been doing with all this work and research, and things that we've been doing with the calendar, that we keep the Holy Days on the right day, the same day. That's all part of it in the things that we do such as the translation of the Bible, the other booklets and books that we have put together.

"...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we no longer be children...**" (vs 13-14). This is part of the problem with the brethren: *Too many of them stay in a child status!* Some of them like to stay in a child status so they can blame the man.

We need to put the responsibility not only on ourselves, but also on the brethren. This whole thing of how it was when we were in the corporate church, that you run around and visit everybody, go here and there and do this and that, we made them *totally dependent on the ministry!* What happens

when you're totally dependent on a man, and he doesn't do what you think he ought to do? *You lose respect!*

Respect is going to come when we teach them to have that relationship with Christ, and we teach them so they are no longer children! Remember what it says about some needing 'milk' when they ought to have been teachers (Heb. 5)? When they needed to know about the 'strong meat'? Part of it comes from that. That's what we need to keep in mind.

Because, and this is still a problem, since they're children out there, then the wolves come along and they are "...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" (v 14).

The fullness of that is in the Catholic Church today, or the *mystery of lawlessness*. You also have the situation, especially today with the calendar, that's what they're trying to do: *systematize the error* so that they can replace Truth with error. That's why so many go to so many lengths with the calendar thing.

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even Christ*." This is how we and the brethren can work together in:

- salvation
- growing
- overcoming
- grace
- knowledge

We all work together! This is why, if we keep this in mind, this is going to help us a great deal in restoring that.

An event being related by an elder on *suspicion*: I hear you went out and had dinner with someone, and the next morning they were asked about it, saying, 'I hear you were out with So and So, and what were you discussing?' That's why I didn't stay with brethren. They were check up and asking what I was doing and what were we talking about?

This shows the kind of ministry that they were under and reflects what they were used to.

A comment was made that a lot of people have gone through so much that because they put confidence in a man first, instead of God—that gets down to what we're talking about—and we have to help them have *confidence in God* and then to have

confidence in us as we follow Christ.

I don't want anyone to follow me because of me. Nor do we want anyone to follow you because of you. Otherwise, we become an idol between the person and God. God does not want that. Now, that doesn't take away from our authority at all. But part of the difficulties that the brethren, such as you brought up, with the asking of questions like this was because ***ministers, in the past, would violate confidentiality by talking about other people and their problems when they should never have opened their mouths!*** Then what that does is set a chain reaction within the Church.

Question: What do you do with people who only want to listen to...? It depends on what their motives are. Some people have gotten so burned by ministers when they hear the Truth they don't want to listen to any other sermons but what we produce. So, you have that problem. But you have a difficulty with it because they are re-creating the same problem they had in the past.

Maybe on an individual level you can help them understand. Even I read all kinds of other books and look at all kinds of other things that people have done to understand what the truth is, and where we're going and what we need to do. They need to grow to the place where they can have their own study. I think the problem can be resolved by teaching them how to study the Bible themselves.

Okay, you listen to the sermons, how do you study the Bible? *Most of them don't (comment)! Teach them how! Most of them don't; they want me to do the study and convey it to them, or you to do the study and convey it them. Teach **them** how to study the Bible!*

Also teach them how to overcome personal sins, and if they have a persistent sin that they need to overcome, just help them to realize that God hasn't given up on them, and they really need to take it to God. That's all part of the personal relationship between the individual and God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Question: Why have so many brethren in different groups not recognized other brethren in other groups? *I think the problem is a matter of control by the ministry, because they don't want them to know about other groups lest they leave them. That's where it comes in, rather than tackling things on a doctrinal basis, then they demonize a minister in another church and scare brethren into staying where they are.*

That sound familiar? That's also a problem. I think it's kind of like how you deal with people

who have been in warfare, wounded and shot at. Or someone who has been betrayed. Or someone who has lost trust and belief, because of what men have been doing. This is part of the problem that we're dealing with here.

Unfortunately, some of them like it that way. Remember how many of the children of Israel said, 'Moses, you go talk to God and you tell us and we'll do it.' That's what people do. They like to have a man between them and God to blame the man if something goes wrong in their lives. Maybe preach something along the line of: What do you do when something goes wrong in your life? What do you do when the minister doesn't do what you think he should do? *Well, you can always go and talk to him!* But a lot are afraid to talk to them, so what they do is they undermine their relationship with the elder by going to other brethren and complaining about it, rather than going directly to the individual.

They need to be taught that if there's a difficulty, go to the elder. Maybe there's a misunderstanding. Maybe it's the figment of the imagination in your mind. Maybe you're supposing something that really doesn't exist. Go to the individual and talk to them about it, and don't come in an accusative way.

We all have our problems and difficulties. We need to understand that. The brethren want latitude with their problems and difficulties, so they need to give the elders some latitude in their problems and difficulties. Some things we can change right away. Other things take a long time. Other things *only God can change!* We also have to realize that.

I think that if you can bring some sermons that are instructive—*not corrective*. Let it be corrective by instruction, rather than corrective by correction. What do I mean by that? *You don't go up and say, 'You've been doing this wrong all this time.'* You start out and show them by the Scriptures what they need to do. Ask some questions: Have we—include yourself, because you're part of it—assumed things and cause difficulties because we didn't talk to each other?

Maybe that's one way to approach it. This also brings out another problem: It seems like this one minister all he does is go back over his notes that he's done for the past 40 years and that's all he preaches on and doesn't know anything else. When they leave, because of that, we pick up the problem and try to help them with the baggage. So, let's go ahead and work it this way if someone like that comes along and wants to start attending here: After they've been coming for a while, just ask them:

- What was the difficulty?
- What was the problem?

Educate them!

- We don't do that here!
- We don't do it this way!
- Here's how God wants us to do it.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:19
- 2) Matthew 18:18
- 3) Luke 4:21, 18-19
- 4) John 5:42-45
- 5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 6) 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 7) 2 Peter 1:12-21

- 8) Ephesians 1:19-23
- 9) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 10) Ephesians 4:11-15

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 3:15
- Revelation 13:8
- Acts 10:28
- Isaiah 56
- Matthew 7:21
- Isaiah 61

- 1 Peter 5
- Hebrews 5

Also referenced:

Study Paper: "*Binding*" and "*Loosing*" in the New Testament (cbcg.org)

Books:

- *Basics in Biblical Greek Grammar* by William D. Mounce
- *Hurlbut's Story of the Christian Church* by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut
- *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter

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Should Women Teach and Preach?

Elders Conference—2011

Fred R. Coulter

We have one other topic to cover, which Ed brought up because of his experience in some of the independent churches. He can tell you some horror stories that have gone on there, difficulties with it. Also I got an email from someone in Mexico that said, 'There are a lot of women preachers down here. Should women be preachers?'

So sent the email on to Gil for him to take care of it and answer what was going on there. But there are a lot of women preachers. There's even one woman pastor in Fort Worth. I heard some of them were leading songs. I thought Texas was where all the he-men were. What are they doing with a woman pastor in the Church of God? That's been for a number of years—hasn't it? About ten years, doing the whole thing.

Let's go to Revelation 2, because we encounter a woman there—don't we? I don't the name of this woman in Dallas, so I'm not equating her with this section of Scripture. However, it does talk about it and the first thing he starts out—let's see what Christ says to it, v 18, the Church in Thyatira. Now, if you haven't seen the *Israel of the Alps*, that's a good one to see. You can call the office or write for it, we'll send you the DVD. It's actually put out by the Seventh Day Adventists and I think it's interesting that they associate themselves with the *Israel of the Alps*—the Churches of God who fled Asia Minor in 325_{A.D.} and went into the Alps and they were there for 1,260 years.

Some of them, it is said, had the old Latin translation, which was more akin to the Greek than Jerome. Some of them only had the book of John. But they did their evangelical work, because it says, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.' Well, they had to go into the Catholic world. What happened was this: There was the Churches of God out of England, the Welch and the Scots, and they came down into northern Europe and these went into southern Europe. So the Gospel was being preached. Of course, eventually the Catholics got them all.

But what they would do, since it was illegal to be a preacher other than a Catholic priest, they would go out as merchants and businessmen. And they would have things that they would sell. They would visit with their clientele and after they had sold their goods, they said, 'Well, we have something that is more valuable than what we have sold you that we will give you.' So, they gave them some written out Scriptures. This way, then, they weren't preaching.

At first they really resisted the pope and the mass and all of these things. But after awhile they gave in to the Catholic Church so they could survive and then they were left to their own devices. When the Catholics sent their soldiers up into the Alps to get them, instead of trusting on God, they trusted on their own tactics and they killed a lot of the Italian soldiers and things that were sent up to get them. But finally, because they weren't trusting in God, they were overwhelmed. Those that were alive, they put them in prison and by, I forget the exact year, but the pope persuaded the king of France, I forget which king it was, that all of his sins would be absolved if he would not only get rid of the Huguenots, but if he would get rid of those Christians up in the Alps.

They hauled them into prison, put them in dungeons and things like that. After a number of years the survivors were let go to go free in the middle of the winter to walk over the Alps. They finally hooked up with the Protestants in Geneva; there were very few that made it. When they got there, they were very surprised that the Sunday-keeping Protestants in Geneva had the whole Bible and they had translated it, and so forth. So that shows you how isolated they were.

But let's pick it up here with Revelation 2:18: "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works... [he mentions the works twice] ...and the last *are* more than the first" (vs 18-19). I don't know if this carries through today with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, I can't say it dogmatically, but many of the things fit.

"But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess... [the first thing they had was a woman teacher] ...to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols" (v 20). Very interesting— isn't it? One of these days we'll have a perfect view of all the history and we will know.

There are times when I have equated this to Ellen G. White as a modern end of this, but this is definitely referring to the Catholic Church because Jezebel was the daughter of the priest of Baal, which was sun worship. And of course, the Catholic

Church is sun worship. So that's the best you can do. You can't lay right in and say that is exactly it.

What about in the Churches of God? Let's see something here that's important. Too many people, and women in particular, think that God is picking on women. And when they only read certain Scriptures, they can certainly give that impression, especially when they read that Eve was deceived and was in sin. They don't read Romans 5:12 that sin entered into the world because of one man: Adam. Eve was deceived, but that tells us Adam was not. So that also tells us something else, too—doesn't it?

Here in Romans 16:1, Paul writes: "Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant... ['servant' here comes from the Greek 'diakonos' or 'diakonoi,' which then is a deaconess] ...of the church in Cenchrea, *Charging* you to receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of saints, and to assist her in whatever she may need from you because she also has been of great assistance to many, including myself. Salute Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers..." (vs 1-3)—husband and wife.

They're pretty prominent in the book of Acts. God does not put down women. It just is we all have different functions and different roles, that's all. We need to all understand this. Are we all under authority? *Yes, every one!* We're all under authority of God the Father and Jesus Christ first of all. When we're out about in the society, are we under the authority of the law of the land? *Yes, we are!* There are even women who are in positions of authority over men, *but that's not in the Church.*

I had one woman who was a very good nurse, top nurse, a head nurse, and she had male nurses that worked for her. She came into the Church and she said, 'Well, what should I do, I'm over men? My employer put me over them, because I'm trained more than they are and I know more than they do so I have to teach them and help them. Do I have to quit my job?' I told her, 'Well, is the hospital the Church?' She said, 'No.' I said, 'Well, there's your answer.' That doesn't have anything to do with the Church or the Word of God.

We also know that in the days of Josiah, the men were so weak and too many of them turned their back on God that the only one left to find a message from God was to what? *Go to Huldah the prophetess*—correct? And so she gave a message from God to men. Well, she didn't take over the king's throne—did she? *No!* But did the king recognize what she said that it was a message from God and really continue to repent and bring a revival to Judah? *Yes!*

Then we have in the days of Barak. He was so weak that when God said go up and fight,

Deborah said go up and fight, and he says, 'I'm not going to do it unless you go with me.' She said, 'Go up and fight.' And he says, 'I'm not going to do unless you go with me.' She says, 'Okay, I will go, but it's a woman's victory.' She didn't get out there with a sword, but she went with him.

Then there are other instances concerning women in the Bible, both good and evil. So the question becomes: What about within the family relationship and within the church, because we can't control the world? Has anybody here been stopped by a woman highway patrol? That was pretty fair. She stopped you and said, 'Now you were speeding and you don't have a seat belt.' She gave you a choice: 'Which one do you want me to charge you with?' I've never been stopped by a woman highway patrol yet, but that's interesting. I better be still and make sure that I'm careful, because I may be.

Just like when you're watching a sports game and one of the commentators says, 'Well, this guy's never done that for so long.' Next time you see him, he's committed an error or done something, so I better be careful by saying I've never been stopped by a woman highway patrol yet, because I may encounter one here very soon and if I do, I won't tell you.

So here we find that God uses women and actually when you go back and you look at the creation, what was the last thing that God created? *Eve!* That puts women in a special relationship with God, as well. Contrary to some of the ideas of men, Mary was blameless. She bore Jesus. I'll pose the question and ring the bell^[noting speculation] and go on, which is: Since Jesus received His human nature through the genes and chromosomes of Mary and He never sinned, yet He carried human nature—how does God use our genes and chromosomes when we're resurrected? *We don't know!*

But when Jesus was resurrected, they recognized Him—correct? Even though he appeared as flesh and bone—remember it didn't say flesh and blood. So He appeared, meaning that He could transform Himself in the various stages of a spirit being. He also appeared to them in glory. When Jesus was resurrected, did God use the same genes that He put into Mary from the Father and also from Mary into Jesus? And will those genes and chromosomes that came from Mary always be in a spiritual form, however God uses them, for all eternity? *And my answer was: I don't know!*

But nevertheless, women are special to God and they participate directly in the creation of human beings in a very special way that's different from a man. Now men, in their genes and chromosomes, they have what is called the 'Y' chromosome and

that determines that when that unites with the egg from the mother, that that child is going to be a male, or a boy. And the men also have an 'X' chromosome. And when that unites with the egg of the mother, and women only have 'X' chromosomes, then when that unites with the egg of the mother, there's a girl.

Let's also understand something else: Who was the Creator of Adam and Eve? *The One Who became Jesus Christ*—isn't that correct? *Yes!* Since He made man and woman, He alone can be Savior of men and women. And when He came to the earth in the flesh, in order to be a male, He had to have the 'Y' chromosome from God the Father and the 'X' chromosome from Mary. No other woman has had that blessing. So we need to understand that. Women are special. Women have things that they can do that men can't do. Men have things that they can do that women can't do. That's why God says when there's marriage, we're to become one flesh.

Let's look at some Scriptures here and let's see some of the things concerning what we just discussed. Let's come to Romans 5 first of all. Some of these things I've just discussed we can put in the realm of *we don't know*. It's interesting, but don't make a doctrine over it. Things that are interesting that you can't answer, you look at it, you think about it, you pray about it, and if God wants you to have the answer, in time you'll find it, and if not, you won't.

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind; *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned." It's inherited! Men sin, women sin, and so forth. What was the sin of Adam? *He disobeyed God*—didn't he? *Yes, he did!* Had he done what he was supposed to have done, he wouldn't have allowed Eve to do what she did.

After God made Eve, Genesis 2:18: "And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper compatible for him.'" We'll find this verified when we get to 1-Cor. 11. In the margin we have who was considered the most qualified expert in Hebrew on this, so we have in the margin: 'a counterpart, a sustainer beside him.' That's interesting—isn't it? Not in front of him, not behind him, but *beside him*.

God gave to women certain things in the way of how He created them that only they can do these things. The whole situation of the sin, it says there, we'll read a little later, that Eve was deceived and was in transgression. But we just read that by one man's sin, sin entered into the world, so they both sinned.

Let's look and see what happened here when God detailed out the results of their sin. This was His judgment and sentence. After they had eaten of the tree they shouldn't have eaten of, they hid themselves from the presence of God. Now where are you going to go to hide from God?

Genesis 3:9: "And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where *are* you?... [Of course, He knew where he was, but He wanted to get an answer from Adam. One atheist wrote, 'Well, how can God be God if He didn't know where Adam was and had to call for him?' *Well, He knew!*] ...And he said, 'I heard You *walking* in the garden, and I was afraid because I *am* naked, and *so* I hid myself.' And He said, 'Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?... [And the man said, 'God, it's Your fault.] ...And the man said, 'The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate'" (vs 9-12).

I don't think that's what He said after Adam awoke from his deep sleep, and God led Eve by the hand and said, 'Adam, here's your wife.' I think He had other words to say about that at that time. So he said, 'The woman.'

"And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What *is* this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate'" (v 13). Yeah, but Adam watched her do it. Because you read v 6: "...She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

Verse 14: "And the LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this you are cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.'" That's why you find legless snakes. Then He talks about the enmity He would put between them and prophecy of the coming Savior.

Verse 16: "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception—in sorrow shall you bring forth children....'" (vs 16). It doesn't just merely mean the pain of delivery. That means also after Cain killed Abel, she suffered the emotional trauma in a different way than Adam did. *In sorrow*—isn't that true?

All of you who have children, have your kids done thing that you don't approve of? And who lies awake at night and worries about it? *Mamma*—isn't that correct? Lose sleep, yes—*mamma* worries about things, even when the kids are grown up—*mamma!* Poppa in a different way. And if she talks to Poppa and he says, 'Mamma, don't worry, it's going to work out.' But she has a nurturing and caring nature to where she wants to help comfort her

children all the time and doesn't like to see them in difficulties and pain and sorrow—isn't that correct? Men do not have that kind of emotional makeup. Men say to women, 'You don't understand.' And women say back to men, 'You don't have any feeling. You don't understand.' I'm repeating this from my own experience.

Verse 16: "...Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you" (v 16). Now that has never changed. The word there does mean to be a barbarian, you know, like with a Capitol One credit card, the barbarians and their axes and their mallets and all of this sort of thing, dragging the women with one hand. Doesn't mean that at all. The men are responsible for the women. God made it that way.

This may help us understand why there was polygamy in the Old Testament. Just a little sidebar here, because lecherous men read that and say, 'Oh, I wished it was like in the old days in the Bible, I could have many wives.' Solomon tried 1,000 and 300 concubines and look how that turned out. And the women say, 'Oh, you lecherous men!' But who are the ones that went to war? *The men!* And you read the battles, thousands died. That means there were thousands of widows.

- Can they plow?
- Can they drive oxen?
- Can they defend?
- Can they fight?

Maybe if you come across some Amazons every once in a while, maybe they could. Or like in the modern age where the Russians gave steroids to all their female athletes and they looked really beefed up. What did God do? *God had men take care of the women* and they could bring forth children. Because after you kill off so many men, how are you going to balance out the population? So that's a different set of circumstances than we have today.

However, I think, when we begin the millennium maybe something like that will also be in effect because how many men are going to be killed? That's not God giving His blessing to polygamy, that is God having men take care of women because they can't fend for themselves and God didn't mean for them to fend for themselves. And that they could bear children and they would provide for the women and the women would take care of the children and take care of the household. I don't know how the arguments went on if it was a crowded household. I don't know how that worked and I don't want to get in the middle of that, because that might be like entering into a catfight.

Notice Adam's sin and this has been the sin of men all along. This is why women's lib

movements come along. This is why when men do not do what they're supposed to do and after a period of time women see what men are supposed to do and don't do it, like in today's society, they take the initiative and do it. Men come along and say, 'Well, you women shouldn't be doing that.' And women say, 'Well, you didn't take the initiative to do it, so I had to do it.'

It's like Moses and circumcision of his son. What did his wife say after she circumcised them? *'You're a bloody husband to me. You should have taken care of that before.'* Even Moses had his weakness. Notice what the weakness is. Even though our wives are to give us counsel and to give us understanding and things like that, to stand beside us and sustain us, we love our wives; our wives love us. We have our rough spots and things during life, because that's just the way it is. That helps build character and love and understanding.

I'm not going to ask anyone to raise their hands if they have never had an argument in their family, never had a dispute between husband and wife, never had a problem of siding with children, and a divided family like that, because all go through it, because that's the carnality of human beings. Isn't that true? *Yes!*

So here's Adam sin, v 17: "And to Adam He said, 'Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife... [Instead of God. That's the meaning it. God said what? *Don't eat of the tree!*] ...to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, "Your shall not eat of it!"—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you, and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field; in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return'" (vs 17-19). No one has stopped that except Christ.

Are there societies that oppress women? *Yes!* Actually, there's a small tribe in China where the women rule over the men, all of them, and they suppress the men. Very rare! I was surprised when I saw it. I didn't think you would have anything like that in China, of all places. Look at China and some of those valleys in the mountains there, they can be very remote. This was one of those remote valleys.

But also there's another thing that we need to take into account, too: ***God holds the man responsible!*** He does. Let's see a prophecy of what happens here at the end-time when women have taken over. When all of the electrical and mechanical slaves that we have today to do work for us, women do things quicker and they have liberty to

do other things. That's fine, nothing wrong with that, because we will see that God has given brains. Yes, women can think and sometimes they see a lot of things that men don't see, because God gave women the nature to feel emotions in circumstances that men don't. They will feel things and sense things and try and warn their husbands. If they listen and it's true, it's probably good advice. Lots of times we don't and then what do we hear a little later? *'I told you so'*—right?

Isaiah 3:1: "For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water, The man of might and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the ancient, The captain of fifty, and the honorable man and the adviser, and the cunning charmer and the skillful enchanter.... [we could put that in modern-day language today] ...'And I will give young lads *to be* their princes, and capricious children shall rule over them.... [Do we have that? *Yes!* What is that? *That is the failure of fathers and mothers!* Isn't it interesting, when you read about a king who does thus and such when he's really evil, and his mother was so-and-so? Remember that? *She didn't train him properly!*] ...And the people shall be crushed, every man by another, and every man by his neighbor; the young shall rise up against the old, and the base against the honorable'" (vs 1-5).

That's exactly the society we have today, v 12: "As for My people, children *are* their oppressors... [more so than ever before] ...and women rule over them...." You watch the ads. Look at the ads on television. Who is always the one who knows more and is smarter and has the answer, but the smart woman and the dumb man—right? And there are a lot of them that way. There are a lot of men who just give up to their wives and surrender and just follow along. That's not a good situation. What does that do to the women? *That emboldens them even more!* They really don't like it, so then they have more contempt for their husbands and the husbands withdraw more, etc. I'm sure you've all seen that. Blondie/Dagwood thing! 'Women rule over them.'

"...Oh, My people, those who lead you cause *you* to err and destroy the way of your paths" (v 12). Now what do we have? We have all kinds of sin legislated into the law, because of the diverse society that we have. Out in the world that's the way that it is. In the Church, when we come out of the world, what do you have to do? If you're a man and you've been giving into your wife all the time, let her rule the roost and run the whole show, then you've got a lot of things you need to do to unlearn so that you take over your proper place that God put you as the head of the household.

I don't know how much you can do when you've let it go on for years and years and years. You have to make that decision as you go along. If women who come into the Church, they have to take less of a lead, then you need to figure out what you need to do.

Let's come to the New Testament and let's see what God has to say here concerning women. Let's first of all come to 1-Timothy 2:8; he covers quite a good ground here: "Therefore, I desire that men everywhere pray, lifting up holy hands without anger and *evil* opinions." In other words, you pray with a pure heart to God.

I don't how long you can hold your hands up, but I don't think God expects us to get a prop like they did with Moses and every time we pray hold up our hands like this. But nevertheless, that would be one thing in reaching out to God.

Verse 9: "In like manner also, *let* the women adorn themselves with clothing that shows modesty and discretion... [Boy, do you have a fight on your hands with most women today. They have plunging necklines clear down to the belly button.] ...not with *elaborate* braidings *of the hair*, or *with* gold, or pearls, or expensive apparel."

In other words, don't make clothing the whole thing of your life. That is a tendency of women—right? Who puts out all the fashion magazines? *For women!* Isn't that true? *Yes!* God says that's the vanity of women. Have a Godly appearance, dress well, do good; if you have some jewelry, fine. Don't get carried away. I saw a woman one time, she had three rings on every finger. I looked at that and I said, 'Oh, my, you have a lot of rings.' She said, 'Yes, I love them all.'

Verse 10: "But *with that* which *is* fitting for women who profess *to have* reverence for God—with good works. Let a woman learn in quietness... [That means not in talking back, rebellion. That does not mean that you do not speak. That does not mean that you do not have discussions. That just means that you're not there with a loud mouth.] ...*and be* submissive in every respect" (vs 10-11).

Because of that, I want to give a warning to all men. Just because your wives submit themselves to you, that does not give you the heavy hand of authority to oppress her. That is to keep leadership, within the family, from God. That's what that is for. You are to be kind, you are to be considerate, you are to be understanding, and you are to love your wife and you are to take care of her. I can tell you this, the woman is the weaker vessel. I don't care how strong you feel. I can attest to you, of all the requests for anointed cloths that I send out, it goes 9

or 10-1 women requesting anointing, on the average. That doesn't mean men are more healthy, but it's also reflective of the emotional makeup of women, that not only being the weaker vessel, but also the more emotional vessel that they can come down with sicknesses and illnesses because they are so wrapped up in worry and anxiety. And women tend to be very unforgiving of one another. All of things that we've covered about anxiety and things like this, women have it more than men and so they come down with more sickness.

What happens when you worry yourself sick to death? Interesting way to put it; and you lie awake and night and you can't sleep, lie awake at night and can't sleep. Say you have four or five children and you wonder where this one is and what he's doing, where that one is and what they're doing. And you've been worried about them ever since they were able to walk. And where are they, where are they going? And then they get a little older and where are their friends and who are their parents and where are they? And then they get in trouble, and then, 'Oh, my, that's a terrible situation.'

Then they grow up and like I told one man, I said, 'When you have children and their first born it cost you just pennies. They get a little older, it cost you dollars. They get a little older, cost you dollars in increments of five. They get a little older, dollars in increments of ten. When they're grown up, it's dollars in increments of hundreds and maybe thousands of dollars for your children'—isn't that right? *Yes! Men* have that worry about it, but women worry:

- How are they?
- What's happening?
- Are they well?
- Are they warm?
- Do they have enough food?
- Who are their friends?

'Oh, I wish he wouldn't date that person. Oh, I wish they wouldn't go out with that person. Oh, my did you see that girlfriend that my Johnny has. Oooo, I wouldn't get caught dead in those clothes. Boy, I hope nothing happens in the car.'

So you worry at night and you hope, whatever the name of your daughter is. I don't want to use a name, lest someone think I'm picking on them. I don't want to have her come to me and say, 'Mom, guess what?' *Oh, no, are you really?* 'No, I just lost my purse.'

Verse 12 says it all: "For I do not permit a woman to teach..." This has to be *in church, in an assembly*. Later it says that the older women are to teach the younger women how to be proper wives, how to take care of the family, how to take care of

children. You are to be a walking encyclopedia of what to eat, what to drink, what happens when there's no breast milk. What do you do, how do you help your children. You have to be a walking encyclopedia on how to you help in childbirth.

Men, when it comes time for children to be born, are worthless. We've had all of our children at home, so I know what it's like. You know what I did? *I walked back and forth!* Dolores says, 'What are you doing walking back and forth? I'm doing all the work.' Then she would groan and moan and I would hurt, oh, my back hurts. But women are to be experts in those things. Just think how much healthier our children would be if they were.

Isn't that much better helping children grow up to be healthy, happy, and have good minds to be educated than to turning them over to a babysitter to feed them the soy powdered milk so they destroy their lives to begin with, in their health, and you run off to a glorious job as a secretary someplace. Or as I see it and I feel sorry about it all the time, I see some of these women who are mail carriers, out there trudging. The one who delivers the mail where our office is, she's walking through the building, and I've often thought when I've seen her doing that and there are days when she really looks down and it's hard to do. And I thought, I wonder if she would be happier if she were home taking care of the house and the family.

Today, Satan has got that all turned around that today the mortgage payments are so high that most women have to work just to get along. And a perfect setting to also cause women to get more sick because now they're more worried because they're off doing a job someplace and where are their children and what's going on in school? What's going to happen when they home from school? 'They get home at 3 and I don't get home till 6.' Oh, oh. All of those things. Isn't that right? Am I wrong? Yeah, it happens!

(go to the next track)

All of us are not spring chickens or roosters, so we've all learned a few things and we've all had our feathers plucked; we know that. We need to cover these principles so we understand, because unfortunately—and I don't see it here in any great degree with anybody, but I do remember this. I was talking with a man who was contemplating coming with CBCG up in Canada.

So Wayne Stenhouse and I went over, it was over near Toronto where we went. He had a wife that ran the show. He was an elder. I stayed at their house. She's the one who did all the talking. I talked with him, she'd answer. I'd be looking at him. Here comes the answer over here. This went on for about three days because we also drove up north to another

area north of Toronto to see some brethren up there that he knew. Then we came back and we stayed at a hotel there in Toronto. I think it was Friday night that we were talking.

I'd be looking at him like this and talking; she'd answer. And I'd look over here and talk to him; she'd answer. This went on three days. So finally I said, 'Please, let me talk to your husband and don't you answer.' Whoopee-do! Went over like a lead balloon that fell 20,000 feet out of the sky.

He couldn't calm her down and she couldn't be still all night and couldn't sleep. Boy, the next morning they didn't show up for Sabbath services. I think that was the thing. Maybe not quite like that, maybe it was they were there at Sabbath services and then this was Saturday night and then they didn't show up for a Sunday morning function. I forget exactly what it was.

Poor Wayne. They came after Wayne. 'Did you know this, did you know that? You should have heard what Fred said. He told my wife to shut up.' You just think common courtesy. If you're talking to someone, you'd expect an answer from them. But for three days it was, 'Hello, how are you?' *I'm fine, thank you!* That was the most difficult situation I've ever had in all my life. And poor Wayne; I think they were pretty good friends, too. I don't think they have ever gotten over that.

What's so hard about doing what God says? And in the final analysis, we'll all be happier. It's like one man told his wife, 'You want me to be nicer to you, quit correcting me all the time. If I do need things that need to be done,' he said to her, 'pray and ask God to show what it is.' So she quit correcting him all the time and lo and behold, they're getting along better. It's just that simple, because I think he told her, 'What if I corrected you every time you did something wrong? How would you take that?' So sometimes put the shoe on the other foot.

We've already covered the rest of it here. Adam was formed first, then Eve. We'll talk about that a little later. Adam was not deceived, but he still sinned. When women quit being women and men quit being men and they mix the roles, like they have today—and some of that is very nutritional, too; we can't get into all of that—***then things are upside down and they don't work good.*** But if you go back to what God says:

- love each other
- help each other
- become one flesh

and so forth—we'll read it the way that God wants it to be—then things are going to go along a whole lot better. And guess what? *Everybody's going to have*

a better emotional condition—aren't they? The wives are not going to be angry and frustrated and the husbands are not going to feel like they're hen-pecked. It just works better that way. Try it, you'll like it.

Titus 2:1: "But *as for* you, speak the things that befit sound doctrine. *Teach the* older men to be temperate, serious-minded, respectable, sound in the faith, in love, *and* in patience; In like manner, *teach the* older women *to be* in *their* behavior as *it is* fitting for godly women, not slanderers, *and* not enslaved to much wine, *but* teachers of that which is right" (vs 1-3). God expects women to be teachers, teachers to women, but not over men.

And you can put in the mix right there, you can put in your notes, the Prov. 31 woman. You read that:

- she's got brains
- she's got intelligence
- she knows how to handle money
- she knows how to run the household
- she knows how to take care of her children

and she does such a good job that her husband praises her—right? Does that sound like oppression? *No!* That's just fine.

In the days of Jesus, women did the weaving and making of clothes. Remember Lydia, who was a seller of purple? That was her business. And they did things like making clothes and selling them and brought in income into the family that way. She did it at home, took care of the home, took care of the family. And that's the way that it should be.

Verse 4: "That they may teach the young women to love their husbands and to love their children." Sometimes that takes teaching. We're not the first people in the world to ever come up with psychology and psychological teaching, of positive thinking, and encouragement in helping people coming along by talking nice to them. That's what this is all about, too.

I think this: If the husbands do not oppress the wives and the wives do not pick on the husbands, but they work at helping each other, everything's going to run a whole lot smoother. God created both of us so that we come together to become one flesh and we both learn from each other. We both grow together. We both get old together, be married many years, have many experiences. And we go through all the things with all of our children and then their children's children. If you have a good enough health, then their children. Then finally before you die, you have a big family reunion with the picture of this family tree. When that picture comes out, you look at your wife with your gray hair and her gray hair, and you say, 'My, look what we started.'

Now notice this, v 5: “*To be modest, chaste, keepers of the home...* [That’s what is missing today—isn’t it? Kids come home to empty houses. That’s the devil’s playground.] ...*to be good and to submit themselves to their own husbands, so that the Word of God may not be blasphemed....* [I wonder how God looks at the church where a woman is a pastor?] ...In the same way, exhort the younger men *to be sober-minded. In all things you yourself set an example of good works; in doctrine uncorrupted, serious-minded, and sincere; use sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that the one who opposes you may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say about you*” (vs 5-8). That depends on their attitude.

Let’s come to 1-Corinthians 11; there’s that dreaded chapter. Remember, they had things upside down in Corinth in so many different ways. Now, let’s understand this in the way that God wants us to understand. Let’s look at it this way.

- Who’s the Head of the Church? *Christ!*
- Does He love the Church? *Yes!*
- Does He care for the Church? *Yes!*
- Does He provide for the Church? *Yes!*
- Does He correct the Church? *Yes!*

All of those things are all examples from Christ. Is He going to marry the church? *Yes!* And we’ll see how He does the things, so that it’s all going to work together for good. And that’s what God wants.

1-Corinthians 11:1: “Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ. 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...” (vs 1-3). He’s got to have a clarification here. Now remember, in Greece they had the Oracles of Delphi and they had women priestesses. So consider the society from which they came.

Verse 3: “But I want you to understand that the Head of every man is Christ, and *the* head of *the* woman *is* the man, and *the* Head of Christ *is* God.... [That’s the order that God has created. You don’t want to go against the creation of God.] ...Every man who has *a covering* on *his* head when he is praying or prophesying puts his Head to shame.... [But you could never get a rabbi to read that.] ...But every woman who has *her* head uncovered when she is praying or prophesying puts her head to shame, for it is the same as being shaved” (vs 3-5). When does a woman pray?

- she prays at home
- she prays with her children
- she prays with her husband

When there’s special music and a woman sings and it’s a prayer, it is a prayer to song. When she sings and it’s prophesying, then that is fine. It would have to do that because he says, ‘I don’t allow a woman to speak in church.’ How could it be anything else?

Verse 5: “...or prophesying puts her head to shame, for it is the same as being shaved.... [Some women today shave their heads and they do look pitifully awful; they do!] ...For if a woman is not covered, let her be shorn....” (vs 5-6). We’re talking about hair and hair length. I’m glad to see an improvement in hair length among the women. And I’ve deferred going through this for years, lest I offend some women. I don’t want to offend men, but there are also longhaired men, too. What do you think every time you see a longhaired man? *Yuck!* What happens when you see a real shorthaired woman? *Yuck!* And guess what the length of the hair was of the woman who answered for her husband every time I was talking to him? It was not down to her ankles.

Verse 6: “...But if *it be* shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved... [shorn is cropped really, really short] ...let her be covered. For, on the one hand, a man ought not to cover *his* head... [What do Jews have for prayer? *A prayer shawl!* No wonder they reject the New Testament.] ...ought not to cover *his* head, since he is *the* image and glory of God; but, on the other hand, *the* woman is *the* glory of man” (vs 6-7). Special creation for man and the man is a special creation for women to help in building God’s family by having their own family and children so that God’s plan can go forward. That’s a tremendous thing. You ever thought of it? We are all in partnerships with God in His creation and in His plan, even with our children.

Verse 8: “For *the* man is not of *the* woman, but *the* woman *is* of *the* man. And also, *the* man was not created for the sake of the woman, but *the* woman for the sake of the man. For this reason, it is necessary for the woman to have *a sign of being under* authority on *her* head because of the angels” (vs 8-10).

That’s very important, because look at all the things that happen to women when they’re alone. Think of all the brutal kidnappings and rapes and everything like that that go on. It can be more than just cropped or shorn hair; it can be rebellion against mother and father. It can be completely innocent and someone just come along and kidnap and murder and kill. We’ve seen all of those things, because the women are the weaker vessel. They just are.

Verse 11: “Nevertheless, neither *is the* man separate from *the* woman, nor *the* woman separate from *the* man in *the* Lord.... [We’re going to see in a minute, we are to become one flesh.] ...For as the

woman *is* of the man, so also the man *is* by the woman... [Every man, other than Adam, has been born of their mothers—correct? *Yes!*] ...but all things *are* of God. Now you judge for yourselves... [Paul said, ‘Okay, you figure this out for yourself. You judge this. Use the mind of Christ, use the Spirit of God, you judge for yourselves.] ...Is it becoming for a woman to pray to God uncovered? Or does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair... [We’re getting into the real topic of the subject.] ...it is a shame to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; because the long hair has been given to her instead of a *veil to cover her head*’ (vs 11-15).

Every Muslim needs to read that. You talk about oppression. Think of the poor women in the Muslim countries, especially those that have to wear burqas and look out like they almost have to have a telescope, walking down the street to see where they’re going. And they’re oppressed in many ways.

When people talk about men being the head of the wives, too many people think of the example of the Muslims where they have four women, treat them like they’re kids, they can beat them and slap them around. If they do something they don’t like, they can kill them. Not what God wants! God is love. He wants us to have love. We’re to love each other. We’re to care for each other. We’re to uplift each other and be supportive in every way.

Verse 15: “...has been given to her instead of a *veil to cover her head*. But if anyone is contentious *over this issue*, we have no such custom, neither do the Churches of God” (vs 15-16). Of what?

1. long-haired men
2. short-haired women or shaven-head women
3. wearing a veil over your head

No such custom! Let’s look at the ideal because we go from what is corrective—and that’s pretty corrective there. I don’t think I’ve given a sermon on this in ten years, you think that’s enough space of time? Let’s see what God wants here.

Ephesians 5:22: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” In order to do that you’ve got to have brains, intelligence, you’ve got to think. That doesn’t just make you a ‘yes’ person. That doesn’t make you less than a person. That gives you the fulfillment of being a woman. “...as to the Lord.”

That’s quite a comparison—isn’t it? You going to fight and argue against God? You going to fight and argue against Christ? You going to correct Him, whatever it may be? Now sometimes, husbands, your behavior is bad enough that maybe your wife really needs to let you know how she feels

and what’s happening. That doesn’t necessarily mean she’s in rebellion against you. If you do things that are so bad that you, just like blithering going down the street, destroying everything in your path, and your wife doesn’t say anything to you, then you know, she is not treating you in the right way.

But if she says, ‘Hey, look, what are you doing? Stop and think. What is happening? Do you understand what is going on? Do you realize what’s you’re doing?’ ‘*No.*’

Verse 23: “For the husband is *the* head of the wife...”

- that takes a lot of intelligence
- that takes the Spirit of God
- that takes love
- that takes dedication
- that takes understanding
- that that takes patience

Doesn’t it? *Yes!* “...even as Christ is *the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the body. For even as the church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives...” (vs 23-25).

- Don’t treat them with contempt.
- Don’t treat them as less than you.
- Don’t treat them with a superior attitude.

—any of those things. It doesn’t mean that. *It means love them!* If there are things that needs to be corrected, you can correct them. Ask some questions you know and so forth.

Verse 25: “Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (vs 23-25). This is the whole goal:

- of the Church
- of each individual
- of marriage

Verse 26: “So that He might sanctify it... [That is, make it Holy.] ...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame” (v 26-27).

This is all to uplift your wife, all to help her, all to inspire her. And if you do that, she will be inspired to submit to you. Does that sound like a fair bargain? This is what God wants. I’m sure that some who are going to hear this message, because I’m going to send it out, will kind of be chafing at the bit, or saying, ‘Well, no, he just doesn’t understand my situation.’

Listen, what I've been through, I understand 99%. I can't say I understand 100%. I understand! So you need to ask the question: Do you understand? If it's a real problem for you, either man or woman, well, maybe you ought to sit down and figure some things out yourself. Like Paul said, 'You judge yourselves.' Don't come and ask a minister to referee the situation. Part of being husband and wife are to work things out. Sometimes they work out smooth; sometimes they're a little rough; sometimes they're a little difficult; sometimes it's silence for a while, too. Isn't that true? But nevertheless, all of those are experiences that we go through so that we can build the character of Christ—isn't that it? Isn't that what God wants? What God wants is not exalting men and putting down women. It is not saying that women are any less of a human being than a man. ***No! Each one of us has a special relationship by our creation to God and then to each other!***

Verse 27: "That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church.... [He brings out a very tremendous spiritual analogy of oneness.] ...For we are members of His body... [This took me some time to understand this, years as a matter of fact.] ...of His flesh and of His bones" (vs 27-30). And 'the flesh' means through Christ's sacrifice. And 'of His bones' referring to how Eve was created from one of the ribs of Adam. In the same way ***we are re-created in the image of Christ from the innermost being of Christ*** through His Holy Spirit. Does that make sense? That's something!

I didn't cover everything I could have covered, I suppose, but we need to leave these things in the same category of *judge it yourself* and whatever needs to be. Now you're going to be in a position that you're going to have to help other people. You're going to be in a position that someone is going to say, 'What should I do?' You've all gone through enough experiences—haven't you?—so you can tell them.

And another thing that's very important for us to understand is this: If you talk to anyone, whether woman to woman or man to man or man to woman or woman to man, in any kind of helping people with their problems, *keep it confidential!* Don't discuss it with your husband or your wife, because people come to you so that they can get some counsel. They don't want it to go any further than between the two of you. So make sure that you

keep it that way. Then you will be able to help more people. Because the worse thing in the world that anyone ever wants is they tell someone about their problems and difficulties and next thing they know they hear little birds flying around the congregation—right? That doesn't work out very well. Always remember that.

There are things, when I am counseling and talking to people, I don't discuss them with my wife. When she talks to different ones, she doesn't discuss them with me. That's the way that it should be.

In the way of preaching and teaching, *women should not develop doctrine*. God left that to the ministry to do. That doesn't mean you don't have points of understanding you can add to your husband's or others understanding. Or by asking a question can bring something out which is very important.

But I've received papers from wives of elders who develop doctrine and their wives ended up running their husbands and it's led to disaster. If that happens and the elder never recovers, then somewhere along the line he will disqualify himself as being an elder for letting his wife rule over him. So there's also that thing that we need to consider.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 2:18-20
- 2) Romans 16:1-3
- 3) Romans 5:12
- 4) Genesis 2:18
- 5) Genesis 3:9-13, 6, 14, 16-19
- 6) Isaiah 3:1-5, 12
- 7) 1-Timothy 2:8-12
- 8) Titus 2:1-8
- 9) 1-Corinthians 11:1-16
- 10) Ephesians 5:22-30

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 3:15
- Proverbs 31

Also referenced: DVD: *Israel of the Alps*
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The Stewardship of God's Word

Fred R. Coulter

Let's understand something about the Bible and the stewardship of the Bible; not only for those who handle the Word of God, but everyone who has the Word of God. Not just for ministers, elders and teachers, but for everyone who owns a Bible. How are you to look at this?

Let's understand what a steward is, since this is the stewardship of the Word of God. A steward is *one who takes care, in trust, of someone else's property, money, goods, whatever*. A steward is not to use any of his master's... Christ is our Master!

- Isn't God the Father Sovereign over all?
- Didn't Jesus say that the 'words that I speak to you are the words of the Father'?
- *Yes, indeed!*

We have the written Word of God that consists of the spoken words of God. If anyone dares say, 'If God would come down and tell me to keep the Sabbath, I'd do it.' You're challenging God! He already came down and said to do so beginning with Adam and Eve. It's recorded so that we can know that, as well as the other things of God. A steward is to be *absolutely honest, forthright and truthful* with everything that belongs to the other person, whatever it may be.

In our case, we are to be absolutely truthful and faithful in *honestly handling the Word of God, honestly translating the Word of God, honestly teaching the Word of God*, because these are the teachings of God spoken by Him, when you read any of the commandments of God. That's why the Ten Commandments are so important. What did God do? *He came down on Mt. Sinai and He spoke these words!* They're the words of God!

Can any impotent little man tell God, 'I don't agree with these things and I don't want them so I'm going to rewrite my own'? *That's what most people do!* I don't think that if you were standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai when God came down in His power and glory—it was shaking and quaking with smoke and lava falling down off the mountain, rocks falling down, you heard the trumpet blasting and blowing and you heard the voice of God saying, 'I AM the Lord your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, you shall have no other gods before Me'—I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to think about any other god. But removed from that—because men can't stand the voice of God—*it's written*. So, here's the test:

- Do you believe God?

- Do you believe His recorded words?
- When you have them, what are you going to do with them?
- How are you going to handle it?

We are all stewards of the Word of God! We are, as Jesus said, 'The light of the world, the salt of the earth.'

Luke 12:31: "But seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew adds, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God...' The primary motivation of our lives—our heart, mind, direction—whatever we do.

Verse 32: "Do not be afraid, **little flock...**" That's what we are, *a little flock*. Many people like to flatter God, and say they have 'Christian values' and that if we have Christian values you ought to vote Republican.

If Jesus Christ is not your man, and God the Father is not your God, it doesn't matter how many of the precepts of Christian values you steal from God to claim as your own, ***you're not being a good steward of the Word of God!*** You have to take *all of it* and preserve *all of it* and live by *all of it*. As Jesus said, 'By every Word of God.' Those who do so are few, here's some encouragement:

"...for your Father delights in giving you the kingdom" (v 32).

- you can't earn it
- you can't buy it
- you can't pay for it
- a credit card will not be accepted

You have to be purchased by Christ! How important should this be in our lives?

Verse 33: "Sell your possessions, and give alms..." It's harder to retain your possessions and really believe God than it is to sell all that you have and go do something with it. That's really hard.

In today's world, our big test is that we have so many things; we have so many blessings, so many, many things that we get so busy that we don't have time for the Word of God.

"...Make for yourselves purses *that* do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief can come near, and no moth can destroy" (v 33). This is not to be misused for some minister to say, 'All right! Send all your money!'

Like this false prophet who said, 'There's not going to be any Feast in 2008 so send me your Feast money.' What's he going to do with it if there's no Feast, when God says that it's to be used

for the Feast? *He's guaranteeing there won't be any Feast because you would have sent your money to him!*

Verse 34: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." That is absolutely true! If your heart is not for the Kingdom of God, God the Father, Jesus Christ and all the saints, and bringing that to the earth: everything you do, everything you own, all the money and things that you have *are worthless!*

Verse 35 tells us what we are to do: "Let your loins be girded about... [prepared for battle] ...and *your* lamps burning." Always keep them going! Note: Matt. 25 about the five wise and five foolish virgins. They didn't keep their lamps burning.

Verse 36: "And you yourselves be like men who are waiting for their lord... [because you are a steward and he's going to come and reckon with you] ...whenever he shall return from the wedding feast; so that when he comes and knocks, they may immediately open to him."

This is from a practice that the Jews had, which was whenever a man would get engaged to his wife, then he would leave her in her father's house until such time that he went out and established his own house and built it and have a place for her. Then he would come, within a year, but at an unannounced time during that year. One of the reasons was to check and see if she's faithful.

This is what it refers to with "...they may immediately open to him." There is also another Scripture we need to look at.

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Here's a blessing for those who do what they should do:

Verse 37: "Blessed *are* those servants whom the lord, when he comes, shall find watching. Truly I say to you, he will gird himself, and will make them sit down, and will come *and* serve them"—because you've been a good steward.

Verse 38: "And if he comes in the second watch, or comes in the third watch, and finds *them* watching, blessed are those servants." A lot of people apply this to watching news. That's not the full force of it. Yes, we are to watch prophecies, but what are you to watch more than anything else? *Your own self!* That *you're not* out there eating and drinking with the gluttons, sinners and so forth, and that *you* are developing and growing in character.

Verse 40: "Now you, therefore, be ready..." *Always ready!* That's why we have the Sabbath every week, because this helps us be ready.

"...for the Son of man is coming in an hour

that you do not think" (v 40). Truly, for them, that was true, but this also has the meaning—not just His second return—that God comes upon you when it comes to the end of your life. Or if you're out there sinning, and you do something foolish and something happens and you lose your life, God is watching you, and that's how it came about. He came upon you at that instant, because you went against God.

Verse 41: "Then Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are You speaking this parable to us *only*, or also to all?'"

Let's look at the phrase, *open the door*. Always have it ready. Rev. 3 talks about the Church that was not watching themselves or prophecy.

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot" (vs 14-15). Back in the parable you didn't keep your lamp burning. That ties in with Matt. 25 that their light is going out and they didn't carry reserves. He says, "...I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot."

Verse 16: "So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth." I think we've been seeing a lot of that in the last few years. Because they weren't watching world news, self, doctrine and Truth, what have we seen with this kind of attitude? *A 'million' different doctrines, ideas and dozens of calendar schemes and interpretations of Scripture!*

Verse 17: "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy...' 'We've got all of these physical things, and surely these reflect the blessings of God.' *Not necessarily!*

- Remember what it said of Sodom and Gomorrah?
- That they became lazy?
- That they had idol time?
- That they had wealth and all of these things?
- Was that a blessing from God?

or

- Can Satan reward his own, too?
- Would Satan like to come along and try to tempt you with something that looks like a blessing of God?

Surely, he would!

We need to consider that here, also! "...and have need of nothing'..." (v 17). We're going to see what we need to do when we're in this condition, that we have everything physically that we would need to have. What do we do spiritually, because *that becomes the real test!* They didn't watch

themselves.

"...and you do not understand that **you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked**" (v 17). That's *spiritually!* Because they had all these physical riches, they weren't storing up treasures in heaven of love and character, which is through:

- living God's way
- praying
- studying

Verse 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich..."—the true gold; {note 1 Cor. 3 where we build gold, silver and precious stone, or wood, hay or stubble}

"...and **white garments** so that you may be clothed..." (v 18)—the righteousness of the saints showing obedience, which then tells us that they were not obedient.

"...and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see" (v 18).

That's the hardest thing to do: *really look at ourselves the way that we need to!* Really come to the understanding and point in your life that *you know* and are convicted to the very soul of your being that **you have nothing you didn't receive**, and everything has come from God, and not to get lifted up like Nebuchadnezzar. He was warned, but he strolled around Babylon and said, 'Look at all **I** have done! God called in the vision.

Likewise with us! Whatever we do, let's not get lifted up in anything. That's why I've written: whatever we do with the Word of God has got to be from what God wants, and we don't stand up and take any credit and say, 'Look, I did this, or did that.' *or* 'Don't you understand this?' *It all comes from God!*

After all, you have to go back and look at all of those beginning with Moses who wrote the Word of God in the Bible, and all the Prophets, Psalms and down through all the apostles. They gave their lives so that we can have this. Now we've got the true riches of the Word of God. What are we going to do with it?

Some people do not understand correction. They get all upset if any correction comes! Well, it's going to come. We have several choices on correction:

1. Are you going to correct yourself with the Spirit and Word of God?
2. Are you going to be corrected by the circumstances and trials that you go through?

3. Are you going to have to be corrected directly by Christ, because you don't listen to the first two?

The Word of God is whether it is preached or you read it.

Verse 19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent." One thing that is really true, if you fully understand that *you have nothing you didn't receive* you're going to be an attitude of repentance every day. That doesn't mean that you're going to be a knock down for other people to take advantage of, because you've got to *stand for the Truth!* It just means that you're not going to do it from your own carnal self.

You're going to do it with the Word of God and the Spirit of God the way that God wants it done. Because they're not doing these things, He admonishes them to do it:

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."—ties in with Luke 12. He can knock on *the door of your life* at any time. That's what this has to do with. Remember this: **Whenever your conscience smites you, and you do not respond to God in return**—your conscience being smitten because of sin is the Spirit of God revealing it to you—**then He's going to have to do some things!** If you respond to God the door is open.

Isn't this quite a characteristic that in the Church of God there's no room for Christ, **the door is closed?** *Whoa!* That's why He wants you to think about it.

"...If anyone hears My voice..." (v 20)—spiritually through God's Spirit in your conscience and God is dealing with you. If anyone hears His voice from the Word of God, obeys the Word of God—which is His voice—"...and opens the door..." *You must come to God and you open the door!* You must come in repentance and ask God to forgive you, that His Spirit comes into you again the way that it should be.

That's why the sermon *Your Second Calling*. A lot of people have said, through the Church experience that they went through in the past, that when they begin to understand some of the things in the Bible the way they ought to, it's almost like another calling. Well, it is! Here it describes the *second calling*.

"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (v 20). This shows a close, intimate, personal relationship.

There's hope, v 21: "To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with

My Father in His throne.” What He’s saying is that *if* you do this and make the right judgments, then you’re going to recover. That’s all part of the stewardship of God and the Word of God.

Luke 12:41: “Then Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, are You speaking this parable to us *only*, or also to all [everyone]?’” Notice how Jesus answers the question; He gives you the real answer and you have to figure out how to get there:

Verse 42: “And the Lord said, ‘Who then is the wise and faithful steward...’ ***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all those who keep His commandments!*** That’s wisdom, faithfulness and ***living by every Word of God!***

- faithful with the Holy Spirit that God has given you
- faithful with the Word of God
- faithful with the physical things that God has given you

Remember that with all of the physical things that you receive, God requires that you give back to Him so that you understand that *you have nothing you didn’t receive!* Very important! I think a lot of the people who don’t believe in that are suffering from it, and really are in great difficulty with God.

Verse 42: “And the Lord said, ‘Who then is the wise and faithful steward whom the lord shall put in charge of his household...’” You’re not called to some menial little task. Though it’s often quoted, ‘I’d rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,’ God isn’t going to have a million doorkeepers. He’s going to give you charge of His household, His Kingdom under Him. Where did we start? *Fear not little flock! It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom!* WOW!

“...to give to *each one* the portion of food in season? Blessed *is* that servant whom the lord, when he comes, shall find so doing. Of a truth, I tell you, he will set him over all his possessions” (vs 43-44)—*because he was faithful* in the absence of the physical presence of his master! Isn’t that the hardest thing to do? *Yes, indeed!*

Then He shows the comparison, and let’s look at how that fit in those days when they were finishing up the New Testament, especially John where he said that ‘there are many antichrists.’ Let’s see how it fits today where people have had their difficulties concerning being faithful to God.

Verse 45: “But if that servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming’...” How does that come about? *Because too many people believe*

what men have said in setting dates! When the dates are not fulfilled that a man has said, the man who said it then gives them an excuse to do something else. So, they do! ‘I don’t need to keep the Sabbath anymore.’

And the one who gave the wrong date, it’s awfully hard to stand up and say, ‘I was wrong, I repent of that.’ Should never have set a date because Jesus said, ‘No man knows the hour or the day.’ Besides, truly, we don’t know when we may drop dead.

“...and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidservants...” (v 45). Sounds like a little church experience we’ve all gone through, *‘beaten up’ from the pulpit!* *‘Beaten up’ by authority!*

“...and to be gluttonous and become drunk” (v 45). That means to misappropriate and use things you should not. To become drunk, not just on physical wine and drink, but also on ***spiritual wine and drink***. Who is that lovely lady that’s called *the harlot* who has the cup full of the ‘wine of her fornication’ to give? How many churches have bought into the doctrines that she preaches? Seriously, we need to ask a fundamental question: Why should anyone in the Church of God ever, ***ever*** think that God is a trinity? When that’s a doctrine of the Catholics? The Protestants? Why would anyone ever, ***ever***, ***ever*** think that there is only one single God?

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with** God, and the Word **was** God.” Why? *Because they have become:*

- drunk on *false doctrine*
- drunk on *their own self importance*
- and falling victim to the doctrines of the false Christianity of this world

There is also tied into it that there are many people ***want to be part of the world***, yet, be accepted of God. You have just enough ‘religion’ to feel comfortable with God, and just enough ‘religion’ that you don’t offend the world. If you’re in trouble you can run quickly to God. But in the meantime, let’s be friends with the world, too.

Like 12:46: “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 will...”—hug and kiss him? *No!* Will call him to heaven? *No!* Anyone who believes in going to heaven does not believe the Bible, though they preach the name of Jesus. The Bible teaches the resurrection. If your soul goes to heaven there’s no need for a resurrection.

“...**cut him asunder**... [that’s not a trial of the faith; that’s *an execution*] ...and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers” (v 46). What is that

ultimate portion? *Lake of Fire!*

The responsibility of the steward, v 47: "And that servant who knew the will of his lord, but did not prepare, nor did according to his will..." That's how we're to order our lives and everything we do. That's how I feel exactly with the things that I do. I don't look upon any of these things as accomplishments that I have done myself—period!

I look back before God called me and I've often wondered where I would be if God hadn't called me. I know that whatever it is it has got to be of God.

"...shall be beaten with many stripes... [I don't want any additional correction] ...but the one who did not know, and did *things* worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For **to whomever much has been given, from him shall much be required...**" (vs 47-48). That's what we need to look upon. Think about that the next time you walk through your house where you have all the things that you need. You have

- food in your cupboard
- hot water running
- a thermostat to keep warm
- everything that you need

God has given it to you so you can devote more time to the spiritual things and develop the character of God! To learn and grow of it!

God is merciful because there are some people who have partial knowledge. Read Rev. 2-3 and you see there is partial knowledge within the Churches of God. There are a lot of brethren out there that have not been taught the way that they should, so they don't know things they ought to know. God will be a little merciful to them. But ***if we've been given much, much is required!***

"...and to whom much has been committed, from him they will demand the more" (v 48). Receiving eternal life is a great responsibility; it is a *stewardship!* It's not a cakewalk of human experience.

Verse 49: "I came to cast fire into the earth, and what will I, if it already be kindled?"

Titus 1—a little more about stewardship, relationship to God, the Word of God and ministry. Titus was an elder under Paul; Paul had ordained Titus.

Titus 1:1: "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to *the* faith of God's elect and *the* knowledge of *the* Truth that is according to Godliness; in *the* hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie promised before the ages of time" (vs 1-2).

After the Flood it began with Abraham and everything for the rest of the history on down through eternity hinges on the calling of Abraham—the children of Israel, the Church—and that is keyed in Gen. 15 to the Passover, which then is keyed to the sparing of the firstborn and the exodus in the book of Exodus and to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Everything is keyed to that, so keep that in mind.

It talks about what God promised Abraham, He was fully able to do and would! It also says, "...before the ages of time." So, God had His plan ***before the ages of time***, which is why Satan the third of the angels rebelled. They didn't want to have these physical human beings, through the plan of God, to be exalted over them.

Take each one of these verses and there is just a lot that comes out of all of them.

Verse 3: "But revealed in its own set time in *the* proclamation of His Word..." This tells us that the preaching of the Word of God is going to come in its own set time. The set time is outlined by what everybody hates in worldly Christianity: the Sabbath and the Holy Days!

{Note book: *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* and also the advanced book: *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days*}

"...with which I was **entrusted**..." That's how Paul viewed what he was doing. That's how we need to view the Word of God. That's how I view what I've been able to add, with the inspiration of God—all the work of everyone that God has dealt with that are somehow connected with the Word of God—were laboring in the field long before we were even here.

"...according to *the* commandment of **God our Savior**" (v 3). Is Jesus God? *It says so right here!*

Verse 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 elders in every city, as I commanded you: If any man be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of debauchery or rebellion. For **it is obligatory that as God's steward**..." (vs 4-7). For anyone who is a minister or elder,

- he's a steward of Word of God
- he's a steward over the flock, over which the Spirit of God has made him overseer
- he's a steward to remain faithful

As God's steward he's taking care of God's property! All the brethren belong to God! Everyone who has the Holy Spirit is in the Church ***of God***, of which Jesus is the Head. Look what happens to the Church whenever that is forgotten; whether on a big scale, or on a little scale.

"...an overseer be blameless, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a bully, not greedy for material gain; but hospitable, a lover of good... [not things, but behavior and character more than anything else] ...sound-minded, just, Holy, self-controlled, holding steadfastly **to the faithful Word...**" (vs 7-9). That's why *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order* is called *A Faithful Version*. We want to be *faithful* to the Word of God.

Isn't it interesting that there are no other versions out there called *A Faithful Version*. They keep track of the names of all the Bibles that have been done.

"...according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine and to convict those who are gainsayers" (v 9).

1-Cor. 3 and 4 tells us a little more of Paul's attitude and how he looked at things, how he considered things.

1-Corinthians 3:19: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God..." Think about that if you entertain any of the false doctrines of worldly Christianity. That's the wisdom of this world.

"...for it is written, 'He entraps the wise in their own craftiness.' And again, '*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*'" (vs 19-20)—because they trust in themselves!

Look at all the atheists—the closet atheists that are coming out—they trust in themselves. What they do is worship *their own thoughts!* It means they worship themselves.

What some of these commentators ought to do, with the view of this, and say, 'If that's so you must be God,' and God can walk through walls. Let's continue the interview with you after you've gotten up and walked through the wall and come back through it. Then I will believe you. In the meantime, if you can't, this interview is over.'

Verse 21: "Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men; for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or *the world*, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours; and you *are Christ's*, and *Christ is God's*" (vs 21-23).

1-Corinthians 4:1: "So then, let *every man* regard us as **ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.**" That's why I'm talking

about, *the stewardship of God!* Not just the ministers only, but to every one of us.

Verse 2: "Beyond that, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful."

- faithful to God
- faithful to his trust
- faithful to his family
- faithful to his wife
- faithful in his preaching

All of those things account there. It doesn't say just faithful and then list out some things. This means faithful in *everything he does in his life!*

Since they were judging him, Paul says this, v 3: "But to me it is an insignificant matter that I am judged by you, or by man's standard; and neither do I judge myself. Now, I am not conscious of anything against myself, yet, I am not justified by this..." (vs 3-4). In other words, if he finds himself in good conduct that doesn't mean that he's just of himself. No! *It's God Who justifies you!*

"...for the One Who is judging me is *the Lord*. Therefore, do not judge anything before *the time*; *wait* until the Lord comes, Who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the motives of *all hearts*; and then shall each one receive praise from God" (vs 4-5).

This is how God does it. Lots of times He gives the wicked rope to hang themselves with. He doesn't come down and correct them all at once. He lets them get tangled in their own spider web as it were.

Question was asked about a faithful steward whose children are faithful. What about when they grow up and leave and become unfaithful? Such as some of the sons of David, like Absalom, and Gershom, firstborn of Moses, who actually went out and worked with the Danites in setting up a false religion.

The answer is that as long as they are under your care and they are faithful, that's fine. When they are adults and leave home, they have to make their own choices. If they make bad choices after they leave home, then that's upon their heads, and doesn't reflect upon a steward of God because when you read Ezek. 18 about the son and the father, that all applies.

Verse 6: "Now these things, brethren, I have applied to Apollos and myself for your sakes; that in us you may learn not to think *of men* beyond what is written..." What does that say? ***Trust no man!*** Realize that we all have our faults and weaknesses, and don't exalt men.

Look what happened to the Church of God

when they exalted a couple men to the heights of heaven. God destroyed it! Think about that, all you who want to yearn for the old days. Remember what happened.

"...so that no one among you is puffed up on behalf of one *of us* against the other" (v 6). They were saying,

- I'm of Paul
- I'm of Apollos
- I'm of Cephas

That's being puffed up to come one against the other. It's kind of like competition in sports.

Verse 7: "For what makes you superior to others?..." This is a very humbling verse; we have a lot of people, especially false prophets come along being superior

"...And **what do you have that you did not receive?**..." (v 7). Let me help you to use this Scripture to help correct yourself when you start getting lifted up in vanity or anything. Whenever you start puffing up and feeling how great you are, stop and remember this verse: "**...you have that you did not receive...**" If that doesn't convince you, just do the bellybutton check, which is that you received everything that you are from your parents.

"...But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?" (v 7). In other words, *you invented it yourself!* Then Paul chides them a little bit, because they're not being good stewards:

Verse 8: "Now you are satiated.... [rich and increased with goods (Rev. 3)] ...Now you have been enriched. You have reigned without us.... [just like the Kingdom of God and you're reigning and ruling already] ...And I would that you did reign, so that we also might reign with you."

Then what did he do? Smash his fist down onto the table and say, 'Don't you know I'm God's only apostle on earth?' *No!*

Verse 9: "For I suppose that God has made us apostles last, as it were appointed to death... [all were martyred except John] ...for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. *We are* fools for the sake of Christ, but you *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but you *are* strong; you *are* glorious, but we *are* without honor" (vs 9-10). He's really bringing out a great problem and a great lesson in humility. Then Paul goes on to explain what he went through and everything that he did. Then he says, 'How do you want me to come?'

Verse 21: "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod... [You want correction? How do you want me to come? *It's about your attitude!*] ...or in love and a spirit of meekness?"

Then Paul starts bringing out their sins. So, the book of 1-Corinthians is very instructive. {note sermon series: *Epistles to the Corinthians*}

I think today we are living more in the era of the Corinthians more than anything else when you look at all the problems that are listed in two letters to the Corinthians. Sometimes if you bring some of these things out, the ones who are really diligent and trying, they take it to heart so much that they actually put upon themselves a guilt complex or conscious that God really doesn't want them to have, because they're willing to change at the blink of an eye when they understand things.

Then there are those who don't like the correction, and they sort of bristle back and say, 'All he's doing is correcting us, shouting, yelling and screaming at us.' That's not the case! There are a lot of lessons in there.

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 12:31-48
- 2) Revelation 3:14-21
- 3) Luke 12:41-45
- 4) John 1:1
- 5) Luke 12:46-49
- 6) Titus 1:1-8
- 7) 1 Corinthians 3:19-23
- 8) 1 Corinthians 4:1-10, 21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 25
- Genesis 15
- Ezekiel 18

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Your Second Calling*
- Sermon Series: *Epistles to the Corinthians*
- Books:
 - ✓ *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
 - ✓ *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
Transcribed:4-15-15

Overview of the Elder's Conference—2009

Missions of the Elders

Wayne Stenhouse

Last week we were in Cincinnati for the elder's conference, and it was a delightful time, very moving time for me, because everything I can learn to do better as an elder I will certainly pass on to you to help you in your life. It may pertain to the elders now, but it's going to pertain to you in your life, also.

One thing God did when He appointed elders and had them ordained, they were given a special covenant. This special covenant wasn't to make the elder's better than everybody else. It was a commission that was given forth by God to help the flock, teach the flock and watch over the flock until Christ returns.

Matthew 22 is what everything should be based on, and this is a covenant that God made also with the elders.

Matthew 22:35: "And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, 'Master, which commandment is *the* great commandment in the Law?' And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind'" (vs 35-37). Brethren, that's going to take a lifetime process. We live it every week.

If you'll notice lately, time is going by so quickly that I keep saying to Sylvia that I can't believe the week has gone. Where did it go?

Verse 38: "This is *the* first and greatest commandment." That's what an elder needs to base everything on with God.

Verse 39: "And *the* second *one* is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Brethren, you've got have some love for yourself and not be down on yourself so much. If you are, you can't love your neighbor. You have to love yourself, and with God's love leave it all in His hands.

Verse 40: "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." When you think about that, everything for our basis is right here:

- our relationship with God
- what we do
- how we do it

We need to fulfill this as elders to encourage you to fulfill it in your life the way you should. There are three missions for elders:

1. Feed the Flock of God and serve the brethren

Hearing this brought a lot more into my thinking as to what the duties of the elders are. We're not to lord it over you. We're not to lead your lives. We are to bring you to the glory of God. Every time I hear this, something else happens that hits me a different way. You can read the Scriptures over and over and all of a sudden you get a different slant at them. You get a little more insight into them.

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?'...." We know that Christ was talking about 'agape' love and Peter was talking about 'phileo' love. They weren't on the same level. Peter did learn this down the road.

"...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" (v 15). That word means to nourish them. Who do the *lambs* pertain to? *New people! People who have returned to God!* We have to go to that level to teach at that level to help them reach the further levels.

Verse 16: "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'" That shepherding means to *watch over and guide* the sheep.

They are not the minister's sheep; they belong to God. This is one of the things that He's given us to do. The word *shepherd* means to *tend to*. To tend to them is to make sure that no grievous wolves come in, protecting the flock from all outside influences and protecting the flock from people changing doctrines, it's our job to tell you and it's your decision from there. However, we would be neglecting you not telling you.

This is not a put down to anybody else, this is simply to put out a warning. Sometimes when you hear a warning, you become alert to it. If you're in the military and you get a strong warning, you better pay attention to what they're telling you. In war there's no love; it's win at all cost. There are people who want to win at all costs, whether they take your crown, or change your mind into some other doctrines. We can't let that happen, so we need to warn you and take care of the flock the best we can do.

Verse 17: “He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’...” This time Christ came down to the ‘phileo’ level, because He knew that’s all Peter could understand.

“...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). A little different from v 15 where it said, ‘Feed My lambs.’ Now you’re feeding a mature flock.

The only way we can feed the sheep is with the Word of God. There’s no other way. Everything pertaining to our spiritual life is in the Word of God.

After thinking about this and Fred preaching on it, this went this way three times because how many times did Peter deny Christ? *It took a little while to get the message through of what really needs to be done!* He says, here ‘Yes, Lord, You know I love You.’ Yet, three times he denied Him! Was that loving Christ? or Is that saving your own skin?

You have to be up to the fact that if you’re not going to deny Christ then don’t go and tell people you don’t know Christ. Don’t leave here and have someone say, ‘Oh, you went to church.’ *Uh, well, yeah I went to church and it was nice and got to meet some nice people and things like this.*

Why don’t you tell them you’re here being fed by the Word of God? It’s very easy and very simple to not do that. He could have said, ‘Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep, feed My sheep.’ But each one He went through the whole thing about ‘Peter, do you love Me?’ Then we see in the end, when Peter writes his epistle that he did understand.

I’m sure that he did a lot of repenting of denying Christ three times. God revealed that to him with His Holy Spirit.

Matt. 20 has been in error in the Church for many years, but it’s a good story to point to. Matthew 20:20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [James and John] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him.” You also will notice that they were called *the sons of thunder!* There was a reason for that.

They were asking a certain thing from Christ, v 21: “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.’” Isn’t it interesting that one of them would be sitting at the right hand, a place of predominance? So, the one on the left is going to feel awfully jealous of the guy on the right.

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...’” Are you able to take the sins of the world on your shoulders and die in My stead for God’s creation? That’s a tough question!

“...and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*? ...” (v 22). Think of it this way: Do elders receive a little more of the Spirit of God to help them in their office? How can Christ be less than that? That’s what He said with ‘the baptism that I am baptized with.’ Christ had a specific commission here on this earth. He fulfilled it through His work.

“...They said to Him, ‘We are able’” (v 22). They had no idea what they were talking about. But what was the whole purpose of that? Of this question by the mother? *It was called politicking!*

‘Why don’t you take my two sons and put them above everybody else—on the same level with You—and these other ten disciples, let them come along later’; or whatever they’re going to do.

That’s what we call *politics*, and that’s something that an elder must never, *never*, *never* get involved with! Let’s face it, brethren, if you have Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, and we as elders under Him, we’re all on the same level.

- Where are you going to climb to?
- Where are you going to go?
- What ladder is going to make you better than what you have been called to do?
- *Absolutely none!*

There’s to be no politicking.

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... [that was the Father’s decision] ...but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’” God rules the universe! God sets the kings!

Verse 24: “And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers.” *Jealousy!* First and last thing you ever need with a group of elders! We’re all to be thinking of the three missions that we have to accomplish.

Verse 25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them... [‘katakuriō’—lordship *downward*] ...and **the great ones** exercise authority over them.’” *Simon Magus!*

Verse 26: “However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant.” So, the duty of

an elder is to be a servant of God, to serve the people. You're not here to serve me; I'm here to serve you! That's my function.

Verse 27: "And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave; just as... [exactly 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 27-28).

The last thoughts on an elder's mind should be any type of politicking, because they're not going anywhere. You're ordained an elder, and if they maintain what they're supposed to be doing, they'll die an elder. That's that! So, it's not any great office above everyone else, but somehow the structure says that we're here to teach you, and to help you get into the Kingdom of God.

Whatever happens as an elder, you deal with everything with love. The one thing I've learned over the last few years is not to give a quick answer. That is a mistake.

- I need to think about it!
- I need to pray about it!
- I need to let God answer, through me, what you're asking!

Sometimes we're setup, not very often, but once in a while. We'll go visiting into a group and one man has a specific question and he takes up the whole time with that. They'll argue until they're blue in the face. I will tell you right now, there's no argument coming from me. What is the Sabbath?

- A day of delight!
- A day of joy!
- A day of fellowship!
- A day of teaching!
- *It's not a day for controversy!*

It's very simple. I'm not going to be dragged down on the Sabbath until I feel horrible, when that's not the purpose of the Sabbath.

When you tie in all these Scriptures, brethren, it's very mind-boggling how God put 'a little here and a little there'; all with a purpose. Sometimes we wonder when we read Scriptures, what is that purpose?

This is something I need to do in my mission before God, and my covenant with God, and you also need to do.

Deuteronomy 17:14: "When you come to the land, which the LORD your God gives you, and shall possess it and shall live in it and shall say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that *are* around me,' You shall surely set a king over you, whom the LORD your God shall choose. **You shall**

set a king over you from among your brethren. You may not set a stranger over you who is not your brother" (vs 14-15). That could be a disaster!

Verse 16: "Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, so as to multiply horses because the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'" Exactly like when we were called, we're not to turn back to the way we were. For us there's only one thing we need to do and that's *go forward* and accomplish what God has called us to do.

Verse 17: "Nor shall he multiply wives to himself, so that his heart does not turn away. Nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold to himself." Talk about choosing kings. How did they sometimes choose kings in lands that we don't know anything about? foreign lands? dictatorship lands? How do they do that? *Could be a family inheritance!* But it could also be that the king decides on the vote and it's not an honest election. It's greed! And that goes hand-in-hand with the kings of the Bible. It was always handed down to the son. It was natural just to carry on the tradition of voting in that king or a representative of his family.

They sometimes rule by a mob action. They do it because they have this mob-mentality and everybody is terrified of them. So, there are different ways they are set today than back here.

Verse 18: "And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book..." How many do that today? How many kings sit down and write a copy of the Law that God gave them? God's not even involved anymore! They're mocking Him!

"...from that which is in the custody of the priests the Levites" (v 18). If everybody read that law and they had to write it out themselves, one thing about writing things out, it duplicates in your mind what you've been told, and then during the week you say, 'What did he say about this...' You can go back and it's all written out.

Verse 19: "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life..." How many people, presidents, prime ministers, or whatever rules the country, gets up in the morning and reads the Law of God? That's His Word!

"...**so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God...**" (v 19). If they had a background in this, and knew all this, knew the Law of God, they can apply it to their kingdoms. But instead they all want civil rights.

Can you imagine all the money in the world put altogether, how much money is being paid to the capitalists, every member of congress, the senate, the

presidents, vice-presidents, the security that goes with all that.

“...to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them” (v 19). God will not be mocked! He didn't set all these laws and statutes up for people to ignore them. Didn't Christ say at one time that ‘every knee shall bow’? A lot of undoing to do!

Verse 20: “**So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren...**” as an elder. We are to know the Word of God. We are to teach it to the best of our ability. If we don't know something we can find an answer somewhere. If it's something that we can't find an answer to, then you put in that box and put it up on the shelf and some day that will be revealed; for those who have a little bit of patience.

“...and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel” (v 20).

Just think, brethren, back in the days of the time of the Israelites and Egyptians, God must have known that the Egyptians were never going to keep His laws. *Never! And they're still going to today!* That's why He chose Israel to be His special people among the nations.

Think about it! What happened to the Israelites? *They spread all over the world!* What happened to the Egyptians? *They didn't spread anywhere!* Not like the Israelites were spread across the world. God wanted a representative of Himself in all the countries that He laid out. Today we need to really study to keep on top of things, that we don't slide and we continue to grow into the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

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: **Feed the flock of God that is among you,** exercising oversight not by compulsion...*” (vs 1-2). I'm not here to force you to do anything; it has to be your covenant with God.

“...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*” (v 2). In other words, you want to come to services and learn something, as I need to do every week, and I want to go home feeling better than I came because I've learned something, I've dealt with something. Maybe there was an issue I didn't understand, and maybe sometimes you give me the answer.

Verse 3: “Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock of God.”

I'm not your possession in a carnal or

fruitless way. I am given the opportunity, as God's possession, to watch over you. Without vision the people perish! If we're not taught something week after week, then we're not doing our jobs. We're the stewards of Christ.

“...but *by* being examples to the flock of God” (v 3). That's what we need to do. Always look at the bright side of life. We have enough drudgeries in our lives that pull us down that we don't need. We need to come to services, enjoy the fellowship, enjoy what we're being taught that day, and to become Christ-like.

Verse 4: “And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory.”

(go to the next track)

2. For the Perfecting of the Saints

This is going to include the brethren very deeply. We want to explain this because it's been misused so many times throughout the history of the Church. I think it's very important that each and every one of us understand that there's only one office before God. That office is an elder. Peter and Paul said, ‘I am a fellow elder with you.’ Different functions, but they were all elders.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave **some as apostles...**” How many apostles are on the earth today? *None!*

“...and **some prophets...**” That doesn't mean foretelling the future or what people think a prophet is. A prophet is a teacher, also; a teacher of the Word.

“...and **some evangelists...**” Let's think about this. If you're sitting with someone—a friend, someone you know, someone you used to know in the Churches of God—and you're telling them what you've learned today, and showing them the way that they need to do things, what are you doing? *You're evangelizing!* We get thousands of hits on our website monthly. How are we going to change that to bring people to an understanding? We've got some ideas.

“...and **some pastors...**” If you come to me on a one-to-one basis with a spiritual problem, and we're going to go through it, we're ministering to you.

“...and **teachers**” (v 11)—which we normally do on the Sabbath.

The next Scripture is why we're called elders, v 12: “**For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry...**” Whatever we do as elders is the work of the ministry. But we're

specifically told here: **“For the perfecting of the saints...”** Not gleaning anything for ourselves, but bringing you to an understanding of working as a ministry to bring you to the same level of anyone else in the Church.

“...for the edifying of the Body of Christ” (v 12). That means lifting up. This is not a hierarchy or controlled government. This is the purpose and mission. **“...the edifying of the Body of Christ”**—the Church, the called out ones, the ‘exousia.’

For this reason, v 13: “Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ.”

This is not a self-gaining thing toward things toward the elders, but a self-gaining thing for yourselves.

The whole reason for this is, v 14: “So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine...” There are some dandies out there!

“...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error” (v 14)—*through tradition!* Brought up through traditions, taught traditions since birth, and to carry on the tradition. The *tradition* does not come from God. It was manmade, not God-made.

I read in a bulletin that they would keep the Night to Be Much Observed as *a tradition* of the Church. *NO!* It's not a tradition of the Church. *It's an instruction by God!* We don't keep the Passover because it was a tradition that was passed down. We don't keep the Sabbath because it was a tradition passed down. It was specifically given in the Bible by, **‘these are the Lord's Feasts.’** *Not ours!* And the Lord God said to Moses, speak unto the children of Israel... They are not traditions.

When people get to that point of using traditions, and tradition is like getting up every morning and brushing your teeth. Why do you do it? *Well, when we were younger some of us were given little choice!* But it comes down to, and we understand it better than ever, it's a very healthy thing to do. We get up and brush our teeth everyday.

Well, we don't want our prayers to become like that. ‘Oh, it's 6:30 in the morning I have to go to God because that's the time I'm to be there.’ *NO!* If you get up an hour earlier, pray earlier. If you get up an hour later, pray later. God doesn't have a stopwatch set on each and every person. But He does want to hear from you; very much so.

Verse 15: “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, 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 15-16).

My mission here is not to force you to do anything you don't want to do. It's your salvation that you need to ‘work out in fear and trembling.’ Do you know what the trouble with tangents is when people go off on a pet doctrine or something they really believe? Then they want everybody to believe it. If you don't believe it they consider you not a part of the Church of God. That's not something that anybody can interfere with, you and God.

Example: Some people won't travel more than a half-hour on the Sabbath. I don't think we'd be meeting if none us drove more than a half-hour. We'd have to meet by ourselves in our own homes. How do we come together and learn, and be taught by God if we're in our own homes every week? *Then you don't need elders or anything, you're on your own!* But sometimes it's very important that we get together because ‘iron sharpens iron.’ I've learned that in this group. I've learned many things from you. Brethren, sometimes it's a personal touch that you have, and the experience you've had that I know nothing about.

We're not talking about your sins here. But if it's something that can help us to change and to grow, then we're on the right track as we should be. But there are some people who believe that you don't travel over a half-hour. What are you going to do in today's world, with today's spreading of the people? What are you doing on the Holy Days? You know what will happen, you'll watch the DVD okay, but you'll probably be sitting in your pajamas. For some that's what they would do.

Our idea, and one of the commissions that we have is to bring people together as much as we can afford and how often we can do it. Fortunately, where we live, I'm sure that most of us have enough money to get here and back every week. That's our priority, to be with God. People will argue down to nothing that they are right.

A small thing came up at the elder's conference about eating out. I'm not going to comment too much on it, but somebody had said something about eating out on the Sabbath. Somebody else refuted that. I didn't want to take sides because I need to study into this and understand it myself, but I did say to the presenter about the Sabbath:

What are you trying to do? *You're trying to change his will!* To change a person's will, *they're of the same opinion still.* Because he won't agree with you, he's trying to

change your will.

I'm just saying that if you, in your heart, feel that you don't need drive over a half-hour to services, that's your decision. I'm not going to be at your door knocking and say, 'Why aren't you coming to services?' *Well, I don't believe in driving on the Sabbath!* What am I going to argue back?

Here we go in changing the *wills and the minds* now. If you don't want to do that and come because of that purpose then that's entirely up to you. You'll have to work that out with God. Nothing is going to be accomplished, that's all I'm saying.

Little things like that we need to learn in life in order to fulfill what we're trying to fulfill here. We can't all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge without some type of interaction. If there is something that we need to bring up, we need to bring it up.

Let me tell you this, a living experience: There are sometimes what we call 'gangers,' when one person goes to another and says, 'Oh, this person did such and such.' Then another person tells another person and another person tells another person. This poor slouch goes into services not knowing that four people already know the bad parts of him.

It's true! Then someone decides to approach someone else, like an elder or whatever, and say, 'Georgio has an awful attitude. Did you see him today?' *No!* and I didn't notice the attitude. (the name Georgio means nothing) Let me tell you something, if you have a problem with Georgio, you better go to him. Do not get me involved. And that's what my answer is going to be from now on. I'm not the sweeping stone at the end, and then I'm supposed to go and talk with him. I didn't feel anything; I didn't feel that Georgio was doing anything. Never saw anything wrong with him.

Then go to your buddies whom you have told and have each one of them go to him. First of all, apologizing for listening to the first guy. Brethren, when we get into misjudgment we get into situations that we don't want to be in. How many people have been in situations they really don't want to be in? Don't let ourselves get into that situation. Let someone else handle that. And there's not enough of that going on in the Church.

You're not going to take me aside and tell me that you don't like my tie, because if you don't I'll send you one next week. (joke). It's not a subject of conflict. It's not something that should bother anybody. Or the way a person looks. How do you know that they haven't had a bad week? How do you know if they have had some catastrophe in their life that they want to keep personal?

We don't have to come in here and drag the skeletons out of the closets. We don't need to do that. If there were more of that done in the Church, there would be less friction. How does friction help your spiritual life? *It doesn't!* It can only deter you from what you're trying to do within yourself.

What happens if somebody has a bad habit? And you know about it? Like you know that Wayne gets up early in the morning and sings like a bird. 'His mind's going.' The point is, it's nobody's affair. If it bothers my wife then she's got to come and say to me that what I'm doing every morning is scaring the neighbors.

The point is, it doesn't edify anybody. It's something that really pertains to no one. These things don't have a place in the Church, that's all I'm saying, very simple. Cutting to the chase, they have nothing to do in the Church! We all have habits, we all have things we need to overcome. Aren't we to do that the rest of our lives? We can't pick on others because they haven't changed as fast or to our liking, but because they're being steered by God, and God will correct them. God will help them as they're going along. That's all part of the second commission that we have to deal with:

- perfect the saints
- bring them together
- help them enjoy the Sabbath
- help you to learn

Remember this: *Whatever I'm teaching I have learned!* It didn't just fall out of the sky. I wanted you to see the importance of the missions of the elders. They're not like people *think* they are: tough, headstrong. Many of us know that in different places that's the way it was.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, being in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them."

- Overcoming!
- Changing ourselves!
- Being exuberant that we've been called!

Verse 11: "Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles in *the* flesh, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands; *and* that you were without Christ at that time, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off are made near by the blood of Christ" (vs 11-13).

I don't know when you think the end is coming; I've heard a lot of speculation from brethren lately, that it can't go on five more years. *I don't know that!* I won't comment on it because it's God Who is going to end things at His time!

3. Getting the Message out to the World

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.'"

We, as elders, have no authority over anything except to feed the flock, to protect the flock and to bring the flock of God, steering them, into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 19: "Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." There's no such thing as just baptizing in the name of Christ. It's very clear here. Where does everything start and begin? *With God the Father!* How can you leave Him out? You'd be sidestepping Him.

Verse 20: "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.' Amen."

Our job is to get a message out to the world! In that, brethren, we have to have the right mindset, do the right things, and we need to be alert to everything that is going on around us.

Some exciting things were given at the conference: There's been a new studio made to facilitate to be able to virtually go on the Internet with all things. The job of the Church is to do that, but the job of the Church is also to *feed the flock, most importantly!* You don't forget that to go and do this commission here.

If the brethren aren't strong, encouraged and steady in the Truth, how can we have someone come in and start going to services somewhere and hear about Worldwide, and this and that church. They don't have a clue what you're talking about.

It sure makes for interesting conversations. Its like any trap, you set out a seed and the animal will come and get it and get caught in the trap. Those days are gone! We have to put them behind us! Did we learn lessons? *Absolutely!*

Churchathome.org is born, and also they've gotten the domain of the afaithfulversion.org (for *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*). Fred said that every time a name comes to mind the names are open. So, he bought all the domain names. If anyone is looking for the Bible they will hit that website. Whatever we can do to

have a tool for people to get in and find out what we're doing. What's happening in the Churches of God today is:

- I'm doing the work
- No, I'm doing the work
- I'm the only one on earth doing the work

I've got news for you, they're all doing the work! God has made it so it is not from one single church. Why? *So that nobody can take all the glory!* It's only God that receives the glory!

The idea is to have people come to us and see what we have to offer. Whatever domain name they can use to get in, it will say that these are our beliefs, check them out. This is what we're commissioned to do.

This is the mission of the elders and these are the duties of the brethren. My duties are exactly what yours are. Anybody that ever put together anything when speaking knows that it takes more than five minutes. Some things you really have to research and try to find out the best possible answer of what can help you to make it to the Kingdom of God. That's the whole purpose of these things.

- we're not here to 'bash' anybody
- we're not here to 'beat' anybody up
- we're not going to do anything like that

Look at this, with no ego for himself, Paul said: Romans 1:1: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle... [see v 6] ...set apart to preach the Gospel of God." He was called for that specific purpose.

Verse 2: "Which He had promised before through His prophets in *the* Holy Scriptures." If it ever came that anybody here was called to teach, you better think about that.

Sylvia and I went through a gut-wrenching week the week we were asked to do this by the congregation, because our fear was: What if we slip? What if we make a mistake? *Which we have!* Are we worthy to do this?

Then I talked to Fred a little bit and he says, 'This is what God wants. You were chosen from among the brethren because this is God's desire. If you don't do it, who is going to do it?' He was very right, but we did have the questions in our mind that we're not just going to walk in here and be the big honcho. *NO!*

I've always been called to serve in some capacity somewhere. People in many cases do not understand the meaning of being called as an elder. It's not a thing of glory. You have a lot to handle in your life with many things that you have no idea

about. But we were willing to try to fulfill what God wanted us to do. We hope we are doing that and serving properly. We hope that we have the attitude that we should have. That's doing it through love, love for you and love for God!

It was an excellent elder's conference. We learned a lot.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:35-40
- 2) John 21:15-17
- 3) Matthew 20:20-26
- 4) Deuteronomy 17:14-20
- 5) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 6) Ephesians 4:11-16
- 7) Ephesians 2:10-13
- 8) Matthew 28:18-20
- 9) Romans 1:1-2

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