



**Front Cover**

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# THE CHRISTIAN IN THE CHURCH

## God's Eternal Purpose

Scripture Reading: Read carefully several times: Ephesians 1:3–14; 3:8–12.

- I. Introduction:
  - A. Two terms defined:
    1. Purpose: The word is *prothesin*: "to place before, to determine or design beforehand; a predetermination, purpose" (AGL). Thayer says: "To set forth to be looked at, to expose to view."
    2. Predestined: The word is *proorizo*: "to mark out beforehand, to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand" (AGL).
  - B. What was "purposed?" What was "predestined?"
    1. The reading of these chapters will disclose the answer.
      - a. To provide men with all spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3).
      - b. To "choose" men and women in him (1:4). This choosing is "to pick out" as the recipients of special privileges, specially beloved, precious.
      - c. To make men and women "adopted children" (1:5). Two pictures of becoming children of God:
        - i. Adopted—placed as a son, child (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5). References have to do with the acceptance of the Gentiles.
        - ii. Born (John 3:5; I Peter 1:21; James 1:18).
      - d. To redeem the lost through the blood of Christ and provide the forgiveness of sins (1:7).
      - e. To make known to men the mystery of His will (1:9).
      - f. That He might gather together in one all things in Christ (1:10; 2:18–22).
      - g. To obtain an inheritance (1:11).
      - h. That all might be to his glory (1:12).
    2. The predestination simply says that this was God's design to provide all these wonderful blessings to mankind through the life and sacrifice of His Son.
  - C. Men explain the origin and development of Christianity in these two ways:

1. Natural, human, instinctive.
  - a. It is contended that Christianity was a gradual, spontaneous, and automatic development from many cultures and religions over a period several centuries.

- b. That the best was borrowed from one people's philosophy and another's religion and still another's system of ethics, until we came to have a composite of all blended to make up the Christian system. How could something so involuntary, accidental, and impulsive be the "eternal purpose of God?"
- 2. Supernatural, divine, planned.
  - a. The Bible disavows the natural view and claims inspiration (II Timothy 3:16; Luke 12:11-12; I Corinthians 2:9-13).
  - b. Christianity did not originate in the mind of man (Galatians 1:11-12; II Peter 1:21; John 16:13). It is not an accident or after-thought. Our study says it was "purposed," "predestined." Read Galatians 1:6-9; I Peter 4:11; II John 9; I Corinthians 4:6; Jude 3.

## II. Discussion:

- A. There are purpose and design in the Scriptures:
  - 1. The text says to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8).
  - 2. To provide abundant life here (John 10:10); to make men free (John 8:32, 36); to effect man's eternal salvation (John 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 1:14; I Peter 1:5).
  - 3. The promises and prophecies of the Old Testament speak of this purpose and God's working toward accomplishment and fulfillment of it (Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 31:31-34).
  - 4. That fulfillment is seen countless times in the New Testament with all of its assurances (Galatians 3:8, 13; 16-17; 4:3-7; Hebrews 9:15).
- B. Some false concepts examined:
  - 1. Christianity is a sociological phenomenon. A beautiful ethic having to do with man's relationship with his fellow man. A purely social gospel, with no higher goal than humanism.

- a. It is true that Christianity has to do with our horizontal relationships. Read these passages and consider what these relationships involve: I Peter 3:8; Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:3; I Corinthians 10:24, 33; Galatians 5:13; I Thessalonians 4:13; Hebrews 3:13).
- b. That Jesus is a mere man, less than God, not Immanuel (See Timothy 3:16; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-19).

- c. That man is not a free moral agent. He is not totally responsible because of heredity, environment, and determinism. He does not have the power of choice or volition (see Mark 16:15–19; Matthew 11:28ff, 28:20; II Peter 3:9; Luke 24:46–47, 13:3–5; Acts 17:30–31; Revelation 22:17). These show personal responsibility.
    - 2. That sin and evil are relative matters. Truth is not absolute. Situation ethics: things are good or bad depending on circumstances. One may do evil that good may come (Romans 6:1). "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). The standard of right is the Word of God (Romans 1:17).
    - 3. That one cannot fall from the grace of God (see John 15:1–8; I Corinthians 10:1–12; Hebrews 6:4–6; II Peter 2:20–22).
- III. Conclusion:
- A. Some conclusions drawn from God's eternal purpose:
    - 1. God loves man and seeks his salvation (John 3:16; I Timothy 2:3–6; Romans 5:5–10; Luke 19:10).
    - 2. His love and goodness should cause us to reciprocate His love and work out our own salvation (Acts 23:40; Philippians 2:12; I John 4:7–11; Romans 2:4).
    - 3. We should be willing to take up our crosses and follow Him (I Peter 2:21–25; Matthew 1:24; Luke 9:23; 18:22).
  - B. Knowing that God's purpose is the salvation of mankind, Christians must commit to evangelizing the world, if God's purposes are to be fulfilled through Christians whom He has left to represent Him (I Timothy 2:2; Acts 13:26, 14:7; II Timothy 4:1–4).

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- C. Those who bring their lives into harmony with God's eternal purpose:
  - 1. Entertain the hope of an inheritance that is undefiled (I Peter 1:4).
  - 2. By patient compliance, they will have eternal life (Romans 2:7).

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## Christ and His Church

Scripture reading: Ephesians 1:20–23; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 1:15–20.

- I. Introduction:

- A. The central figure of the church is Christ:
  1. The passages employ non-literal language, or a word picture of the church as a body.
  2. This metaphorical language is used not only for beauty and vividness, but to give us a keener discernment and a deeper understanding of the divine truth of Christ's place and authority in God's scheme of redeeming man.
  3. The Old Testament prophecies and promises pointed to this fact:
    - a. The promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3; Galatians 3:8, 16–18; Genesis 22:8, 17; John 1:29).
    - b. Promise to Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22).
    - c. Promise to David (Psalm 2:7, 8:5–6; Hebrews 2:6–8, 16:9–11; Acts 2:25–31; Ephesians 4:8–10, 22:18; Matthew 27:35ff; Psalm 68:18, 110:1; Matthew 22:44).
    - d. Promises through Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 9:7; Daniel 7:14, 27; Luke 1:32–33; Isaiah 53).
      - i. Divine Servant (Isaiah 53:11).
      - ii. Divine Substitute (Isaiah 53:4–5).
      - iii. Divine Sacrifice (Isaiah 53:7–8).
      - iv. Divine Satisfaction (Isaiah 53:10–11).
  4. Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18).
    - a. He is the head of it (Text).
    - b. He bought it with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
    - c. He is the builder (Text)>
- B. Organized religion in Christendom:
  1. Has failed to meet the spiritual needs of people.
  2. Given birth to the position: "We will follow Jesus but want nothing to do with the church." The Jesus Movement.
  3. There is nothing wrong in giving emphasis to "following Jesus," but there is no such dichotomy.

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That is, you cannot separate between Christ and the church, for the church is His body.

4. Neither Christ nor His church should be demphasized.
5. The church as viewed by man:
  - a. A place of fellowship.
  - b. A relationship in which good works are performed.
  - c. Unrelated to true Christianity. One can be a Christian, die, and go to heaven and never be identified with the church.

## II. Discussion:

- A. The church as viewed by Christ:
  1. The church of the first century took the gospel to the entire world (Colossians 1:23). To whom have we preached?

2. The first century church had a spirit of unselfish giving (II Corinthians 8:1–6). How much do we give?
  3. The church as Christ designed and intended it was to be a people of fellowship and sharing (Acts 2:44–45, 4:32–33).
  4. There was the spirit of unity among them (Acts 4:32; I Corinthians 1:10).
  5. They were a rejoicing people (Philippians 4:4). They knew whom they had believed (II Timothy 1:12). Assurance is very vital.
- B. The church is His body:
1. The church is discussed under many different figures of speech: bride (Ephesians 5:23–27); a family (I Timothy 3:15); a kingdom (John 18:36), and others.
  2. It is as a body that we see His authority, His position as head, and His relationship, therefore, to the church.
  3. Here are some of the evident lessons to be drawn from this picture of the church as a body:
    - a. The oneness of God's people—the church (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:4). The sin of division. Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20–21). Paul urged Christians to be united (I Corinthians 1:10). This can be accomplished only if we speak as the words of God (I Peter 4:11); and imitate Christ in our thinking

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and lives (Philippians 2:5; I Corinthians 11:1; I Peter 2:21; Luke 5:28).

- b. Christ is the head of the body (Colossians 1:18).
  - i. This entails the question of authority, but it also speaks of direction. The human body is controlled automatically and discretionary, consciously and unconsciously, by the head.
  - ii. So, the church, the spiritual body of Christ, is regulated, exercised, directed, commanded, and restrained by Christ who is the head.
  - iii. The church would be one in its truest sense, if it recognized and respected the fact that Christ is the head of it and that every movement emanated from the head. When men believe, teach, and act as suits themselves, the body is convulsed, and, if not corrected, will be ultimately devastated.
- c. Cooperation and sharing (I Corinthians 12:25). Each has a work to do and an office to perform and it does so with the assurance that it is important to the body and that it contributes to the smooth functioning of it (vs. 15–16).

- d. Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Emphasis is on Christ as our Savior. The beginning point of that salvation in Christ is baptism, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13). This act of faith brought us into Christ (Romans 6:3) and we became members of the spiritual body of Christ, the church.
- e. Christ cleanses us from our sins (Ephesians 5:27) by the washing of water through the Word; but He also seeks to cleanse our consciences (Hebrews 9:14).

III. Conclusion:

- A. There are those who express a desire to follow Christ without being a part of His church:
  - 1. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for emphasizing the Scriptures but rejecting Him (John 5:39-40).
  - 2. Inasmuch as Jesus is the builder, Savior, and purchaser of the church, it is not possible to ignore the importance of it. Further, since He is the head of the

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body, the church, there is no way for the church to exist without Him. On the other hand, we cannot conceive of a head without a body.

- B. What have you learned?
  - 1. What is the relationship of Christ to the church? Supply as many different word pictures as you can recall from the New Testament scriptures.
  - 2. What analogy did Paul use to describe the love Christ had for the church?
  - 3. Can you separate Christ and the church? Why? Why not?
  - 4. Can we disregard the church and be faithful servants of Christ only?
  - 5. What should the love of Christ engender in our hearts?
  - 6. Explain what "the body of Christ" means and how Christ is the head of the body.

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## **My Relationship to Christ**

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 5:16-19; Romans 6:15-18.

- I. Introduction:
  - A. A changed Relationship:
    - 1. Baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
    - 2. When one is born again, he is saved and enters God's kingdom (John 3:5).
    - 3. It is then that his new life begins (Romans 6:4).
    - 4. To be in this new relationship is to be a son of God (Galatians 3:26–27).
    - 5. When we obey that “form of doctrine”—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we are transformed from servants of sin to servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17–18).
  - B. In this new relationship:
    - 1. Christians should continue to walk in the light (I John 1:7). Continue in the faith (Colossians 1:23).
    - 2. You are:
      - a. Dead men (Romans 6:6–11).
      - b. Live men (Ephesians 2:5–6).
      - c. New men (II Corinthians 5:17).
      - d. Transformed men (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22–23; Colossians 3:9–10).
    - 3. You now seek things above (Colossians 3:1–3).
    - 4. You no longer practice sin (I John 3:9).
- II. Discussion:
  - A. My faith and my relationship to Christ:
    - 1. To come to Christ and to please Him one must have faith (Hebrews 11:6).
    - 2. One must stand fast in the faith (I Corinthians 16:13). Courage and perseverance in the face of life's problems.
    - 3. That belief comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The Word of God relates the fundamental facts:
      - a. There is a God (Genesis 1:1).
      - b. Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 3:17, 17:15; John 3:16).

- c. The Holy Spirit revealed His will (John 14:26, 16:13; I Corinthians 2:9–13).
    - d. The Bible reveals the fact that the end of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
    - e. The Bible declares that there is reward for the righteous and damnation for the wicked (Matthew 25:31–46).
  - 4. There is in creation, in the realm of nature and science, inexplicable facts not understandable from a human standpoint, but which strengthen our faith and corroborate the Word of God (Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:1–2; Psalm 19:1–4, 8:3). Who can

- explain mind? The conception and birth of a child? The blossoming of a flower? A grain of sand? A snow flake? The stripes on a zebra or the song of a bird?
5. The sustaining power of my faith:
    - a. I will be with you (Matthew 28:20).
    - b. I know (II Timothy 1:12; I John 3:2, 5:19; Philippians 3:10).
    - c. It would be well to define that faith, "My faith looks up to thee. ..."
- B. My praying and my relationship to Christ. How God has and does operate:
1. Supernaturally, miraculously. Does He have to perform a miracle to answer prayer? Used miracles to begin things. Creation was a miracle. The Law at Sinai was given miraculously. The Christian age was ushered in and the church begun by a miracle.
  2. Through established law; natural and physical.
  3. Providentially. Operating through His laws to meet our needs (Philippians 4:19). Is it necessary to understand and explain it fully in order to believe it and accept it?
  4. We have the assurance:
    - a. God hears and answers our prayers (Matthew 6:8–13; Matthew 7:7–10; Mark 11:24–25).
    - b. A Christian needs to study God's Word so he may know for what to pray. That is, that we may know and do His will (John 15:7, 16; James 1:5–7; I John 3:22, 5:14).
  5. For what should we pray?
    - a. The necessities of life (Matthew 6:11).

- b. Our prayers for the temporal should take into consideration what is even more important—the spiritual (James 4:3).
  - c. For deliverance from evil (Matthew 6:13, 26:41; James 4:7; I Corinthians 10:13).
  - d. That the Word of God may run and have free course (II Thessalonians 3:1).
  - e. For one another (James 5:13, 16).
6. Importunity in prayer.
  - a. Woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22ff; Luke 18:1ff; II Corinthians 12:8)
  - b. There are troubles in life for all of us. Night grows dark, storms rage, hearts ache and bleed. Not exempt from these trials in life, nor are we promised that they will soon pass, but through prayer, He promises to sustain us (II Corinthians 12:9).

- C. My hope and my relationship to Christ:
  - 1. Christ is our only hope (I Thessalonians 1:2-3; I Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27).
  - 2. Our faith is the assurance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1).
  - 3. In Christ, our hope, we are free from condemnation (Romans 8:1-2; Ephesians 1:7).
  - 4. Hope of being happy if you die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13).
  - 5. It motivates the Christian:
    - a. Lay hold on that hope (Hebrews 6:18).
    - b. It reaches beyond the physical and the present (I Corinthians 15:19).
    - c. The hope of heaven (Colossians 1:5; I John 3:2-3)>
    - d. Great help in life's present distresses (I Peter 1:13).
  - 6. Our lives have, along the way, a great many disappointments, trials, and anxieties; but let us recall with encouragement the words of Jesus (John 14:1-6).

### III. Conclusion

- A. Christ is our:
  - 1. Propitiation (Romans 3:25; I John 2:1-2).
  - 2. Mediator (I Timothy 2:5).
  - 3. Advocate (I John 2:1).
  - 4. King (I Timothy 6:15).

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- 5. Head (Colossians 1:18).
- 6. Authority (Matthew 28:18).
- 7. High Priest (I Peter 2:9).
- B. Our faith, prayers, and hope are more meaningful on this account.
  - 1. Formulate in your own minds and words a clear meaning of what faith is to you and what part it plays in your everyday life.
  - 2. What does prayer mean to you?
  - 3. How does hope fit into your daily Christian life?

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## **My Relationship to Christ's Church**

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:22-33; I Corinthians 12:14-27.

- I. Introduction:

- A. An accurate and clear definition of the church:
    - 1. What it is not (Acts 17:24ff).
    - 2. What it is:
      - a. *Ekklesia*—the called out ones.
      - b. Related saints, holy sanctified, *hagion* (I Peter 1:15–16).
      - c. Those called out by His gospel (I Thessalonians 2:12; II Thessalonians 2:14).
      - d. Called out of the world (John 17:11, 25–29; II Corinthians 7:1).
    - 3. How this change from the world is effected:
      - a. Belief into Christ (John 3:16). It is faith that brings us into Christ. An obedient faith, to be sure (James 2:14ff).
      - b. Led to repentance:
        - i. By the goodness of God (Romans 2:4).
        - ii. Awareness of one's lost and sinful condition (Romans 7:14–25).
      - c. Baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26–27). The consummating and primary act that brings one into covenant relationship with God (II Corinthians 5:17).
  - B. This new relationship in Christ provides many great promises:
    - 1. God's abiding presence (Hebrews 13:5–6).
    - 2. His protection from life's daily temptations (I Corinthians 10:13).
    - 3. The joy of the present abundant life (John 10:10; Philippians 4:1–4).
    - 4. Victory over death (I Corinthians 15:55–56).
    - 5. There are also many responsibilities one must accept.
- II. Discussion:
- A. My responsibilities to Christ the Head:
    - 1. To be completely subject to Him (Ephesians 5:24). That word is *hupostasis* (Greek), and means literally "to stand under." It is voluntary assuming of that stance of surrender and subordination to the will of God.

- 2. This seems to naturally follow because baptism in the New Testament context is:
  - a. Deliverance of its subject from:
    - i. Ignorance (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 2:3).
    - ii. Darkness (Colossians 1:13; Acts 26:18).
    - iii. Bondage (Romans 6:17–18; Galatians 5:1).
  - b. Transformation of its subject:
    - i. Romans 12:1–2. Of the mind.
    - ii. Of the body—that is, its use (Romans 6:12–13; Ephesians 4:22–32).

- iii. Of the soul (I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:39; James 1:21).
    - c. This is the commitment one made when he was baptized into Christ—to accept all the responsibilities that this entails.
  - 3. This is an unconditional surrender.
    - a. Renouncing all (Luke 14:33).
    - b. The excellency of Christ makes it easy to properly arrange our priorities (Philippians 3:7–8).
    - c. There can be no mistake that Christ makes demands of us:
      - i. That He be positioned first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).
      - ii. That we love Him above all others (Luke 14:26; Matthew 22:37).
      - iii. It is a giving of ourselves first to the Lord (II Corinthians 8:5).
      - iv. A giving up of all for Him (Matthew 13:45–46).
  - 4. In all of these ways the church must be subject to Christ.
- B. It should be holy and without blemish:
- 1. It is a sin that caused man's separation from God, "Therefore the Lord sent him out of the garden ..." (Genesis 3:23–24).
  - 2. While God is good and merciful, He cannot tolerate sin (Isaiah 59:1–2).
  - 3. Jesus told the story of the prodigal to show that sin is:
    - a. Separation. Separated this young man from his

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father's house (Luke 15:11ff). "... journeyed to a far country ..."

- b. Wasteful. "And when he had spent all..."
  - c. Inevitable misery. "He began to be in want ..." Fed and wanted to fodder with swine.
  - d. Insanity. "But when he came to himself..."
- 4. God wants his people to be good and pure.
  - a. Bring forth from good hearts that which is good (Luke 6:45).
  - b. The principle that governs pure thinking and pure acting is found in Romans 12:21.
  - c. God wants it sanctified (set apart, separated) and cleansed (a strong, drastic term—*katharisas*—from which we get cathartic).
  - d. It is necessary for us to bring every thought into obedience to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). It comes from a word which means "taking captive." These actions seem rather severe and intense; and indeed, that is what it takes in self-discipline for the church to be pure.

Inasmuch as sin is a savage, fierce, and violent force in men's lives; so the treatment of sin must be rigorous and unsoftened in our disposing of it.

5. A pure church is a powerful church; and a pure Christian is an impressive Christian, whose influence touches many lives (II Corinthians 3:1-3). The Sanhedrin took knowledge of the apostles *that they had been with Jesus* (Acts 4:13). Peter said that a Christian woman's manner of life has a good chance of influencing her husband to become a Christian (I Peter 3:1-2). Paul strongly admonished Timothy: "Be an example ..." (I Timothy 4:12). Frequently Paul referred to his own manner of life by which he had shown the churches how they ought to live (Acts 20:20, 35; Philippians 4:9).
- C. Love the church:
1. "Christ loved the church and gave himself ..." (Ephesians 5:25).
  2. It is impossible to love Christ and have no love or regard for those whom He loves (I John 4:20).
  3. It is a command that we love the church (I Peter 2:17). Christ gave the command long before (John 13:34-35).

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4. We can develop love and affection for those we do not know by:
  - a. Acquainting ourselves with the fields in which they live. Paul had never been to Rome, but he was deeply concerned for them (Romans 11). Paul, here, uses the word *epipotheo* which means "to desire, to long for earnestly, to have a strong bent, to love, have affection for" (II Corinthians 7:7, 11).
  - b. Learning of their opportunities, needs, and problems. Paul wanted to visit Spain because he cared (Romans 15:24, 28). Note the same desire and longing previously mentioned.
5. Congregational loyalty is necessary to build up and make strong the local congregation.
  - a. It seemed to be lacking at times in the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 5, 11:30ff).
  - b. The church in Thessalonica was a model of this (I Thessalonians 1:2-9).
6. My responsibilities to my brethren:
  - a. We are members of one another (I Corinthians 12:12-27).
  - b. Each is important (ibid.).
  - c. Love one another; serve one another; please one another; look to the good and advantage of one another; minister to one another; consider one another.

- d. Appreciate the value of other members of the body (I Corinthians 12:2).
- e. To avoid division, God made each member dependent upon the other (I Corinthians 12:22–23).

III. Conclusion:

- A. Each member should be rooted and grounded in the Word of God (Colossians 1:23).
- B. Every teacher speak the Words of God (I Peter 4:11).
- C. No man should think more highly of himself than he ought (Romans 12:3).
- D. Each should take thought of the good of others (Romans 15:13).
- E. Careful to guard his speech (Proverbs 26:20).
- F. Let all be done in love (I Corinthians 16:14).

## Elder–Member Relationship

Scripture Reading: I Peter 5:1–4; Hebrews 13:17.

I. Introduction:

- A. Important areas to be explored and discussed:
  - 1. How much authority does the eldership have?
  - 2. What are sources of tension in the relationship?
  - 3. What is a good working relationship where these tensions are eliminated?
- B. There are three terms that apply to the office of elder. There are also two other words which designate and portray these men of God.

<b>English Spelling</b>	<b>Transliteration</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. Episkopoi	Bishops	Overseers
2. Presbuteroi	Presbyters	Elders
3. Poimenes	Pastors	Shepherds
4. Oikonomoi	House managers	Stewards
5. Hegoumenoi	Ones leading you	Leaders

II. Discussion:

A. These leadership words:

1. It is tremendously important that we know what these words mean because the purpose, the role, and the function of these men are couched within the meaning of these terms.
2. Here are brief definitions of these terms and the passages which refer to them
  - a. *Bishops*: This term in the New Testament means "overseers, inspectors, watchers." It comes from two words—*epi* plus *skopos*—"to look, to inspect." The term *bishop* is used four times: Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; I Peter 2:25. It is translated *overseer* once: Acts 20:28.
    - i. There was a strong sense of responsibility and concern for the destiny of others.
    - ii. They had a feeling of accountability, not just expediency, for the souls of others. They felt amenable to God and liable for the welfare of those under their charge. This

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was well understood by both the *overseer* and the *overseen*.

- b. *Elders*: This term means "senior, older, more advanced in years, men of age, experience, wisdom, dignity." Thayer says, "Those who presided over the assemblies or churches" (Acts 16:4, 20:17, 21:18; I Timothy 5:1, 17, 19; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1).
- c. *Pastors*: This term has to do with shepherds who feed the flock, pasture the flock, lead the flock, and protect the flock (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). Thayer says that this term is "used of the overseers of Christian assemblies." The word has a very old history. Liddell & Scott tell us that the very form of it means "to tend, to cherish, to guide, to govern."
- d. *Stewards*: "For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God" (Titus 1:7). This must not be construed that the latitude of their authority is unrestricted, or that they possess the freedom and right to legislate and execute what their wisdom dictates. The word means a trustee, or one who manages the estate of another. It is to God that they are subject.
- e. *Leaders*: The word, in Hebrews 13:17, does not translate "rulers over" as well as it does "leaders." The point of the office is not power to be exercised, but service to be rendered. That service is rendered by "the ones going out ahead or the ones leading you." The

term "obey" would be best rendered "to be persuaded." It has the root word "faith" or "belief." So, the thought is "believe in, be persuaded by, those who are leading you."

3. The authority of elders.
  - a. He is really not a ruler, but a leader. He must, however, have authority, if he has responsibility. He must lead, exercise watch and care, be answerable for men's souls. That is authority!
  - b. McGarvey has this comment: "It is indisputable that there was a body of men in the primitive church called elders, and that so many of these as were found in one congregation constituted

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the eldership of that congregation." The word that can and should be translated eldership is *presbuteron*. This is not some kind of officialdom, as it is known by men who are officers in civil government, nor does it present an authoritarian view. They are not lords. However, elders are properly styled officers, and eldership properly designates an office. Some may prefer to call it a work, but the distinction, in this case, would be one of words, semantics, rather than ideas.

Let us read another excerpt from McGarvey: "One of a body of men, who has any work specially assigned to him by the body, is an officer of that body, in the full import of the term. If, then, we shall, in the course of our investigation, ascertain that elders of the church are charged with the performance of public duties assigned to them by their brethren, we shall thereby know that they are entitled to the name of officers." In that service let us look to Christ as the example (Matthew 20:27-28; Luke 22:26-27; John 13:1-17). Particular attention needs to be given to Matthew 20:25-26.

- c. Peter says that the elders were *allotted to your charge* (I Peter 5:1-3). The elders had the charge and care of the churches. He then said, *among you*, which could indicate that they had frequent contact with the flock. The Greek word *kleros* means "to assign by lot." It is plural and should be rendered "your charges." Arndt & Gingrich define and apply the term: "the various parts of the congregation which have been assigned as portions to the individual presbyters or shepherds."
- d. *Not lording it over them*. The Lord does not permit the elders to be domineering. The verb means to be master,

to be over someone, rule. Jesus used this same word with reference to authority in the kingdom (Matthew 20:25–26). Jesus reversed all human concepts of greatness and rank (Philippians 2:5–7). Give attention to

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His teaching (Mark 9:35; I Corinthians 9:19; II Corinthians 4:5). Today, it is difficult to comprehend the concept of servant leaders instead of lord leaders. Note the centurion's description of authority (Luke 7:8). He had been appointed and, by virtue of his office, he exercised authority. But, with us, instead we are to be *workers with you for your joy* (II Corinthians 1:24).

- e. One of the great sources of dissatisfaction to congregations involves an authoritarian attitude on the part of some elderships. J. Roy Vaughn comments: "Members of the church should strive to give their full cooperation in the work under the oversight of the elders. It is a rebellious spirit that causes a man to stand aloof and refuse to work, while at the same time he uses every opportunity to criticize the elders. But it is just as necessary that the elders cooperate with the church ... Until elders learn that they must work with the church, they cannot expect much cooperation from the members. They will soon lose the respect of the church and find themselves unpopular and rejected leaders of the church." Disrespect and contempt are generated when elders are tyrannical, dictatorial, and overbearing.
- B. Why some elders lord it over the flock:
- 1. It is an amazing fact that multitudes of Christians respect them despite these aforementioned traits, for they believe it is spiritual treason to disagree with the elders, even if they are dictators instead of shepherds.
  - 2. Here are some of the reasons for lordship:
    - a. Ignorance of the Bible. Not aware of the kind of leadership the Bible discusses (I Peter 5:1–3; Matthew 10:10–28; Mark 9:30–35, 10:35–40; I Corinthians 9:19; II Corinthians 4:5; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:5–7). Emphasis on qualifications rather than work and functions.
    - b. Ignorance of the flock (I Peter 5:3; I Thessalonians 5:12).

- c. Ignorance of leadership principles. The Bible is filled with examples of leadership.
- d. Fear of losing control. Authoritarian rulers of nations are domineering over others to compensate for a lack of self-confidence. This can be true of elders. Leadership should be positive, confident, loving, and goal-oriented with no fear of losing control. Ted Engstrom said, "The genuine Christian leader must always have the humility not to feel threatened by those close to him."
- e. Fear of false teaching. Every leader in God's church should be concerned about false teaching (Acts 20:29–31; Titus 1:7–11). However, those who teach and practice false doctrine must be refuted with God's Word and with proper discipline and not by a domineering spirit.
- f. Fear of not being followed. The flock will follow if elders labor AMONG them (I Thessalonians 5:12; John 10:27).
- g. Immaturity. Lording it over the flock is a sign of immaturity. Not a novice (I Timothy 3:6). An elder should not feel above criticism offered by any member of the congregation, especially when offered in the proper spirit.
- h. Fear of the preacher. Some preachers may actually want control of the congregation and may effect it through close friendship of some of the elders, or by an overbearing and threatening disposition. A survey among preachers in 1975 revealed "unsatisfactory relations with elders" as the cause for 60% of preachers leaving full-time work and 32% indicated this to be a major problem they face in preaching (Waymon Miller).
- i. Failure to understand the role of deacons. Give some study to this word for servant (Matthew 20:26, 22:13; Mark 9:35; John 2:5, 9; Ephesians 6:21; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8–10). The word *diakonon* means (1) one who serves voluntarily; (2) one who serves out of love; and (3) one who serves for the good and advantage of others. Some elders find little time to shepherd the flock because they are doing the work of deacons.

- j. Loving the preeminence (III John 9; Romans 12:3).
- III. Conclusion: I believe this statement by brother J. Roy Vaughn is worthy of our consideration: "Elders should understand that being appointed an elder does not perform a miracle by which they are endued with the wisdom of Solomon. They are ordinary men just as they were before they were appointed, and they should not forget this. They are subject to making mistakes and they will, sooner or later, make many mistakes. If they are wise men, they will invite the aid and cooperation from other brethren."

## **My Relationship to the Local Church**

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 3:14.

- I. Introduction:
- A. First century local churches:
1. There is no organization in the New Testament church except the local congregation.
  2. Name one thing in each of these local churches that distinguishes it:
    - a. The church in Cenchræa (Romans 16:1).
    - b. The church of God at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2).
    - c. The church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 1:1).
    - d. The church in Philemon's house (Philemon 2).
    - e. The church that is in Nymphas' house (Colossians 4:15).
    - f. The church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1).
    - g. The church in Smyrna (Revelation 2:8).
    - h. The church in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12).
    - i. The church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18).
    - j. The church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1).
    - k. The church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7).
    - l. The church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14).
- B. The composition of the local congregation:
1. Members came from every stratum of society; fishermen, tax collectors, tent makers, soldiers, physicians, politicians, members of Caesar's household (Philippians 4:22).
  2. They came from different strata of society, ethnic groups, and the poor, the high, and the low, educated and uneducated, noble and ignoble. All beautifully amalgamated into one composite, living and working harmoniously together (Ephesians 4:1-3; see also Romans 1:14; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28).
  3. It would be well if this intense appreciation of one's personal relationship to the local church could be recaptured and reproduced in our time.

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- II. Discussion:
- A. A deficiency in our view:
1. A misunderstanding of the concept of the local church:
    - a. We can be members-at-large. We can be members of the church, but no particular congregation. No feeling of responsibility. No obligation to anyone. Not amenable, accountable, or answerable to anyone.
    - b. Dislike a situation in a local congregation and quit the church.
  2. Adult members of a Bible class were asked to consider this matter. Why are many church members inactive and unconcerned with their inactivity? Here are the answers given:
    - a. The hearts of the people are not what they ought to be.
    - b. Resistance of a spiritual nature is low.
    - c. People are prone to procrastinate.
    - d. There is a lack of wholesomeness among Christians.
    - e. Too many efforts and motives are initiated by duty, not by love.
    - f. Complexity of modern living which produces complacency.
    - g. Failure to put first things first.
    - h. The average Christian today is shorn of his individual power. He seems to be saturated with the idea "What difference could I make?"
  3. The individual Christian's view of the nature of the church needs to be enriched. His appreciation for his relationship to the local congregation needs to be deepened by an adequate understanding.
- B. What is the Bible concept of the Christian's relationship to the local congregation:
1. It was in the plan of God through the ages (Ephesians 3:11).
  2. When the church was born on Pentecost, the announcement was made that this was the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:14–36).

3. God promised not only to be present in these events and with these individuals, but would be active among His people individually (Jeremiah 31:31–34).
4. In this way God would restore the original harmony between Creator and created, and bring about a reconciliation in this community of believers—the church (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20–21; II Corinthians 5:18–19).

5. This relationship is characterized by peace (Zechariah 9:10; Isaiah 9:5–7, 11:6–9). Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:7).
    - a. He is our peace (Ephesians 2:14).
    - b. Peace from God (II Timothy 1:2).
    - c. Peace of God (Philippians 4:7).
    - d. Peace with God (Romans 5:1).
    - e. God of peace (Romans 16:20).
    - f. Peace by Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36).
  6. He thus destroy's barriers and removes antagonisms which separate men from their fellows. This is what the local church should mean to every Christian.
- C. The individual Christian is bound to the corporate body:
1. He is baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3–4). The Lord adds him to the body (Acts 2:47). He is, in fact, baptized into the body (I Corinthians 12:13). Then, shortly thereafter, he says, "Now you are in the body of Christ, and members individually thereof" (12:27). Read Galatians 3:26–29.
  2. Love is the basic ingredient. This is necessary to life in the church (John 13:34–35; I Corinthians 13:1–13). The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). The love of Christ constrains us (II Corinthians 5:14). That means it compels us.
    - a. He challenged the Colossians: "But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14).
    - b. Our relationship to our brothers and sisters is not optional. It is required that we live that loving relationship to fellow Christians.
    - c. The welfare of the local congregation is of greater importance than the individual's private interests (I Corinthians 12:12–27). In the early church it was abused (Acts 5:1ff, 8:9ff).

- D. How does the individual Christian demonstrate the proper relationship to the local church?
1. Respect for Christ (John 14:15). Love.
  2. Love for fellow Christians (John 13:34–35). There is no place for bitter recriminations and hatred in God's family (Ephesians 4:31–32).
  3. Regard for the elders of the local church reflects genuine respect for the Lord's church (I Timothy 5:17).
  4. Ready unto every good work (Titus 3:1).
  5. Faithful and regular in the church's corporate worship (Hebrews 10:25).
  6. Responsible and liberal in his giving (II Corinthians 8:7, 9:7).

7. Studies and obeys God's will (Acts 17:11). Participation in Bible classes is never distasteful.

III. Conclusion:

- A. What you owe to your home congregation:
  1. Loyalty.
  2. Dependability.
  3. Your presence.
  4. Your financial support.
  5. Your prayers.
  6. Your best effort to reach others that the local church may grow.
- B. God places demands upon our lives. We meet those demands when we are loving, living, active, serving members of the congregation (Colossians 1:18).

## Preacher-Member Relationships

Scripture Reading: I Timothy 4:12-16; II Timothy 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:15-16.

I. Introduction:

- A. A needed exhortation:
  1. "... through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:13-15, ASV 1901 version).
  2. There are several key words here that are important to this relationship between us:
    - a. **Love.** This is the strong word for love which means that we look to the interests of others, and that we do it unselfishly.
    - b. **Servants.** This is the word for slave. There are several thoughts in this term, such as, "... and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). A slave does the will of the master. But in our relationship to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we know that they did not purchase us. So, the lesson is that we should be interested in serving others rather than ourselves, just like a slave is concerned to please his master.
    - c. "*Bite and devour one another.*" An ugly term and an uglier situation. The language is so strong it literally means to "gobble one another down." When that condition exists, the church cannot make progress. It will be irreparably damaged.
- B. Major issue of our day:
  1. Someone has said that a fair summation of the major issues could be made under the letter "P:" Population, poverty, pollution, pride, permissiveness, promiscuity, polarization.

2. Polarization has a very destructive force, even among believers in Christ. How sad that in preacher–member relationships this problem arises. Let us live, love, work, and worship together in the happiest and most harmonious way.

II. Discussion:

- A. A call for unity (Ephesians 4:1–6):
  1. A congregation may not have everything it needs or thinks it needs—money, buildings, equipment, unusual ability.
  2. One thing it cannot do without is the team work of sharing and brotherliness.
    - a. This has to do with mutual effort. “For we are God's fellow workers” (I Corinthians 3:9).
    - b. It has to do with the very spirit of the Christian personality and character. “Give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ...” (Ephesians 4:3). “With all lowliness, meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2).
    - c. This is certainly the essential, vital part of “walk worthy. ...” (Ephesians 4:1).
  3. Growing up in Him, *maturity* (Ephesians 4:11–12).
    - a. Give attention to the different people and work, yet they work together beautifully to make the body a harmonious whole. Point out the work of each of these people to whom gifts were bestowed.
    - b. “Speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him ...” (Ephesians 4:15). When those who lead, teach, shepherd, and minister relate the truth in love, there will be a growing toward maturity. It matters little how much “church activity” we may have if we are not transformed into the likeness of Jesus (II Corinthians 3:18).
  4. “From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplied, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16). Christians of varied backgrounds and personal interests have in common something that far outweighs their differences—their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and that commitment to Him and His Word. Some of those differences are: economic, educational, cultural, social, racial, national, political.
- B. The minister and the members:
  1. “Nourished in the words of faith ...” (I Timothy 4:6–11).

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- a. What a compliment for the Lord to call us "a good minister."
  - b. He faithfully teaches the Word of God. He is consecrated to the Lord's appointed task for him. Time and energies are not wasted. It is possible for him to dissipate his energies in important but secondary matters of life, he carefully disciplines himself in time and thinking and effort, laboring, striving, living, and teaching the way of Christ.
  - c. He is the servant of the Lord. His message is the Master's message (I Timothy 4:11). He holds a personal interest in the welfare of his brethren. When he sees them, he sees living, eternal souls that you cannot value in dollars. He loves them and they know that he loves them; and fruit is more easily borne in their lives.
2. The members are very aware of him as an individual. He is not a dehumanized minister or brother, but he is a very close, personal brother in Christ to them. They know him as one who has problems as well as answers. Hearts and homes are open. Joys and sorrows are shared. Their mutual conversations have to do with spiritual matters, their faith is strengthened, their hope enlivened and their love vitalized. This is truly a two-way street, and how beautiful when it is realized and accepted by all.
- C. "Be an example to the believers" (I Timothy 4:12).
1. Whoever these brethren were, old or young or whatever other circumstances, the only way for him to gain their confidence, support, and respect was to live what he taught.
  2. His love, manner of life, his faith, and his purity were to be exemplary. Otherwise, he would be despised. This can be applied to any of us.
  3. We must have the spirit of exhortation. The preacher is not only to tell but show; not only to point the way, but lead the way. He may be known as a scholar in the study of God's Word and he may be eloquent in the pulpit; but his brethren need to see him as one who believes the message and does his best to practice it.

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4. He needs encouragement and understanding from his brethren. He must earn their respect and confidence. He needs their help

and appreciation (I Peter 4:8–9). He will have their respect and appreciation if he is that example in word, manner of life, faith, love, and purity.

- D. "Be diligent in these things" (I Timothy 4:13–16).
  - 1. Love and patience are needed, but our efforts must not be lowered from those high and noble standards. Expressions are often found: "Give heed," "Neglect not," "Be diligent," "Continue in these things." God wants us to give our very best.
  - 2. His life must be the dedicated life. But, at the same time, may the membership of the congregation fully realize that he outreach of the congregation is not solely dependent upon the preacher. It is a mutual involvement. May they mutually provide encouragement, hope, and strength to each other.

### III. Conclusion:

- A. A working together:
  - 1. Preach the Word (II Timothy 4:1–5)
    - a. Preaching takes many forms. I doubt that they had any "professional preachers."
    - b. They were self-supporting under certain circumstances (Acts 18:3, 20:34).
    - c. They were supported by fellow believers (I Corinthians 9:11–12; II Corinthians 11:8). Always the mission was to preach the Word.
  - 2. Many times:
    - a. Preaching is used, but only three times is the word *preachers* used (I Timothy 2:7, 11; II Timothy 1:11; II Peter 2:5).
    - b. The good news, evangelizing, is used, but only three times is the word *evangelist* used (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:5).
    - c. He is telling us, not about preachers and evangelists, but about preaching the Good News to the end that men may be saved.
  - 3. "Urgent in season and out of season." Take every opportunity to spread the good news.
- B. The manner of its being preached, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, is to be done lovingly, humbly, and courageously.

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## Christian-Christian Relationships

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:23–24.

- I. Introduction:
  - A. The religion of Christ superior to all others:
    - 1. It is different and superior primarily in its attitude toward, and treatment of, one another

2. It may be of interest to you in your study to know that "one another" and "each other" are found 213 times in the New Testament.
3. It always considers the other person first. This is a mark of Christian maturity.
  - a. "That you may grow up in him in all things" (Ephesians 4:15).
  - b. We do not always exhibit true Christianity in our relationships with one another.
- B. Our relationship to God must be right. So, also, must our relationship with each other. This defines the whole course of the religion of Christ in our lives.

## II. Discussion:

- A. Some things we ought not to do toward one another:
  1. We should not wrong or injure one another (Acts 7:26). "Let us not quarrel, for we be brethren." This can be done by words and deeds. It may even be done by neglect and ignoring our brethren. Someone has said, "I never knew how cruel just common talk can be. I thought that words were singing things with color like the sea. But since I felt their caustic lash and know how they can sting, I hold my breath when words go by for fear they will not sing."
  2. We must not judge and accuse one another (Romans 2:1, 14; 14:13).
  3. Christians ought not to be puffed up and arrogant with one another (I Corinthians 4:6). Please consult several translations for help in the understanding of these words.
  4. Christians should not have "matters against one another" (I Corinthians 6:1). This is a dispute. If they do, it should be settled with the help of one another (brethren in the family of God). Otherwise, it is a shame.

5. Brethren must not bite and devour one another (Galatians 5:15). Literally, "eat one another down."
6. They should not provoke one another and envy one another (Galatians 5:26). Conceit may lead to these feelings.
7. Do not speak evil of one another (James 4:1). What a lovely state of affairs in the local congregation if this were followed.
8. Do not grumble and complain against one another (James 5:9).
- B. Here are some things we should do to one another:
  1. Show compassion (I Peter 3:8). This was the chief characteristic of Jesus.
    - a. Pity, a feeling of distress, to be moved in one's inwards.
    - b. The Hebrew word meant "of the same womb."

- c. Compassion is used 43 times in the New Testament; kindness is used 88 times; and mercy is used 347 times.
  - 2. Sympathy: "To suffer with a fellow-feeling. To have mercy and show kindness." Some of the words have to do with the feelings of the heart; this has to do with our actions so as to aid one another
- C. Let us consider attitudes we should have toward one another:
  - 1. Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50). What is that peace Mark discusses? Is it just the cessation of hostilities between parties?
  - 2. Receive and honor one another (John 5:44). Preferring one another (Romans 12:10). The word is *proago*, which means to go before. "Let the other fellow go first."
  - 3. Be kind one to another (Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:32). In this brotherly love we have two words for love. One is *philos*, the warm love of friendship. Another is *storge*, the close love of a family. The church is not a society or an institution, or, in this sense, even a community. It is a warm, close, loving family.
  - 4. Have the same mind—unity and harmony—with one another (Romans 12:16).
  - 5. Be patient, bearing with one another (Ephesians 4:2). This is to be in humility and gentleness.

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- 6. Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 6:14–15). This is not compromise with error, nor is it becoming soft on truth. It is a fundamental attitude we have toward one another.
      - 7. Esteem one another (Philippians 2:3). This is another instance of permitting the other fellow to take the lead, to count, think, consider him, esteem, and regard him first. How difficult for most to practice this.
      - 8. Accept and receive one another just as Christ has received us—without qualifications, without accusation, without recrimination, grudges, and without probation (Romans 15:7).
      - 9. Consider one another (Hebrews 10:24).
      - 10. Look to the good and advantage of one another (I Corinthians 10:24, 33).
      - 11. Be courteous to one another. To sum it up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind hearted, and humble in spirit, not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead (I Peter 3:8–9).
      - 12. Have good manners toward one another (I Corinthians 13:5).
- III. Conclusion:
  - A. What we should do for one another:
    - 1. Serve one another (Galatians 5:13).
    - 2. Greet one another (Romans 16:16).

3. Edify one another (Ephesians 4:16). Help one another build his house.
  4. Admonish, encourage, stimulate one another (Colossians 3:16).
  5. Comfort one another (I Thessalonians 4:18).
  6. Exhort one another daily (Hebrews 3:13). In weakness we need the strength of the others.
  7. Minister to one another (I Peter 4:10).
  8. Show hospitality to one another (I Peter 4:9).
  9. Fellowship one another (I John 1:9). Sharing with one another—having things in common.
  10. Confess to one another (James 5:16).
  11. Pray for one another (ibid.).
- B. Love is the key. Scriptures: I Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; I Peter 1:22).

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## Christian Men Working in the Local Church

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 12:12–21; Romans 12:4–5

- I. Introduction:
  - A. The assurance Jesus gave for the building and perpetuation of the church:
    1. “The gates of hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).
    2. Its permanency is guaranteed because the foundation of it is Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God (I Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 16:16).
    3. His promise was not only to build, but to preserve and perpetuate His church.
    4. His promise finds fulfillment on Pentecost in the building of it, and in all the time since that day until the present is seen its continuance (I Corinthians 15:24; Daniel 2:44). It is a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).
  - B. The importance of the church cannot be overemphasized:
    1. It is a vital part of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:1–11).
    2. It was purchased with the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).
    3. Reconciliation takes place in it (Ephesians 2:16).
    4. Citizenship in His kingdom is for those who are a part of the church (Ephesians 2:19).
    5. It is that relationship of redemption and forgiveness (Colossians 1:13–14).
    6. Sonship in the house of God takes place in the church (Galatians 2:19; I Timothy 3:14).
- II. Discussion:
  - A. What is the church? Some terms that would indicate men working in the local church:
    1. The word “church” in the New Testament is used very differently from the way it is used in contemporary society.

- a. People speak of “going to church” as though the church were a place we meet—a building.
- b. “Join the church of your choice” is a expression used by people around us.

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- 2. The church is never used in this sense in the New Testament. It is the “called out people” of God, a family of penitent, baptized believers, who have been called out of the world by the gospel and added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47; I Thessalonians 2:14).
- 3. Here are some of the terms applied to disclose its functions:
  - a. It is a family (Ephesians 2:22; I Timothy 3:15). In that family, God is our Father (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:3) and Christians are children of God (I John 3:1; Romans 8:16–17). Make no mistake about it, there is always plenty of work to do by every member of the church. You can know that the Holy Spirit has drawn this picture of the church as a family to bring to the front and make clear that lesson. It remains for you and me to draw the proper scriptural parallel.
  - b. It is a body (Ephesians 1:22–23; Colossians 1:24). There are at least two lessons here: the oneness of the body (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12); and the function of it. Every member has his part to play and his work to perform (I Corinthians 12:14–27).
  - c. It is a kingdom (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:13). We are citizens in that kingdom if we have been born into it (John 3:5), and there are obligations that devolve upon citizens to promote the welfare of the kingdom (Acts 13:47).
  - d. It is a tabernacle or temple (Hebrews 9:1–3; I Corinthians 3:16). This is a place of worship and service (Revelation 11:1; John 4:23–24).
  - e. It is a vineyard (Matthew 20:1–8). The primary lesson in this story is that the church is a place of labor.
  - f. It is a school (John 6:46; Ephesians 3:10; Matthew 28:18). Christians are disciples and learners in that school of which Jesus is the Master Teacher (John 3:1–5).
  - g. It is a sheepfold (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; John 10:1). The sheep are together and they are to stay together, hear His voice (John 10:3), and follow him (John 10:27).

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4. All of these terms evince the lesson that whatever the relationship—a family a body, a kingdom, a temple, or a vineyard, we are to share and work and worship together. “No man lives to himself” (Romans 14:7). It is vital that we learn this lesson if the church is to survive.
- B. What is this work we are to do together?
1. Why Jesus came into this world (John 3:16; Luke 19:10; I Timothy 1:15; I Timothy 2:3-4).
  2. The mission of the church is to proclaim the good news about Jesus and what He has accomplished for us in the world. To accomplish this mission the early church preached that gospel as God's power to save (Romans 1:16); cared about one another in their needs in life (Acts 2:44, 4:34-35) and built each other up toward maturity (Ephesians 4:16).
  3. Finding my place in the work (Romans 12:6-8).
    - a. First, understand that you have abilities and set about to discover what they are (Matthew 25:14-30). We may not be an eye, a hand, or a mouth, but we must function with what we have to the best of our ability. The one talent man was not condemned because he had one talent, but because he failed to use it.
    - b. There were miraculous spiritual gifts bestowed on certain Christians in the first century church. They were given for the establishing of truth until the New Testament was complete (Ephesians 4:8-16).
    - c. While miracles are not wrought today, the work they produced can still be done by all of us: prophecy (to speak forth the will of God—W.E. Vine); ministry (to be a servant); teaching (if our talents enable us to teach publicly, if not, then let us teach privately); exhort (a special talent for encouraging others); giving (if we have been blessed with material things, let us give liberally to the Lord's work); ruling (the Greek word is *prohistamenos* and means to “to set before.”. The literal meaning in the Greek New Testament is, “the one taking the lead”); mercy (To show gracious favor and saving mercy towards).

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- d. These are fields of endeavor in which we can work together in the local congregation.

- III. Conclusion:
- A. All of us can seek to practice this inspired admonition: (Titus 2:2, 6–8).
    - 1. Temperate (self-control).
    - 2. Grave (serious, dignified, worthy of respect).
    - 3. Sober-minded (sensible, thoughtful).
    - 4. Sound in the faith (trustworthy, reliable, a term which means healthy, to be hale, sound in doctrine, pure, uncorrupted).
    - 5. In love (I Corinthians 13:4–7).
    - 6. In patience (long suffering).
  - B. Attention is given to Christian women and young men as well (Titus 2:3–9). Select those ways from this passage in which you can serve.
    - 1. Give serious and thoughtful attention to your importance in the body and the need to do what you can for your own good and growth, for the edification of the congregation, and for the honor and glory it can bring to Him who is the Head.
    - 2. Examine what may be the real problem in service.

## **Christian Women Working in the Local Church**

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:25–26; I Timothy 2:8–12; I Peter 3:1–7; I Corinthians 11:1ff.

- I. Introduction:
- A. Christianity has emancipated women:
    - 1. Under Judaism her position was very much higher than her counterpart in the world about her.
    - 2. She was not an article of personal property, as chattel, although a bride's price was paid in the transaction of the marriage. However, God's law protected her (Deuteronomy 24:1–2).
  - B. The position of women in paganism:
    - 1. In other cultures and religions, the woman was abused as the weaker vessel.
    - 2. The Koran, the sacred scripture of 580,000,000 Moslems, does not accord women the important and dignified position shown her in the New Testament.
      - a. "Men stand superior to women in that God has preferred some of them over others ..." (Sura 4:38. Compare Acts 10:34; Galatians 3:28).
      - b. "But those [wives] whose perverseness you fear, admonish them and remove them into bed chambers and beat them ..." (Sura 4:38ff. Compare I Peter 3:7 NIV). Treat your wives as a precious possession.
    - 3. In many places of the world today, woman's rights are decidedly reduced, her status is unconditionally lowered, often shamefully. Enormous burdens are placed upon her. She carries

the heavy loads, becoming little more than a beast of burden in miserable drudgery and wretched toil.

- C. What is woman's place?
  - 1. She has her own divinely appointed role to play and sphere in which to serve which God intended for her. It would be foolish for a man to intrude himself into that realm.
  - 2. Conversely, it would be folly for her to clamor for man's place and position to which God has appointed him.

II. Discussion:

- A. Woman's place is not inferior nor less honorable.

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- 1. Her station is the highest in honor and influence. It is seen in her husband's attitude toward, and treatment of, her.
    - a. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).
    - b. She is called co-heir and fellow-participant of the grace of life (I Peter 3:7).
  - 2. Some have interpreted subjection to be inferiority (Ephesians 5:22; I Peter 3:5).
    - a. One can be subject to another and still be equal (Philippians 2:6; John 10:30, 14:28; Hebrews 1:3).
    - b. Children are subject to their parents, but not inferior.
    - c. In public school, one is subject to his teachers, showing respect and obeying rules, but that does not signify inferiority.
    - d. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1). While one is not justified because he is not inferior to make a loud, noisy, and clamorous demand to be free and to act as he pleases, his subjection to civil government is not an indication of inferiority.
  - 3. We are not, in this lesson, probing a Christian woman's worth or value. Her excellence is already well known and established. It is not her intrinsic value that is under consideration, but her sphere of service and the boundaries of her function. Is it different from or identical with that of man? Is the region of her service to God synonymous to that of man in the church?
- B. Some things the Christian woman cannot do in the church:
    - 1. She cannot be the head of man (I Corinthians 11:3).
      - a. The word for head in this passage means: "Chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate."
      - b. There is a chain of command in this verse: God, Christ, man, woman, children, servants.

- c. The wife is required to be in subjection to her husband (Ephesians 5:22). This is not an autocratic, despotic, tyrannical situation of sub—

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subservience. This verb, *submit*, has a form which means to submit one's self.

- d. The bringing of one's self under the state of influence of another has to be a voluntary matter. The principle is simply this: that God's arrangement for service rendered by men and women, the woman cannot be the head over the man.
- 2. She cannot exercise dominion over the man.
    - a. "I permit no woman to teach or have authority over man ..." (I Timothy 2:12).
    - b. There are two verbs in this verse: *teach* and *exercise authority*. Grammarians tell us that these are verbs of ruling, carry the Creative case, and literally mean: "The woman cannot teach over or exercise authority over the man."
    - c. "I will not leave the management of the Lord's house to the woman." It does not say, nor infer, that she cannot teach. She most assured can. She is told to do so.
  - 3. She cannot lead public prayer.
    - a. The passage which forbids this is I Timothy 2:8.
    - b. There are two terms used for man in the New Testament; *anthropos* and *aner*. *Anthropos* is the general term for men—and embraces all the human race, respective of sex. *Aner* is used 150 times in the New Testament and almost always, with very few exceptions, refers to man in contrast to woman. As far as I am able to tell, it is always used in the contrast when it has the articulated article "the" before it. In other words, it reads, "I would that THE men ..." in contrast with women.

Living word commentary: "Paul's use of THE men is emphatic to women." The Pulpit Commentary: "He gives further directions as to the persons who are to make the prayers, viz., the men. The stress is clearly upon the men." Lenski: "The men only and no women whatever are to do the praying in public worship of the congregations. In every congregation only men are to lead in public prayer and not women."

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- c. This does not, most certainly, prohibit a Christian woman from praying, but it restricts her from leading the public prayers.
  4. She cannot be a public preacher of the Word of God.
    - a. "... as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches" (I Corinthians 14:33-34). This was a long established principle. Paul adds, "as the law also says." The rule is positive, explicit, and universal.
    - b. How far reaching is this prohibition? Is she allowed to sing, confess Christ, acknowledge her sins? She is to be governed by that long established principle—she cannot teach over or exercise dominion over the man.
  5. She cannot be an elder in the Lord's church (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).
    - a. The management and superintendence of the local congregation has been given by the Lord into the hands of men.
    - b. Simple prohibitions are seen in such statements as "the husband of one wife."
    - c. It is fairly common, however, for women to be appointed elders in denominational churches. To do so does not make it so, or mean that it meets with God's approval.
    - d. The Christian woman may have a tremendous influence on her husband as he serves as an elder. She can help or deter him, qualify or disqualify him.
- C. What the Christian woman can do in the church:
1. She can expound the Word of God (Acts 18:26). They invited Apollos into their home and there explained the Word of God to him more accurately. The teaching of a man in a private situation is the circumstance under consideration here. She may teach her husband (I Peter 3:1-2).
  2. She can pray and prophesy (I Corinthians 11:5; Acts 21:9). Prophecy means: "to set forth a matter of divine teaching." Once, it was a miraculous gift. We do not have that now, but one can still set forth a matter of divine teaching.
  3. She can guide the home (I Timothy 5:14). "To occupy one's self in the management of a household." It

is not left in her hands without consideration of her husband or consultation with him.

4. She may school others (Titus 2:4-5). This is the word train or school, and means "to steady by exhortation and guidance."
  5. She can be a servant of the church (Romans 16:1-2). This is a special servant (deaconess): (1) service rendered voluntarily, (2) out of love unselfishly, and (3) for the benefit and advantage of others.
  6. She can teach and admonish (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). While this is in the context of singing, she may do this teaching and admonishing elsewhere provided it is not exercising authority over man.
- III. Conclusion: No one can better use life and ability as an influence for good than a Christian woman. The example of purity and reverence and faithfulness will influence the lives of many others (I Peter 3:1-5). Abraham Lincoln said, "No man is poor who has a godly mother." Thackeray wrote, "Mother is the name of God in the lips and hearts of little children." The Jewish Talmud asks: "Who is best taught?" Then answers, "He who first learned from his mother."

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## My Relationship to Other Religious Groups

Scripture Reading: Psalm 1; I Peter 4:11; Galatians 1:6-9.

- I. Introduction:
  - A. The lesson at hand is important and timely:
    1. There are some 2,500 denominations in the United States alone.
    2. We cannot, must not "write these people off."
      - a. They are lost and need to be saved.
      - b. Christ died for them, also (John 3:15-17).
      - c. Christ's gospel is for them as well as us (Mark 16:15-16).
      - d. God wishes all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4).
      - e. This relationship should depend not upon what we feel or others think, but upon the Word of God (Colossians 3:17).
  - B. How do we treat the people of denominations?
    1. Some of us treat them harshly and bitterly.
      - a. We have been abused by them, so we reciprocate. They have said ugly and unkind things about us and have misrepresented us to others.
      - b. We feel that we are right and they are wrong and we must show them.
      - c. We misinterpret harshness and rudeness to be the Spirit of Christ with which we should deal with others (Acts 13:10ff). It is dangerous to pervert the truth and to do so receives strong criticism.
    2. We should not treat them:
      - a. With anger or disgust, if they are ignorant or honest.

- b. Unwisely and unkindly (Matthew 16:16). He intends for us to use an approach that will be designed and destined to save them.
- c. If they are not honest, but hypocritical and rebellious, note how Jesus dealt with them (Matthew 21:12–28, 23:1–36, 37). Even after all that, Christ wept over them.
- d. The Christian is the light of the world to show the way (Matthew 5:16). The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle toward all (II Timothy 2:24).

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- e. Deal sincerely with every man. If some do not want the truth, then take it to those who do. Let all we do be done in the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9).

II. Discussion:

- A. What about fellowshiping all?
  - 1. The open-arm attitude is opposed to the plain teaching of God's Word and the Spirit of Christ.
  - 2. He instructs us:
    - a. To prove and test teachers and preachers (I John 4:1; Acts 20:29–31; I Peter 2:1–3).
    - b. We are to have nothing to do with false doctrine (II John 9–11).
    - c. Those who bring another gospel are to be banned. They are anathema (Galatians 1:6–9).
    - d. We are to turn away from them (Romans 16:17). Avoid them. Have no religious fellowship with them.
  - 3. Observe, in your study, the Spirit of Christ in dealing with false teachers and hypocrites and His treatment of those who, through weakness of the flesh, were implicated in sin (Matthew 23; Luke 7:38–44).
- B. How was error dealt with in the Old Testament?
  - 1. The case of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1–2, 16:12; Isaiah 55:8; Jeremiah 10:23).
  - 2. The case of false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1–5).
    - a. Warns that they would arise.
    - b. Do not follow them to go after other gods.
    - c. Permits it to discover if His people truly love Him (John chapters 14–15, 21–24).
    - d. False teachers were put to death and God's people were to do the executing (I Kings 18:40, 19:1).
  - 3. Other passages (Leviticus 20:1–5; Deuteronomy 13:6–11, 18:20–22).
- C. How was error dealt with in the New Testament?

1. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matthew 7:15–20).
2. Truth is not to be perverted. Error is not as good as truth. The belief of a lie will damn the soul (Matthew 15:14; II Thessalonians 2:8–12). Only the truth will make men free (John 8:32, 17:17).
3. John issued this warning (II John 9–11).

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4. A further warning he issued against false teachers (I John 4:1).
5. How can you measure these things (II Timothy 3:16–17; II Peter 1:3)?
6. Paul issued a strong warning (Acts 20:29–31).
7. Other passages (II Peter 2:1–3, 3:15; Romans 10:1–3; Matthew 7:13, 24; II Thessalonians 1:7–9; Matthew 7:21–27; Colossians 3:17).

### III. Conclusion:

- A. Hate sin but love the sinner.
- B. God wants His truth jealously guarded. Perversion of truth can cause both teachers and taught to be lost. The spirit of our teaching and the manner of our lives should be to the end to lead men to Christ.

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## The Meaning of Christian Service

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:14–30; John 12:26.

### I. Introduction:

- A. More is expected of the Christian than study and worship.
  1. Service is required.
  2. How is a Christian a servant?
    - a. He is a slave (Matthew 8:9; Romans 1:1, 6:17–18).
    - b. He is a minister and a deacon (Matthew 23:11; Romans 16, 15:25; Hebrews 6:10).
    - c. He is an attendant—one who waits upon (Hebrews 3:5).
    - d. He is a house-servant, realizing he cannot serve two masters (Luke 16:13).
    - e. He is a child-servant, submissive, reverent, and dependent (Matthew 8:6–8).
    - f. He is an underling, recognizing and submitting to higher authority, ready to take orders (Matthew 26:58).

- g. A word for servant (minister) which means to work publicly (Acts 13:2).
- B. Service is the road to true greatness:
  - 1. The greatest man or woman is the greatest servant (Matthew 23:11; Luke 22:26).
  - 2. Jesus is the example of this kind of servant (Mark 10:45; John 9:4). He set the example of humble service in washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1–17, I Peter 2:21).
  - 3. A splendid example given in the day when the church was young was that of Dorcas (Acts 9:36–43).
- II. Discussion:
  - A. Service makes the difference:
    - 1. The parable of the *ten virgins*, a lesson in watchfulness and readiness (Matthew 25:1–13).
    - 2. The parable of the *talents*, emphasizing the duty to work and that of responsibility (Matthew 25:14–30).
    - 3. A description of the *judgment* and faithfulness on the part of the Christian in rendering service under all circumstances. Doing (Matthew 25:31–46).

- B. The universal law of disuse:
  - 1. There is a universal law of disuse.
    - a. Material things are lost by disuse.
    - b. Farms grow up with weeds and bushes.
    - c. Vacant buildings become dilapidated and useless.
    - d. Tools corrode and rust.
    - e. Muscles, not exercised, will become scrawny, emaciated, and atrophy. Eventually they will perish.
    - f. Mind, not used and sharpened, will become dull and weak.
  - 2. In the spiritual realm, there is a parallel.
    - a. Lose power or ability of discernment of good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).
    - b. Loss of sense of responsibility will callous one's feelings for the needs of others—like the priest and the Levite (Luke 10:30–36).
    - c. It becomes neglect and wickedness. Some opportunities come to us; others we have to make. To fail to do so constitutes the greatest transgression (Matthew 24:24ff). He is called by the Lord a “wicked and lazy servant,” to be cast out into darkness.
  - 3. The Lord does not expect the impossible, but he requires the possible.
    - a. It is possible for us to give and to give generously, but disuse of the sense of liberality will deaden our

sensibilities and cause us to lose the grace of giving (I Corinthians 16:2).

- b. It is easier to explain what we have done than to try to explain why we did not do it.
- c. In the parable of the talents, the first two men used fourteen words to say what they had done. The one-talent man used forty-two words, in the English language, in a vain effort to try to explain his slothfulness.

III. Conclusion:

- A. A servant is one who obeys:
  - 1. It is not a ritualistic and mechanical obedience, but a submission from the heart (Romans 6:17-18).

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- 2. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "But that the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do (John 14:3).
- 3. Paul seemed to delight in calling himself a *servant* of the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 5:13). He used the term *servant* with means *slave*, frequently: (1) one bought with a price, (2) a servant, slave, serves, (3) a slave does the will of the master and not his own will. It is significant that the word means *to serve*. So, if one does not serve, he cannot accurately and correctly be called a servant. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me..." (John 12:26).

- B. The busy man:

### The Busy Man

If you want to get a favor done  
By some obliging friend  
And want a promise safe and sure  
On which you can depend,  
Don't go to him, who always has  
Much leisure time to plan,  
But if you want your favor done,  
Just ask a busy man.

The man of leisure never has  
A moment he can spare;  
He's busy "putting off" until  
His friends are in despair;  
But he whose every waking hour  
Is crowded full of work,

Forgets the art of wasting time  
He cannot stop to shirk.

So, when you want a favor done,  
and want it right away,  
Go to the man who constantly  
Works twenty hours a day,  
He'll find a moment, sure, somewhere  
And fix you while the idle man  
Is framing an excuse.

— —Author Unknown

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## The Meaning of Christian Stewardship

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:1–13; I Corinthians 4:1–2

### I. Introduction:

- A. To know what Christian stewardship is as the key to true Christian happiness:
  - 1. Look up dictionary definitions of *steward* and *stewardship*.
  - 2. In the New Testament, the word is *oikonomon*. It is compound, composed of house plus law, standard, or rule. It came from a word which means to dispense or distribute. So, a steward is one who is concerned with the management of the domestic affairs of the house of God. He is an administrator and a supervisor of the good with which God has entrusted him.
  - 3. The Christian really has no option in the matter of being a steward. He may choose to be a good one or a bad one, but he is a steward nonetheless.
- B. At the judgment, the Lord will require an account of the way we have handled:
  - 1. Time. "Redeeming the time ..." (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5).
  - 2. Proper supervision and use of talents (Matthew 25:14ff).
  - 3. Our money (II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9).
  - 4. It does not matter how much or how little of this world's goods we may have, we are going to give an account to God on that day of judgment on our use and disposition of them (II Corinthians 5:10).

### II. Discussion:

- A. The Christian steward recognizes divine ownership:
  - 1. He is aware and deeply conscious of the fact that he is only a steward and does not own anything (Psalm 24:1; I Chronicles 29:10–14).
  - 2. If we could be thoroughly convinced that we own no land, money, or anything else for the simple reason that God claims

divine ownership of everything, our task would be easier, our way home more plain, and our joy more complete (Acts 17:24ff).

3. Picture a man who works in a bank or some large business for a few months and convinces himself

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that he owns the establishment. How could he come to that conclusion? By using the type of reasoning that we use when we feel that the material things of this world are ours. "I went to school many years to prepare, and I have worked hard these many years to earn what I have. It is mine."

4. Hear what God has to say: "Every good gift and every perfect gift ..." (James 1:17). In this connection, read and consider Acts 4:32.
  5. God's title to the world and everything in it is clearly defined (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8; Psalm 50:10). We must recognize that we also belong to Him (Ezekiel 18:4; I Corinthians 6:19–20; Isaiah 43:1). The Macedonians recognized this and gave themselves to the Lord (II Corinthians 8).
- B. The Christian steward honors God with his first fruits:
1. The faithful steward will pay to the landlord all that is due him. What would you think of the tenant who gathers the whole crop in the fall and said to the land owner, "thank you" or said nothing at all—as so many do.
  2. "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase" (Proverbs 3:9–10)
  3. Will a man rob God? (Malachi 3:8–10)
  4. It is a Biblical and proven fact that the steward who gives to God the best, first fruits off the top, is wonderfully blessed (Nehemiah 13:10–12; II Chronicles 31:10–11).
  5. The Lord not only wants us to be liberal, but He wants the first and the best (Malachi 1:13–14; I Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 25:27–30).
  6. This, without doubt, was the sin of Cain (Hebrews 11:4; Jude 11; Genesis 4:4ff). The LXX: "If thou hast rightly brought it, but hast not rightly divided it ..." So, with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5).
- C. The Christian steward knows he must give an account:
1. An account of the way we make it and also the way we use it (I Corinthians 4:7).
  2. We speak of "my house, my barns, my land, my cattle, my crops, my business, my bank account." Whose shall these be in 100 years? No, you do not own anything and you must learn this important fact to be a good steward.

3. There is an old story of a man who loved money so dearly that he converted it into gold so he could take it to heaven with him when he died. He said gold was good in any country. He put all his gold in his attic and told the family that he would get as his spirit ascended to heaven. A few days later he died and one of the boys went up to the attic and observed that the gold was still there. The mother replied, "I told him if he were going to take it with him, he had better put it in the basement, and then he could get it on the way to the place where he was going!"
4. Every Christian should carefully study I Timothy 6:6-10.
5. While we are discussing the steward's management of the money with which God has entrusted Him:
  - a. The steward must give an account of his time.
  - b. The steward must give an account of his life. Life is sacred. God has given it to us with many precious opportunities for speaking a kind word, lending a helping hand, doing some good deed, and rendering a service to those around us.
  - c. We must give an account of our influence (Romans 14:7). That fact that we may be ignorant of the influence we are exerting only magnifies the seriousness of it.
  - d. We are stewards of the gospel. The only feet the Lord has to carry the gospel to the world is our feet. A good steward loves the gospel and he loves the souls of those who are lost and will do his utmost to see that it is carried to them. A faithful steward will never be happy in keeping the gospel at home.

### III. Conclusion:

- A. Who is a good steward?
  1. One who makes all he can.
  2. One who saves all he can.
  3. One who gives all he can.
  4. The Bible teaches that a Christian steward should make all he can (Matthew 25:14ff). Examples are the five talent and the two talent man (Ephesians 4:28; II Thessalonians 3:10; Romans 12:11). There is not anything

wrong in a man working and making all that he has the ability to earn.

5. Save all you can (John 6:12). It is not wrong for a man to make provisions for his family and for the future (II Corinthians 12:14).
  6. Give all you can (I Corinthians 16:2). If all the members of the church were true to this trust, we could evangelize the world in our generation. Why do you want a raise? For your own selfish pleasure? Or, that you may be able to give more to the Lord and His work? To do good to others?
- B. A good steward is faithful in small things:
1. Carefully read Luke 16:10. A Christian is just as responsible for his nickels and dimes as he is for his thousands. It is not what you would do with a million if riches should fall to your lot, but what you are doing at present with the dollar and a quarter that you've got!
  2. What suggestions would you make to restore New Testament giving in this congregation?



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