

Milk & Honey

Vol. XXVI November, 2012 No. 11

Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Ministry of an Elder or Overseer

1 Peter 5:1-4
Multiple Authors

1. **The Responsibility Of The Ministry** - "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers" (1 Pet. 5:2). "Tend - nurture, guard, guide and fold - the flock of God that is your responsibility" (Amplified). There is no suggestion here of a clerical order ruling arbitrarily over the laity. These elders were mature, godly men, upon whom rested the responsibility of watching over the souls of believers, as those for whom they must give an account. "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account" (Heb. 13:17). Peter links himself with them, "who am also an elder." If Peter was ever a Pope he never knew it! He took his place as one with his elder-brethren in sharing the ministry for the edification of the saints, even though he was one of the original twelve. He admonishes the elders to feed, not fleece, "the flock of God which is among you." They were to feed the people by ministering the truth of God as made known in His holy Word. (H. A. Ironside)

2. **The Motivation Of The Ministry** - "Not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly" (1 Pet. 5:2). "Not by coercion or constraint but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits (belonging to the office) but eagerly and cheerfully" (Amplified). If it is undertaken as the result of strong pressure brought to bear on him, or for any reward which may be offered, the shepherd does not fulfill the ideal of this passage. None of God's soldiers are mercenaries or pressed men; they are all volunteers. We must have a shepherd's heart, if we would do a shepherd's work. Nor is this love merely the liking which may come from the flesh, or be dictated by the inclination of the soul. There must be the love which is akin to the love of the Chief Shepherd Himself. A love which can endure without return or thanks; which can grow where there is scarcely any soil; and which clings to the least lovely and thankful. That love is only shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (F. B. Meyer)

3. **The Character Of The Ministry** - "Not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3). "Not (as arrogant, dictatorial and overbearing persons) domineering over those in your charge, but being examples - patterns and models of Christian living - to the flock" (Amplified). The Spirit also no doubt foresaw that some would be lording it over God's flocks, and so forewarns in this verse. Many today take the position of rulers, and the people just must knuckle down to their ways. They well nigh demand worship as well as obedience. The elders are to care for God's sheep, but not have dominion over them. There is nothing worse than a domineering man assuming a high place in the church. We have seen shepherds in our country driving the sheep with sticks and stones. In the eastern lands, he leads them, calling them by name, and they follow him. You cannot drive God's sheep. You will just drive them away. You must lead them. Diotrophes in 3 John 9 is an example of one who lorded it over the flock of God. John speaks scathingly of him. He loved to have the preeminence. He would not receive John into the church, and spoke against him with malicious words. He also refused to receive others, and cast them out of the church. Such there are today, too. We are not to lord it over one another, but to serve. The elders should not drive, but show the way to the sheep. They should be examples in word and deed. (J. Nieboer)

4. **The Reward Of The Ministry** - "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Pet. 5:4). "And (then) when the Chief Shepherd is revealed you will win the conqueror's crown of glory" (Amplified). It is a work that requires much labor, often gives much sorrow, and yields little present return. People have much interest in the evangelist's work, and there is a present joy in seeing sinners saved, but the shepherd's work is more arduous and often little in it to cheer. It is because of this that the "crown of glory" with its dazzling brightness, is promised from the Chief Pastor's own hand. He knows all the toil, has seen all the tears, and fully estimated all the labors spent upon the sheep for whom He gave His life. That crown of unfading glory will tell to all how much He appreciated the service of which men thought so little. (William Lincoln)

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If a man desires the position of an overseer, he desires a good work (1 Tim. 3:1).

Biblical Giving

Steve Hulshizer

Touch a man's wallet and you have touched a nerve. When Jesus challenged the rich young ruler to part with his money it struck a nerve. The young man apparently did not realize the grip his money had upon him until confronted with giving it away. (Luke 18:22-23) So it is with many of us. We do not always realize how much we trust in riches, and how much importance we place on money. Money gives us a sense of security; however, Scripture would teach us that riches have wings, and really provide little security. (Prov. 23:5)

When it comes to Christians and giving to the Lord, it has been said, "A giving Savior should have giving disciples." (2 Cor. 8:9) It was the Lord who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) Instruction on giving to the Lord occupies a good part of Scripture and is a very important part of the Christian pathway.

Throughout the Old Testament we are given accounts of those who gave abundantly. When the tabernacle was to be constructed the children of Israel gave their jewelry, linen, and other materials to such an extent that Moses needed to command them to stop giving. (Ex. 36:3-6) The widow of Zarephath gave her last meal to the prophet. (1 Kings 17) In the New testament we read of the widow who gave "all that she had." (Mark 12:44) Mary and Martha provided hospitality to the Lord (John 12:2), while Lydia did so for Paul and his company. (Acts 16:40)

Often "giving" is viewed in a negative light, and many fail to see it is more "blessed" to give than receive. Many miss a blessing by failing to give of that which the Lord has placed in their hands. All is His, and David stated, "for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. 29:14) In addition to blessing, giving is a way of honoring the Lord. "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:" (Prov. 3:9) What Christian would not want to honor the Lord in the way he lives? Yet, despite this, many fail to see giving as a way of honoring the Lord. Giving needs to be seen in a more favorable light. We need to view it, not as a chore, but as an opportunity to honor the Lord and to be a blessing to others, and in turn be blessed.

There are some very simple principle associated with Christian giving. One is that of *secrecy*. The one giving is not to blow his trumpet and announce it to the world. It is not to be done for the praise of men. (Matt. 6:1-4)

Giving is to be *systematic*. Paul instructed the Corinthian saints to set aside each Lord's Day in accordance with how the Lord has prospered them. We do many other financial

activities in a systematic way, and yet giving is often done in a haphazard fashion. We pay mortgages, loans, and utility bills on a regular basis, and giving to the Lord should also be done in an orderly way.

As noted above it is also to be *proportional*. It is to be "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. 8:12) We need not compare our giving to others which will most likely cause difficulty. We are free to simply give in accordance with what the Lord has placed in our trust.

Perhaps most important is that our giving is to be from a *willing and cheerful heart*. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) In a selfish world giving is usually viewed as a duty—something we ought to do. The Lord is desirous for the Christians to have a cheerful attitude toward giving. Thankfully there are those Christians who really enjoy giving to the Lord. It should be true of all the redeemed.

We often speak of developing and using our spiritual gifts, and it needs to be done. When writing to the saints in Corinth Paul said, "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (2 Cor. 8:7) The "grace" of which is speaking is that of "giving." No doubt he would exhort us today to "abound in this grace also."

Paul concludes this exhortation with the example of "giving" by the Lord Jesus, Who was rich, but for our sakes became destitute in order that we might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9) Certainly His grace is to stir our hearts to be cheerful givers. *

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There is no charge for Milk & Honey. It, like all ministries of Spread The Word, is supported entirely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. All gifts are tax deductible.

Publisher: **Spread The Word, Inc.**

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Dover, PA 17315

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The Christian's Mission

C. H. Mackintosh

The Feeding of the 4,000: Mark 8:1-9

“He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them and they set them before the multitude (verse 6). We have each one to remember, that we are sent into this world to be a channel of communication between the heart of Christ and every form of need that may cross our path from day to day. We need to be reminded, in days like the present, that every child of God, every member of the body of Christ, whatever be his position or sphere of action, has a mission to fulfill - a work to do for Christ.

1. *The Need.* “In those days, the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him...(verse 1).” Here was the state of the case - great need, and no apparent resources to meet it.

2. *The Divine Resource.* But Jesus was there - blessed be His holy name! - in all the love of His heart, and the almighty power of His hand. He was there who, of old, had fed three millions of people in a vast howling wilderness - for forty years. He could at once, and directly, have met the need without calling His poor unbelieving and self-occupied disciples into the scene at all. He could have summoned angelic messengers from heaven to wait upon those hungry thousands. But He did neither the one nor the other.

3. *The Divine Purpose.* It was His gracious purpose to use His disciples as channels of communication between Himself and that vast hungry multitude. Not merely as instruments of His power, which angels might be, but the very expression of His heart.

4. *The Divine Procedure.* Had He merely intended to use them as instruments of His power, it would have sufficed to put the ways and means into their hands. But no; He wanted to make them channels through which the tender compassion of His heart might flow out. Our blessed Lord first gathers His disciples round Himself, and seeks to fill their hearts with His own feelings and thoughts ere He fills their hands with the loaves and fishes (verses 2,3). It is as if He had said, “I have compassion, and want you to have it also. I want you to enter into all my thoughts and feelings, to think as I do, and feel as I do. I want you to look with my eyes at this hungry multitude, in order that you may be in a moral condition to be My channels. If I say, “I must try and be a channel,” I shall make a fool of myself. But if I drink at the fountain of Christ’s heart, I shall be filled to overflowing, my whole moral being will be permeated by His spirit, so that I shall be in a fit condition to be used by

Him, and I shall be sure to make a right use of whatever ways and means He may put into my hands. If I get my hands full of means, before my heart is full of Christ, I shall not use the means for Him. I shall use them for my own glory, and not for the glory of God.

5. *The Human Response.* But mark how slow the disciples were in responding to the desire of the heart of Christ respecting them (verse 4). It was His gracious purpose to use them as His channels, to bestow upon them this immense privilege; but they, like ourselves, were little able to appreciate it, simply because they failed to enter into His thoughts, and to apprehend the glory of His Person. Did they not know, or had they forgotten, that they were in the immediate presence of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe? Surely, had their hearts at all apprehended the glory of His Person, they could never have asked such a question as, “How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?”

6. *The Divine Results.* But God was there! Yes, it was God, speaking through human lips, who had said, “I have compassion on the multitude.” He knew the exact distance each one had travelled, and the length of time each one had been fasting. Yes, God was there, in all the tenderness of a love, which could take account of the most minute details of a creature’s weakness and a creature’s necessity. If we want to act as the channels of the grace of Christ, we must have to do with Him in the deep secret of our own souls. We must learn of Him; we must feed upon Him; we must know the meaning of communion with His heart; we must be near enough to Him to know the secrets of His mind, and carry out the purposes of His love. We may depend upon it, that what is really in our hearts will come out in our lives. We may have a quantity of truth in our heads, and flippantly flowing from our lips, but if we really desire to be channels of communication between His heart and the needy ones in the scene through which we are passing, we must habitually drink into His love. It cannot possibly be in any other way. “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water (Jn. 7:38).” *

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*And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the
Son to be the Saviour of the world. 1 John 4:14*

November, 2012

Slower Reactions

Steve Hulshizer

It was evident that as the years roll by my reactions have slowed considerably. I can remember as a teenager playing baseball by the hour. I would move before the ball was hit. Given the location and speed of the pitch, and some knowledge of the hitter, I was already heading in the right direction at the crack of the bat. A few years later I would watch the ball be hit and then decide that I better try to get to it. Not many years later I would just watch the ball and not react at all! My reactions had slowed considerably.

As I thought about my slower reactions, I was thinking they are not all bad. As we get older, and hopefully more mature, it is often good that our reactions are slower. We should react slower to unkind remarks. We should be slower in getting angry. (James 1:19) With increased experience should come increased discernment, and this should keep us from acting too quickly in receiving movements and individuals. "Lay hands suddenly on no man" was Paul's instruction to the younger Timothy (1 Tim. 5:22).

In the last several decades there has been many who jump on the bandwagon of some movements which promised church growth. Others quickly adopted the "self-esteem" philosophy of the psychologists. Youth rapidly accepted the "Christian rock" scene.

The apostle John wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) Trying the spirits takes time. "Haste makes waste" is true in spiritual things as well.

Israel made hasty judgments concerning the Benjamites and the city of Ai. Judas did his horrible deed "quickly."

Pilate and Herod also made hasty decisions concerning the Christ, and many in the world today continue this practice to their doom.

May we who are older take the time to encourage those who are younger to have slower reactions to this world's deception and spiritual counterfeits. Quick reactions may be good in sports, but in the spiritual arena they could be very harmful. *

Milk & Honey, November 1999

Warning from 1915

The world is under judgment: Satan is blinding men's eyes while he leads them a few steps more over the brink into eternity. Hell awaits the unsaved. This earth is stained with the blood of Christ, Who, when He was here, devoted every hour and moment to His Father's will. In such a world the Church must ever be a witness against the prevailing levity and indifference. How solemn, then, is it to hear men pleading for amusements—to attract the masses, to keep up the interest of the young people. The pleasure of God's people is found in the unspeakable joy of learning more of Christ. The craving after worldly amusements is the sure sign of an empty heart. Samuel Ridout, 1915

York Bible Study Program

November 2012 - April 2013

Date	Topic	Teacher
December 8	Eternal Life & Eternal Punishment	Randy Amos
January 12	Romans 12-16	Tom Irwin
February 9	Lessons from Saul & David	Bob Spender
March 9	Feasts of Jehovah	Mike Attwood