**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt #1)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #1:** Identifying the Raw Materials

*Who is the ultimate example of a godly leader?*

*What “Raw Materials” should we look for in potential leaders?*

**A.** Reliability and faithfulness in little tasks (Matthew 25:14-30)

* God gives according to ability; He expects faithful service

*“Be big kingdom agenda oriented, not big church oriented ...”*

*Are you using the resources God has given you?*

**B.** Accepts responsibility for failures/ mistakes (Proverbs 28:13)

* Learn what God can do through failure in your life.

*“Where there is the grace of God operative, human failure is never final.”*

**C.** Team player (1 Corinthians 12)

* Understand your weaknesses / limitations and appoint others
* utilize the spiritual giftedness of others

*“Are you willing to work on a team; be a part of a team?”*

**D.** Patient with others idiosyncrasies

* We need to be patient with those who are different than us

*“We need to be people who are willing to work on our own limitations and glean from those who are more mature”*

**E.** Knows own limitations

* Are you able to identify your own weaknesses and limitations?
* Be specific about your weaknesses
* Take the time to evaluate your own life!
* Make a specific plan to grow and change

**F.** Able to accept criticism graciously

* Is your heart teachable; do you want to learn?

**G.** Solution-focussed rather than problem focussed

* Do you like to solve problems, or just complain about them?

**H.** Enthusiastic and optimistic (about serving the church)

* Are you enthusiastic about the church? (Christ’s church)
* Are you negative about Christ’s church?

*Philippians 1:6*

*1 Thessalonians 2:17-20*

* Do you love Christ’s bride?
* Do you thank God for the church?
* Do you have confidence in God’s work?

*“The Bride isn’t as lovely as she will be. But the Bride of Jesus Christ is beloved by Jesus Christ!”*

* Are you optimistic about the power of God to transform people’s lives?

**I.** Enjoys serving people

* You need to like to be around people (all kinds of people)
* Do you love people and love to interact with people (even the difficult ones)?

**J.** Trusted by close friends

* Are you trustworthy in ... prayer, non-worldliness, true humility and stewardships?

**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt #2)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #2**: Building a Team of Courageous Churchmen

Introduction:

We need to have a plan to build a team of leaders.

**A.** Doctrinal convictions derived from scripture

* Doctrine is essential; leaders in the church need to know theology

1 Timothy 4:16

* Develop doctrinal convictions *TOGETHER*!

*“Strength of leadership comes from understanding theology, period. Godly character and understanding of God’s revelation and your ability to articulate it - that is the strength of the ministry.”*

What do you think of that quote?

What role does doctrine play in daily life? How is it relevant for our lives?

“*In the training of leadership, we are training men to develop doctrinal convictions* *on the basis of texts of Scripture*.”

“Teach doctrine and show young leaders where in scripture you derive it from.”

1 Timothy 4:16 ... persevere & protect

2 Timothy 2:15 ... “***Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth***.”

Spend personal time together ... but make sure it is for the purpose of growing in your understanding of Biblical truth and how it applies to people’s lives.

**B.** Make clear application of the truth to life’s problems and the church’s issues

Lists of topics to discuss:

* What is an elder?
* What is church leadership/ shepherding
* Resolving leadership conflicts
* Church government ... why elder lead, not congregational lead? What’s Biblical?
* Philosophy of ministry: why do we do what we do? (Why not other things?)
* Biblical discipleship/ counseling
* Understanding worship and music in the local church
* Church discipline
* Woman’s role in the local church
* Spiritual gifts
* Shepherding own family
* Dealing with crises
* Divorce and remarriage
* Studying Scripture [basic hermeneutics]
* Eschatology
* Overview of theology in every area
* Contemporary issues
* Church history

Open discussion is welcome and exegesis is welcome. What do you understand about these things? Do you want to know what the Bible says about this topic? Let’s learn together!

Psalm 119:99 “***I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.***”

Matthew 4:4 ... live by *every word*

**The Results**: Ephesians 4:14 ... “***As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine*** ...” We want to pursue unity in the body of doctrine given, and we are to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

**The Aim**: to be able to walk someone through the tenets of the faith. Define the truth and give 1-2 verses of Scripture which defend your position.

Make this an enriching time of developing camaraderie.

**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt 3)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #3**: A Consistent Philosophy of Ministry

***Ephesians 3:14***

* + “Paul prays for God’s strengthening with His power which comes through His Spirit and does the work in the inner man.”
  + “It comes by comprehension, real understanding of the love of Christ, and it is a work done by the Spirit in the inner man.”
  + Who - God is doing the work
  + Basis - Strengthening the inner man
  + Ultimate Goal – so that Christ may dwell in your hearts in faith

***Romans 12:1-2***

* + “It has to begin with our convictions derived from Scripture.”
  + “We can never over emphasize the renewing of the mind by way of truth.”
  + “We must ground our people in truth”

***1 Timothy 3:15***

* + “If you want to know what the church’s product is, it’s truth”
  + Repository of divine truth.
  + The church is the pillar and support of the truth.
  + “That’s our job. To herald it. To teach it. To live according to it. To exhort our people in it. That is the mandate.”

“If you are a young aspiring leader learning doctrine, but you are not being exhorted in the application of it or shepherded in the application of it, I guarantee you, you will be puffed up.”

***Consistent Philosophy of Ministry***

* Clear
* Consistent
* Entire Church Learns

***Why have a Philosophy of Ministry?***

* A philosophy of ministry connects Biblical truth with what you do so there is God’s authority on those things and those things don’t change. We don’t change the tenets or the main focus points of our philosophy of why we do what we do in the church. Everything else is fair game. Methodologies come and go.
* It unifies every area of ministry under a single purpose.
* Prevents distractions that don’t represent core issues and life of the church.
* Benefit: Provision of clear direction for entire church

***Mandates of Church***

* Gospel, Equipping, Outreach, Encouraging, Discipleship, Leadership Training, Maturing of Saints, Caring for needy (*Non - Negotiable*)

***Matthew 28: 18-20*** *(Church planting and establishing)*

* The mandate of the local church goes way beyond speaking the gospel.
* Because Jesus has authority over every soul…go therefore and make disciples of every nation. Make disciples.
* Believers will identify with Christ in the local church and be taught to observe God’s commandments.
* Teaching believers to observe *all* that Jesus has commanded.

*“The mandate of the local church is in effect where disciples are born of Christ’s authority, they are baptized to identify with Christ and God’s people, and they stay together where they are taught by leaders all that Jesus commanded and to observe it and walk in it.”*

***Acts 20:25*** *(Declaring the Whole Purpose of God – an Equipping Centre)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Sacrifice required * Catechizing families * Teaching leaders * Theology * Doctrine & walking in it | * Practical ministry life * How to live as a Christian * How to evangelize * Identifying doctrinal error * Helping the weak by teaching the word of God |

***Romans 12*** *(Body Life Objectives)*

* Clear view of what the body life objectives are of the Church
* Giving of self as service of worship
* Transforming of mind
* Gifts used in church
* Think with sound judgment

***Colossians 1:28-29*** *(Discipleship)*

* Admonishing and teaching
* Present every man complete in Christ

***1 Peter 4:7-11*** *(Urgency)*

*“Any philosophy of ministry which is effective is going to focus its attention on facilitating life on life so that the mature character in the church can help the less mature.”*

**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt 4)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #4: Building a team of courageous churchmen**

**A.** *Courageous in Conflict*

*“If you are going to be teaching doctrine, you are going to be accused; if you are going to be teaching a philosophy of ministry in the church you will have people coming against that!”*

Leaders in training need someone to follow; someone to look to who has spiritual courage.

Every faithful ministry is going to come under satanic attack. Leaders need to stand firm and say, “We will not change our philosophy of ministry or our doctrine. We will stay the course and exalt Christ!”

“*Young men need to see consistent courage, strength of character, ready to go, pressing on even through difficulties*.”

“*The next generation ... needs mentors who will take the truth all the way to the highest cost if God so asks for it*.”

2 Corinthians 12:15 “**I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?**”

Philippians 2:17-30 ...

Question: who are you trying to please – God or men?

**“For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant (slave) of Christ.”**

Galatians 1:10

**B.** *Patience with the process*

“*The church belongs to Jesus Christ. And her glory, her sanctification, her beauty belongs to Jesus Christ*.”

“*As we learn to grow in our leadership of the body, we need to be patient with the process* *– it takes time.*”

Titus 3:1-2

James 3:13-18

Hebrews 12:3ff

**C.** *Availability, compassion, & sacrifice*

Acts 20:31 ... *night and day for three years*

2 Corinthians 11:28 ... *pressure of concern*

Philippians 2:17ff ... *poured out*

1 Thessalonians 2:7 ... *parental love*

“*Are we willing to give up our personal time, hobbies and comfort to train men?*”

Are you willing to give up your personal time, hobbies and comfort to be trained?

What is the Biblical way to think about failure?

Are you a gracious forgiver of other’s failures?

Are you willing to make the sacrifice to learn to lead, and, to lead?

**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt 5)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #5**: **Building a team of courageous churchmen** *(continued)*

**D.** *Prayer and Alertness on Behalf of New Leaders*

We must be constantly concerned about purity and integrity – our own and that of one another.

*“Prayer is a very difficult work ... it is hard work!”*

**What makes prayer so hard?**

1. Sometimes we lack faith ...

*“It is that one act that requires the most faith!” “Prayer is the most faith-filled act because everything about it is dependent upon God ...” “It requires raw faith.”*

2. Sometimes we lack sincerity and genuineness ...

3. Sometimes we are just too selfish to pray for the needs of others ...

**What do we need to do?**

1. Realize God knows what we are like ... He knows we need to grow.

2. Get over our excuses for not praying.

3. Strive to be more disciplined in prayer

1 Thessalonians 1:2ff “*we give thanks to God always for all of you making mention of you in all our prayers* ...”

4. Create a structure for disciplined, godly prayer

We desperately need one another’s prayers.

We desperately need to be praying.

Keep the needs of others before you!

**Prayer is driven by the need to see the flock protected**

1. Satan schemes against the flock

Ephesians 6:10-18 “*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil* ...”

“*If we don’t pray we become a weak link in the chain of protection ...”*

Here’s where the bar is set ...

vs. 18 “*With* ***all*** *prayer and petition pray at* ***all*** *times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with* ***all*** *perseverance and petition for* ***all*** *the saints ...”*

2. Pray for purity, integrity and protection, for the flock and for yourselves!

How are you doing?

Are you praying for the people in the church?

Are you praying with and for your wife?

Are you praying with and for your children?

Are you praying for those you are discipling and the needs of the church?

It’s time to take inventory!

It’s time to grow and be changed!

**Shaping the Next Generation of Men** (Pt 6)

*Jerry Wragg*

**Session #6**: **Building a team of courageous churchmen** *(continued)*

*Discernment Regarding “Gray” Areas*

“*... Once you have your doctrine and philosophy of ministry established, most decisions (of leadership) come down to ‘gray’ areas or difficult matters of conscience* ...”

Acts 15:6ff

How do we navigate through the “gray” areas of life?

Leaders need to ask some important questions that will compel them to think biblically and critically not only about each decision they must make but the motives behind them.

“*To do something that you have not considered carefully as a matter of faith is to assume that your conscience is ok when it might not be trained properly* ...”

Romans 14:13ff

“*Paul asked all possible questions ... to make sure that what he thought was a freedom, was truly a freedom*.”

Beware of defensiveness: “*If you are defensive about a Christian freedom, it’s not a freedom* ... *if you are trying to hold on to something ... you are not acting in love ...*”

“*It’s not that another person’s conscience dictates what you can do, but it is your love for others and for Christ that dictates what you can or cannot do*.”

Beware of trying to drag your church into “freedoms”! You may, in arrogance and lack of love, find yourself dragging others into areas of self-condemnation.

Have you exhaustively considered what the Bible says? Have you considered how this will affect your own spiritual life or the reputation of the church? Have you asked the hard questions about your relationship with your brother or your responsibilities as a leader? If not then you need to ask more questions!

1 Corinthians 9:19ff

**Questions for navigating the “gray” areas of life:**

#1 *Will it be a spiritual advantage to my life?*

In other words, will I be enhancing my growth by doing this or that? Will it cultivate more strength, endurance, discipline, and discernment? Will it build rather than tear down my life? Sleep may be a good thing but too much of it will not be profitable. There’s nothing wrong with recreation and leisure time but without careful parameters one could be spiritually weakened (1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 10:23-31).

#2 *Will it slow me down with excess baggage in the Christian race?*

We are to live our Christian lives by faith. There are certain activities or behaviours which may not be wrong but could become excess distraction and temptation for some. Living a faithful life for the Lord requires diligence, perseverance, struggle, and focus. We should avoid behaviors and activities that add bulk to an already challenging set of spiritual priorities (Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

#3 *Will it potentially enslave me?*

According to God’s word we are not to allow anything to “master” us (1 Corinthians 6:12). Whatever your decision about a gray area of life, you must stay away from that thing which will bring you under its power. Because of sinful desires which are at war with God’s spirit within us (James 4:1) we can easily underestimate the enticement of everyday experiences. Many people have quickly come under the bondage of entertainment, media, food, money, romance and a host of other enjoyments God has richly given to us. We often rationalize by conveniently overestimating our spiritual ability to say no or to not be influenced (as in the case of Demas – 2 Timothy 4:10).

#4 *Will it hypocritically cover my sinful desires?*

In other words, am I doing it “in the name of” true biblical freedom when the truth of the matter is I’m really satisfying sinful desires? We are to be honest with ourselves. We are not to put a veil over our sinful motives while pretending to be truly “free in Christ” (1 Peter 2:16). It is very common to turn liberty into license (Galatians 5:13). If you spend a good bit of time defending your “privilege” to exercise a Christian liberty, perhaps you ought to let go of it for a time as a means of testing your motives. Is it truly a “freedom”? If so, it should be easily dispensed with for the sake of maintaining integrity before the Lord.

#5 *Will it violate Christ’s supreme rule in my life?*

Every believer should be submitting every day to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. However, not everyone agrees on just what the Lord wants. Some are convinced in their conscience that something is wrong and others have a freedom of conscience to do the same thing. We must ask ourselves, “For me personally, is this something the Lord would be pleased with?” If we have any doubts we should not do it (Romans 14: 20-23). If you believe that the Lord’s will for your life would not be violated, then you’re free to proceed (Romans 14:5). But be careful here, Paul warns us to be completely free from doubts. In other words, we should not be involved in some “gray” activity without having sought counsel, studied God’s word, prayed, and scrutinized all possible pro’s and con’s before proceeding. If important issues are bypassed and the conscience is violated, the result is sin (Romans 14:23).

#6 *Will it impair my judgment or hinder the Holy Spirit’s control of my will?*

We are taught by Scripture that we must yield our will to the complete direction of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:6-14; Galatians 5:16-25). Any activity that may diminish our ability to remain alert and sensitive to the things of God should not be taken lightly. This principle can have broad and specific application for the Christian. For example, unregulated relationships with unbelievers can cloud one’s judgment, plant seeds of confusion about the truth, and “de-sensitize” us to the Spirit’s conviction (1 Corinthians 15:33-34). Consider also the very real dangers associated with chemical substances (e.g. pain medication, alcohol, tobacco, etc.) which may lower inhibitions and skew our moral compass. We must be careful to avoid if possible all potential hindrances to the influence of the Holy Spirit. We need a sensitive conscience and the truth of God’s Word pouring into my life!

#7 Will it build up other Christians by its example?

We must never exercise a Christian freedom at the expense of another’s faith. What you do in front of others is not simply a matter of your freedom in Christ to live as you choose, but rather an issue of building up other believers in their spiritual maturity. We must be careful not to unwittingly encouraging another toward a behaviour that may violate their conscience, thereby putting “a stumbling block in a brother’s way.” (Romans 14:13) The pattern of our lives sets an example, and it is a tremendous encouragement to carefully limit our liberty out of love so as to never hurt a brother or sister in the Lord (Romans 14:15; 1

Corinthians 10:23-33).

#8 Will it lead others towards Christ?

This is a very difficult issue. The Bible teaches that we are never to get into a situation where our innocent behavior is “spoken of as evil” (Romans 14:16). For example, if what we are doing, though not sinful, could misrepresent t the Lord, His church, His people, or His truth, to the world then we should avoid it. Not only are we to build up less mature believers in the body but we are also to have character that is above legitimate question in the eyes of unbelievers (1

Peter 2:12-24; 3:13-17; 4:15). Some things are not evil but can easily be associated with questionable elements of society or even worldliness. Remember, if Christian freedoms are truly “freedoms” then we should be as ready and willing to give them up as enjoy them.

#9 Will it be consistent with Christ-like character?

We want to imitate Jesus Christ in all our desires, words, thoughts, and deeds. If we say we belong to Christ then our first consideration when deciding whether to do this or that should be what the scriptures teach about our Lord’s attitude toward His heavenly Father, toward obedience, toward people, toward the truth, etc. Is this consistent with who He is, His likeness? Could this bring His name and the gospel into question? Will others see what I’m doing and question my commitment to follow Him? (1 John 1:6; 2:6).

#10 Will it magnify the glory of God?

We should live in such a way that the word of God is honored (Titus 2:5) and God’s glory is on display (1 Corinthians 10:31). We must ask if the activity or behavior could undermine God’s name. Could God’s honor and praise be diminished as a result of this? Some things may seem mundane and rather non spiritual (i.e., eating, working with hobbies, leisure, etc.) but Christians must always be alert as to how God can be gratefully praised for all He has provided. We must avoid anything that could detract from bringing Him thankful praise for everything we have the freedom to enjoy.

***Remember!***

Hebrews 13:7

Hebrews 13:17

**Adapted from - Grace to You: Decision Making to the Glory of God**

Did you know 90% of the choices you make as a Christian involve areas where Scripture says surprisingly little? What you wear, where you go, how you spend your free time—you won’t find many

explicit instructions in the Bible. But you can find plenty of rules and strictures in the various spheres

of evangelicalism, many of them unhelpful and even harmful (and not only in the fundamentalist camp).

Of course Scripture forbids all clear-cut sins such as lying, cheating, stealing, murdering, or committing adultery. The Bible also clearly calls us to pursue Christ and grow in our faith. No Christian seriously questions whether he should read the Bible, pray, or tell others about Christ. Scripture is unambiguous about those things.

There is, however, one class of questions that seems to fall somewhere in the middle. These are the issues dealing with Christian freedom—things that fall between what God prohibits and what He commands. What entertainment is acceptable? What kind of music is okay? What can a Christian do or not do on Sunday? What about what you wear, what you eat and drink, or how you spend your free time—does the Bible address those things?

Some would say, "No, the Bible doesn't address those things. Those are gray areas, so do what you want to do—you're free in Christ!" While it is true that the Bible doesn't specifically list every possible decision you'll face in life, it does address all choices with principles that govern Christian freedom.

When you run your choices through the following grid of principles from God's Word, you'll find both clarity and true freedom to live your life to God's glory.

**Will it violate my understanding of the Lordship of Christ?** (Will it violate my conscience?)

*He who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not*

*from faith is sin* (Rom. 14:23).

First Corinthians 10:25-29 contains three references to abstaining from a certain practice "for conscience sake." Never train yourself to violate your conscience. If your conscience is troubled by what you consider, don't do it. If you aren't sure about it, don't do it. It is hard to overstate the value of a clean conscience, but it is worth keeping your conscience clear so that your relationship to God will not be hindered. If you'll keep yourself in prayer and the study of God's Word, you will inform your conscience so you can "walk as children of light...finding out what is acceptable to the Lord" (Eph. 5:8-10)

**Will it cause someone else to stumble?**

*Food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do*

*eat. But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak* (1 Cor.

8:8-9).

This is the principle of love. As Romans 13:10 says: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." If you know that your choice—what you consider ok—causes another Christian to stumble and sin, love that brother or sister enough to restrict your own freedom. That is not very popular in our self-absorbed society, but it is biblical. To continue to indulge in a legitimate freedom that causes problems for another Christian is a sin. For "by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore," Paul said, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble" (1 Cor. 8:12-13).

**Will it be spiritually profitable?**

*All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify* (1

Cor. 10:23).

A "profitable" thing is useful, helpful, or to your advantage to do; and the idea behind "edify" is to build

up spiritually. So based on this verse, ask yourself, "Will doing this enhance my spiritual life? Will it

cultivate godliness? Will it build me up spiritually?" If not, you should seriously question whether that

behavior is the best choice.

**Will it bring me into bondage?**

*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not*

*be mastered by anything* (1 Cor. 6:12).

In the second part of this verse, Paul is saying, "I will not be brought under the power of anything." “I will not be mastered by anything.” If what you are considering can be habit-forming, why pursue it? Don't allow yourself to be in bondage to anything or anyone. You are a bond-servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him alone.

**Am I exercising this freedom to cover my sin?** 1 Peter 2:16

“*Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God*.”

**Would this imitate what Jesus Christ would do?**

“*The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked*.” 1 Jo. 2:6

**Will it bring glory to God and advance the gospel?**

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Cor. 10:31).

That verse is clearly both the summary and the goal of all the principles listed above. Isn't our heart's

cry to glorify our Lord and Savior with our lives? Think about your decision—Will He be glorified,

honored, and praised through it? May we say along with Jesus, "I glorified You on the earth" (Jo. 17:4).

**Additional Questions to Ask:**

**Will doing this defile God's temple?** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

**Will doing this encourage me to give thanks to God?** 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17

*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

**Will doing this encourage and edify others?** 1 Corinthians 10:23

*All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify*.

**Will this help me preach the gospel without compromising the truth?** 1 Corinthians 10:27-33

*If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake* …

**Will this help me to think in godly ways?** Philippians 4:8

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely , whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

**Will this prevent proper stewardship of my God-given resources?** (Time/ money/ relationships)

1 Cor. 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:15-16

*For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

**Will this serve me first, or others?** Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:33

*with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves*

**Leadership Course**

*Jerry Wragg*

**Part I: The Heart of Pastoral Leadership**

**I. A Life Worth Following**

*“Leadership is the ability to influence someone else, whether for good or bad.”*

*“Leadership comes done to ... living a life that is compelling enough to follow, and, having a message that is compelling enough to listen to.”*

**A. Influence Defined**

*“When someone is living in such a way that others are compelled to be like them; to follow them; to follow in their footsteps; to live the way that they live – that is influence , and in the spiritual realm that is spiritual leadership ... then what comes out of your mouth must be compelling enough to be listened to.”*

Do others want to follow the path you take?

Warning: James 3:1 “**Let not many of you become teachers** ...” Let not many aspire to the role of leadership or influence, because “**such will incur a stricter judgment**.”

Fathers ...

Spiritual leaders ...

*“In the church leadership is key to the strength and longevity of the church.”*

Spiritual leaders impact on the church ...

Some elevate natural abilities ...

Some want to be praised ...

Some are fearful, untrusting, lacking in courage; they run from difficulties and make relational harmony the goal (sacrificing truth and doctrine for peace) ...

**B. Influence is God Given** *(Spiritual influence is a gift from God)*

**1.** It is God’s sovereign joy

1 Corinthians 2:5 ...

Man’s intellect and philosophical prowess ... or the gospel?

Godly leaders don’t appeal to man’s fleshly desires or wisdom.

**2.** It is God’s power that transforms

1 Corinthians 3:5ff ...

True spiritual leaders want to get *themselves* “out of God’s way.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 ...

**3.** It is God’s wisdom that brings discernment

Some men don’t trust the Word of God to transform lives ...

Discernment is built as the mind is renewed by the influence of the Word of God.

Are you living a godly life, and is the Word of God on your lips? This is the essence of spiritual leadership! (Psalm 119:7-11; Isaiah 66:2)

*Spiritual leadership trusts in the Word of God to transform hearts and open blind eyes.*

**C. Leaders are divinely appointed**

*Spiritual leaders must be full of the Holy Spirit.*

Psalm 75:6-7

We need to evaluate our own character to see who I am really trusting in ... myself, man, or God.

Ask yourself: am I living a life worth following?

**Leadership Course**

*Jerry Wragg*

**Part I: The Heart of Pastoral Leadership** (Continued)

**II. God Looks at the Heart** *(not natural skills or talents)*

*We need to talk about our character … Our leadership has to be focussed primarily on the sanctification of our own lives ... this involves our hearts – what’s going on in our character.*

*The power of our influence grows out of our devotion to Christ.*

In 2 Timothy 2:21, Paul links spiritual usefulness directly to the absence of wickedness!

“**Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work**.”

*Usefulness is next to godliness ... you must think carefully about your character.*

The overarching character quality of *every* spiritual leader: “**Above Reproach”**

1 Timothy 3:2 ... **an overseer must be above reproach** ...

*It means, “There is no legitimate complaint against your spiritual striving ... people may slander your character in an attempt to ruin you, but any complaint against you ... will not find anything to attach itself to ... you are a person of habitual striving toward Christlikeness ... not perfection, but the overall direction of your life...”*

It ultimately is a matter of the heart!

Warning: External appearances do not always reflect one’s true internal character.

What matters most is not what other men say about you, but what God says about you.

**The tragic example of Israel**

1 Samuel 7

1 Samuel 8:5

Spiritual influence comes from God, and God appoints leaders based on what is in the heart!

Are you a person of Christlike character in your heart? That’s what matters most!

**VALLEY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY**

**INTRODUCTION:** The topic for our session today is: a Biblical Philosophy of Ministry

It has been said that if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time!

To approach ministry in the church (or our lives as men who are to be leaders of our homes) without clear purpose and direction is to guarantee missing the target of God’s design.

God has a design and purpose for the church, as to what it is to be and what it is to do, and He has communicated this for us in His Word. In Titus 1:5, Paul wrote to Titus saying, “**For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains** …”

Paul had been to Crete on his missionary journeys and churches had been planted there. But now Titus needed to stay and help establish those churches according to the design of God for the church. The Bible tells us that churches are to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. Churches deal with people, money, programs, projects … and there are always opportunities and obstacles.

This reality creates a need to be able to give answers for why we do what we do.

What are some reasons why churches do what they do?

* Tradition – we’ve always done it this way
* Following the latest trends – what’s “working” in other places?
* Wanting to stay on the cutting edge – wanting to be current / relevant

Potential Problems: is it Biblical? Does it please God? Is it what God wants done?

The Bible is not silent about how we are to do ministry. Far from being “grey” about this topic, the Word of God is clear and it is to be listened to.

And so, right from the beginning, I would like to contend that: if God is going to bless our ministry here at VH’s, we must learn to do things God’s way.

*(the church is not our own / the church does not belong to the elders or the people who give the most money or those who have been attending the longest / it doesn’t belong to those who are most intelligent or most influential / the church belongs to God – Acts 20:28 says Christ purchased it with His own blood – and so He gets to say how the church will function!)*

The implication of this then is that God’s way of doing things must impact and determine how everything in His church is done. (Sunday Worship / SS / midweek studies / men’s & women’s)

All our ministries must be *truly* Biblical AND they must be *thoroughly* Biblical.

The goal of everyone in the church should be to have a ministry that honors God because it is thoroughly Biblical. A Biblical philosophy of ministry is a tool that can help us achieve this.

1. **Defining Philosophy of Ministry**

What is a philosophy of ministry and why is it so important and necessary?

1. **Defined Generally**

A philosophy of ministry is a set of ***unalterable principles*** that determine how we will function in our ministry. Simply stated, our philosophy of ministry defines ***why*** we do what we do. [*And, on the other hand, it explains why we don’t do what we don’t do!] [Also, because it is grounded in Scripture a philosophy of ministry is really a theology of ministry*]

1. **Defined Specifically**

A Biblical philosophy of ministry is a set of *NON-NEGOTIABLE* **biblical principles**

that guide *all* the choices and decisions in your ministry.

It is different than a statement of faith, although it is connected (our statement of faith expresses what we *believe* and what we *teach*).

It is different than a methodology of ministry, which is “what we *do*.”

*A philosophy of ministry explains why we do what we do.*

1. **Why is it so important to have a philosophy of ministry?**

* Because *why* you do something will eventually lead to *how* you will do it.
* Because a biblical philosophy of ministry will allow you to say “yes” to some things, and “no” to others
* Because, the kind of foundation you lay determines the kind of structure you will build. The foundational principles you lay down for ministry will determine the kind of spiritual structure your church will become – whether biblical or not!

1. **Benefits of a Philosophy of Ministry**

A. It develops *unity* of direction and encourages consistent communication of our purpose and overall direction.

*A well-articulated and embraced philosophy of ministry will filter down through the rest of the flock to form a consistent approach to ministry. It will also work to encourage consistent communication of our purpose and overall direction.*

B. It defines each aspect of our ministry in relation to the whole.

*It will help us avoid the competition trap*

C. It forces us to determine our goals with an overall biblical understanding of ministry firmly in our minds.*It will give us the reason why we do what we do.*

**LAYING A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION:**

Everyone has a philosophy of ministry, whether or not it is perceived or understood, clearly defined, or biblically consistent – we all have reasons for what we do. Everything we do at VH’s must be based on a biblical foundation. This foundation (philosophy) will provide the framework for measuring all that we do.

How is a philosophy of ministry developed?

A. **AN** **IMPROPER APPROACH**

1. Start with a Focus on Programs.

a. Try to duplicate a "model program."

Problem: This will lead to frustration or failure, because the specifics of how God chooses to work in any given situation varies depending upon the nature and needs of the people and the uniqueness of each circumstance.

b. Stay with an existing program (i.e. we do what we do because we've always done it this way, or because it worked at one time.).

Problem: This will lead to frustration or failure because people and their needs constantly change.

2. Start by Focusing on Needs

a. Ask the people what they want.

Problem: When you focus on felt needs, you will always end up

with a superficial and socially oriented program.

b. Seek to attract people by pleasing them.

Problem: When you focus on felt needs, you will always have a

man-centered ministry rather than a God-centered ministry.

3. Start by Establishing Goals

a. Set goals to achieve "success."

Problem: When you begin by setting goals, you will always conform your goals to your view of success, whether right or wrong. This can lead to confusing human aspirations with true Biblical success.(i.e. Bigger is better. Contrast this with Joshua 1:8)

B. **A** **PROPER APPROACH**

The FIVE biblical foundation stones of our philosophy of ministry

**1. A High View of God**

a. God is holy, righteous, and just (and other *perfections*). Since holiness is one of God’s communicable attributes we must seek to exemplify it.

(see 1 Peter 1:13-15; Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:8)

b. We must perceive ourselves as existing to bring glory to God rather than seeking our own glory and personal comfort. We must approach all ministry from a God-centered perspective which will practically lead to obedience of Jesus Christ and His teaching.

c. Our lives need to reflect the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord and He is coming back again to reign over this earth!

A high view of God will lead us to teaching & ministries that exalt His character

A failure to have a high view of God leads to…

**·** A toleration of sin

**·** A focus on man, evidenced in teaching, counseling, programs & worship.

RESULT: The church will reflect man-centered ministries that attempt to please man rather than glorify God.

Questions to consider:

**·** Do we teach with a focus on promoting God's holiness or man's comfort?

**·** Does our church practice biblical discipline (Matthew 18)?

**·** Do we have a reverence for the character of God?

**·** Does our worship magnify the character and work of Jesus Christ?

**·** Do we compromise truth for the sake of pleasing people or maintaining the status quo?

A COMMITMENT TO A HIGH VIEW OF GOD leads us to view His Word as the perfect guide for our lives.

**2. An Affirmation of God's Word** (We affirm that the Bible is the Word of God, to be fully trusted and fully obeyed)

a. Inspiration—the Bible is in total/ all/ completely the inspired Word of God. The Bible is “breathed out” by God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

b. Inerrancy—it contains no errors. God conveyed truth to individuals He chose, and what they wrote did not stray from the original pattern of truth as it existed in the mind of God (Psalm 19).

c. Authority—simply stated: what it says I must do (Psa.119)! If we are to have a Biblical philosophy of ministry, it must seek its sole authority from the Word of God.

d. Sufficiency—A belief in the sufficiency of Scripture **prohibits** any attempt to integrate it with worldly philosophies such as psychology or humanism (2 Pet. 1:3-4; Psa.19; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 4:12).

e. Relevancy—It is totally relevant for every situation. It may not give us an explicit answer to every specific problem, but it will *always* give us the principles by which we can, through obedience, glorify God. (Ps.19; 2 Tim.3:17; Psa.119:105; Isa.40:8).

A failure to recognize the inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, and relevancy of the Word leads to:

**·** Pursuit of comfort, rather than obedience.

**·** Personal experience as your authority rather than the authority of God's Word.

**·** Unbiblical counsel for dealing with matters of life and the heart

**·** Contemporary, man-centered thinking as your guide for living rather than the principles of divine truth.

RESULT: The church produces people who pursue their own desires based upon an ungodly standard.

On the other hand, the result of this essential attitude- the right perspective of Scripture- will be a commitment to teaching sound doctrine and then helping Christians learn how to change and grow.

Questions to consider:

**·** Do we humbly and willingly submit to the authority of the Word?

**·** Are our lives conforming to the Word?

**·** Are we teaching the Word in a way that people can apply it to their lives?

**·** Do we turn to God's Word to find the answers to people's problems?

**·** Do we contaminate the truth by mixing it with error?

AN AFFIRMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD is the basis of a biblical view of mankind.

**3. A Biblical Understanding of Mankind**

a. People were created to glorify God, but because of sin, they seek to glorify themselves (Rom. 3:23).

b. As a result of sin entering the world people are born totally depraved (Rom.5:12-21).

Note: to be totally depraved does not mean that everyone performs every possible act of wickedness his nature is capable of, but rather it means:

**·** His goal in life is selfishness and only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

**·** All his righteous deeds are like filthy rags because they are not

the result of faith (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 14:24b).

**·** His heart is deceitfully wicked (Jer. 17:9-10).

**·** On his own he cannot and will not do good or seek God (Ro. 3:10-18).

NOTE: A sinner is separated from God, and as a result, he will seek fulfillment from the world's evil system (1 John 2:15-17). The implications are disturbing:

**·** Christ will not be seen as the only solution to man's needs.

**·** Substitutes will be provided that promise fulfillment and emphasize self-esteem rather than God’s glory.

**·** *Felt* needs rather than *real* needs will be addressed.

RESULT: A failure to recognize this truth results in the church producing people who make choices to solve their life's problems based on what they believe will practically meet their perceived needs.

Questions to consider:

**·** Is the goal of our teaching to confront sin and see God change lives, or to please people and make them feel good about themselves?

**·** Are we more Christ-like today than we were a year ago? Can we measure spiritual progress?

**·** Are we living out a life that reflects total dependence on God as a model to the community?

KNOWING THIS encourages us to look for opportunities to meet real needs, not just felt needs. Therefore, the goal of everything we do is to direct people to a greater relationship with God through obedience to His Word.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF MANKIND enables us to correctly understand the purpose of the church.

**4. A Correct Understanding of the Purpose of the Church**

a. The church exists to **Exalt** God by worshiping and glorifying Him God (1 Cor. 10:31; Heb. 13:15).

b. The church exists to **Edify** the saints by teaching them the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

c. The church exists to **Encourage** the saints by providing a context of loving fellowship with one another that builds each other up in the faith (Eph. 3:16-19; 4:12-16).

d. The church exists as a training center where people can grow through the application of teaching and the use of their spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14; Rom.12; Eph. 4).

e. The church exists to be a light in this dark world, for the **Evangelization** of God's elect (Mat. 5:13-16; 28:19-20; Titus 1:1-3; 2:11-15).

NOTE: A failure to correctly understand the purpose of the church leads to superficial and counterfeit ministry, resulting in disunity. “Program success" is glorified rather than God. People become passive spectators rather than active participants.

RESULT: The church becomes an organization, run by men and programs, rather than an organism of committed believers empowered by the Spirit of God.

Questions to consider:

**·** How do we define "ministry success"?

**·** Are people being equipped and motivated to exercise their spiritual giftedness?

**·** Does our ministry structure revolve around maintaining programs or building character into the lives of people?

A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH helps us to recognize the importance of biblical leadership.

**5. Godly, Qualified Leadership.**

a. Leaders must reflect the character of Christ to be models for the congregation (1 Thess. 2:4-12; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).

b. Leaders must adequately equip people to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12).

c. Leaders must provide ample opportunity for people to do this work (Heb.10:24-25).

NOTE:

**·** A failure to correctly understand biblical leadership leads to unbiblical discipleship and modeling.

**·** Unqualified leadership leads to ministry with a focus on skills or ability rather than godly character. This can lead to disqualifying sins.

**·** Lack of adequate equipping for the task leads to frustration, which can produce a high turnover of leadership.

**·** Unqualified leadership brings great harm and discouragement to the very ones the leaders seek to love and protect.

**CONCLUSION**

A well-articulated philosophy of ministry that is biblical is essential to “doing ministry God’s way.” It’s crucial that this biblical philosophy of ministry be the grid through which all our ministry decisions are passed.