

Elder Training Series

Session 25 - Job Duty of 'Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively' - PART 3 (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: Again perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you need to work on or improve.

[Note: The discussion in this document continues onward the discussion from the previous document, 'Session 24', in this 'Elder Training Series' about 'Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively' - PART 2.]

READ: "**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...**" (2 Timothy 3:16), and "**...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.**" (1 Timothy 4:13)

(Continuing) SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors have the duty before God to ensure that the Scriptures are prominently presented, explained, and applied in the messages of their church or ministry.

-- Job Duty: Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively (continued)

DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE - in PREACHING:

- - Elders, overseers, and pastors have been given the job duty by God in 1 Timothy 4:13 to "**...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching**".

-- In the New Testament, the English word 'preach' translates from a Greek word that carries the meaning of:

- - - - "exhortation" - "a speech or discourse that encourages, incites, or earnestly advises, or urgently requests";

- - - - "imploration" - "to appeal to earnestly";

- - - - "hortation" (or hortatory) - "strong urging". (Strong's #3874, in 1 Timothy 4:13 for example; *AHD* - "exhortation", "imploration", "hortation")

- - This God-given mandate to 'exhort' - 'urgently advise', 'implore' - 'earnestly appeal', and 'hortation' - 'strongly urge' within preaching surely coincides with the abundant usage of imperatives in the Scriptures, in which the imperative form of an action verb is employed by God to strongly instruct or outright command the reader or listener to 'do... (this or that)', which is usually in response to the truths and doctrines that are presented in a section of that Scriptures.

- - Therefore, every imperative that is contained in preaching a (selected) verse of the Scriptures should be earnestly and extensively exhorted for the audience to do.

- - The imperative should also be expanded upon and elucidated upon, in order to make it clear how the audience persons are to put the imperative command into effect in various ways in their life.

- - Exhortation should be likewise exerted in the presentation of other applications that are contained in the preaching.

-- In other places in the New Testament, 'preach' translates from a different Greek word that carries the meaning of:

- - - "preach" - "to proclaim or put forth in a sermon; to advocate, especially to urge acceptance of or compliance with; to deliver (a sermon); to give religious or moral instruction, especially in a lengthy manner";

- - - "proclaim" - "to announce officially and publicly; declare; to indicate conspicuously; make plain";

- - - "herald (as a public crier)" - "to publicly introduce, announce, proclaim". (Strong's #2784, in 2 Timothy 4:2 for example; AHD - "preach", "proclaim", "herald")

- - From these definitions, a proper and warranted conclusion is that these dynamics need to be utilized in preaching, in order to accomplish what God desires for the delivery of messages that are to extensively expose the meaning of His Scriptures - His Word.

- - Failure or refusal to 'regularly' utilize each of these dynamics is each a deficiency that produces less of a positive effect than what God desires to be occurring in the delivery of preaching a message about His Scriptures. (NOTE: 'regularly' = appropriately occurring with healthy frequency)

- - From decades of observations, it is blatantly obvious that preaching is a form of art that requires finesse, meaning in the sense of "refinement and delicacy of performance, execution, and artisanship; skillful, engaging handling of information in a presentation; and at times utilizes tactful, diplomatic maneuvering". (adapted from *AHD* - 'finesse')

- - Preaching is also a judged presentation performance, wherein each person is sitting in the audience by choice, and evaluates the performance to determine whether or not he/she will continue attending in that audience and listening to that type of presentation performance in the future.

- - Preaching furthermore is an act of persuasive diplomacy, wherein the person doing the preaching represents God, standing before the (audience) people and diplomatically endeavoring to persuade each of them to adopt and put into action what God wants them to do, as instructed in the Scriptures.

- - Decades of observations unquestionably indicate that very few people preach with excellent content and presentation style that thereby effectively facilitate excellent spiritual results for God's purposes in the lives of those audience people.

- - So from this empirical evidence, there is an intrinsic huge challenge to preach in a manner that consists of and produces this kind of excellence.

- - A wise approach for elders, overseers, pastors, and ministry leaders would be to honestly and realistically evaluate and critique each of their own preaching occasions, to determine what improvements they need to make in order to raise their sermons up to a level of effectively facilitating excellent spiritual results for God's purposes in the lives of their audience people.

- - An important note here about self-critiquing is that any substantial deficiency in preaching may not necessarily indicate that God has not endowed the person with sufficient gifting to do excellent preaching, but instead may indicate that the person needs more training and experience in preaching, and/or needs to be fully yielding of control of his mind when writing and when preaching the sermon. (For details on "yielding of control of the mind", see the document "Session 10 - Mandates Relating To 'Godliness' And 'Empowering'", in this 'Elder Training Series'.)

- - For those persons who nevertheless continue to overwhelmingly struggle to write a good or excellent sermon (or Bible lesson), it is acceptable to use or integrate someone else's excellent sermon (or Bible lesson), for which permission has been granted by its author, of course. (2 Timothy 2:2)

- - It is wise to seek out, accept, and utilize permission-granted help to produce or improve the quality and impact of one's sermon (or Bible lesson).

- - In essence, this is no different than using a purchased curriculum, or using information from commentaries.

[- - Note: On this ministry web-site, www.BelieverAssist.com, there are available for download numerous sermon (or Bible lesson) outlines and ministry training documents (in English, or Spanish, or some in Portuguese) that are all free, with copyright permission and usage granted.]

- - A usual dynamic of preaching is that the audience persons listen in silence during the entirety of the sermon, thereby supplying the speaker with no immediate verbal interactive feedback during the sermon presentation.

-- This lack of immediate interactive feedback creates the challenges for the speaker to:

- - - - anticipate reasonable objections and address them in the sermon;

- - - - anticipate reasonable questions and address them in the sermon;

- - - - anticipate any reasonable confusion and address that in the sermon;

- - - - anticipate lack of interest for some listeners, so try to find ways to create and hold interest.

- - One way to create interest, for example, is perhaps by presenting a significant dilemma, or quandary, or paradox, or mystery that naturally stems from a concept in the (selected) verse, and then perpetuating that intrigue through most of the message until a solution is offered near the end of the message.

- - Depending on the circumstances, sometimes this intrigue can be intentionally left unsolved in the current message, and used to plant a teaser of suspense to incite in the audience persons some motivation to return next time to hear the next message that will address or solve that dilemma, quandary, paradox, or mystery from the current message.

- - To motive people to return next time to hear the next message, sometimes, a sense of anticipation or urgency can be created from a (selected) verse and promoted, about learning in the next upcoming message something that is important or of interest to the audience persons. For examples - learning about a valuable blessing that God wants to give each person, or learning about how God regards some current issue that is affecting most of the audience persons.

- - 'Choosing what to preach on or about' is another challenge of preaching, because some approaches can unknowingly produce ineffective or even counter-effective results.

- - Perhaps the most common and popular approach of weekly 'choosing what to preach on' is 'leapfrog', wherein like a frog that hops around in a random fashion yet stays within his own little pond, the preaching person chooses incongruous topics because they stay within his own personal interests, comfort zone, and extent of his ministry training.

- - So for the audience persons under preaching from this 'leapfrog' approach, over time they develop a limited, stunted, skewed, and 'potpourri' view and understanding of the Scriptures - a "hodgepodge confused unconnected conglomerated collection" of what God says to us humans in the Scriptures. (AHD - 'potpourri')

-- Clearly, a supreme objective of preaching is for the listeners to hear and learn the Scriptures 'comprehensively' - "so large in scope and content as to include much". (2 Timothy 3:16-17; *AHD* - 'comprehensive')

-- But with preaching from the 'leapfrog' approach, there is no comprehensive learning of the Scriptures, and instead there is only narrow, restricted, and (in essence) repeating preaching because the preaching person is unwittingly choosing only his same few favorite comfortable topics to preach on.

-- In order to facilitate the maximizing of potential effectiveness for the listeners, the best approach of weekly 'choosing what to preach on' is to:

-- -- -- proceed one or two verses per message through a whole book in the New Testament;

-- -- -- proceed through a single natural section of content per message for short stories, parables, illustrations, eyewitness accounts, prophecy descriptions, and etcetera that are in such books as the Gospel books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), the Book of Revelation, and many of the Old Testament books;

-- -- -- proceed one verse with one or two cross-reference verses per message from the Book of Proverbs;

-- -- -- proceed a few verses (perhaps 1-4) per message that compose a natural topic section of content in the Book of Psalms.

-- A topical stand-alone message is acceptable - if it directly relates to a current event or situation, or if that message is being performed as a substitute that week for the regular preacher who happens to be absent that week.

-- Otherwise, stringing along topical stand-alone messages week after week should be avoided because it promotes a patchwork-disconnected view of the Scriptures and it tends to follow the limited topic selection that is favored by the speaker.

-- Topical messages series are acceptable occasionally but should not be practiced as the norm - because likewise it can fall into the category of being a favored topic of the preaching person.

-- The objective is to preach on what God wants said - "to declare to [them] the whole counsel of God", and not necessarily what the speaker wants or prefers or favors said. (from the Strong's Greek words in Acts 20:27)

-- Repeating a message is not acceptable for an audience that has heard that exact message in the past.

-- The time length of the message needs to stay within the range that the average person in the audience can ingest and is wanting to sit through.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

-- From this analysis, it is obvious that very good expository preaching and preaching delivery method are important to the spiritual growth of the church, and by extension, ultimately to its numerical growth as well.

-- In addition to being assigned by God to be 'guardians of sound doctrine' (1 Timothy 1:3,10; Titus 1:9), elders, overseers, and pastors should be especially motivated to ensure that the preaching in their church is of high quality and excellent delivery.

- - So for those of you who are an elder or overseer, what are you going to do when you observe that the preaching of the pastor is significantly deficient in some manner, or form, or aspect, or content, or doctrine?
 - How are you going to handle the very difficult predicament of telling the pastor that his preaching is in some manner significantly deficient, such as:
 - - - - being in error;
 - - - - or contains false doctrine;
 - - - - or lacks substance;
 - - - - or is confusing;
 - - - - or is 'leapfrogging' and not preaching 'the whole counsel of God';
 - - - - or is merely a long string of quoted verses;
 - - - - or is 'surfing over' sections of verses;
 - - - - or is not exhortative;
 - - - - or is not expository;
 - - - - or inappropriately allegorizes a Scripture content;
 - - - - or incorrectly interprets a Scripture content;
 - - - - or is grossly deficient of applications?
 - - How are you going to present this problem to the preaching pastor, without accidentally inciting him to stumble, or become discouraged, or become dejected?
 - - When the preaching pastor gets defensive, or defiant, or in denial, or accusatory, or hostile, or enraged from being presented with constructive feedback about his preaching, now what are you going to do?
 - - Are you, as an elder or overseer, going to speak up and, as diplomatically as you can, inform the preaching pastor when there is a significant deficiency in his preaching and when he has inappropriately reacted to constructive feedback about his preaching?
 - - Or instead, are you going to choose to remain silent, becoming in fact an accomplice to his mediocre poor, or counterproductive, or significantly deficient preaching?
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File name: eldertraining-session25.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

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