

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part LV: 1 Timothy - The Pastor's Manual On His Ministry Role"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) I was recently given a copy of a sermon outline from a party that had attended an area pastor's conference. The sermon was about what it takes for a church to be **healthy**.

One of the sermon's outline points was, and I quote: "A healthy church is a **Growing** church." Since the message was given for **ministers**, the implied that the **pastor** is doing his job if the church's giving and attendance are going up!

This idea is quite prevalent today. I once heard from a home missionary that its missionary pastors are expected see dynamic growth in the **numbers** attending their churches in **less** than **ten** years or they are **removed** from their pastorates by the mission leadership!

Well, is the pastor responsible for the Church to grow both in numbers attending and giving? If so, how FAST should the numbers grow for him to be "certified"? Where does SCRIPTURE place the cut-off point in terms of numbers-per-year gained to qualify a pastor as being "successful"?

(2) Another note in the minister's conference message was that "A healthy church . . . should have a **vision**." By this term is meant the need for a "plan", a ministry program or building goal of some sort.

Well, is the pastor responsible to get the Church into a new building, a big bus ministry, a Christian day care center outreach, a Christian medical out-patient facility, etc. to be a success? If so, what if the CHURCH can't AF FORD this, or REFUSES to follow this suggestion? Is the PASTOR then a failure? How big must the effort or plan be, to be termed "successful"?

(3) During our Sesquicentennial Celebration, I was directly questioned by a Christian leader attending on what plans **Don Shell** had for Nepaug's future. In talking with him, I noticed by "plans" he meant specific program or building development. **Question: Must Don Shell lead Nepaug into an expansion of program and building? If he doesn't, is he failing? KEEP IN MIND THAT IT IS NEPAUG'S WELFARE AND MONEY, INCLUDING YOUR OWN, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT!**

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

Need: *"With various expectations directed toward the PASTOR as to what he should ACHIEVE, those of us in the PEW wonder! After all, the welfare of our Church is ultimately at stake!"*

- I. **Because of sin's DECEIVING effects, man has often ignorantly pursued goals for his spiritual fulfillment that actually HARM him:**
 - A. God originally told man in Eden not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or he would die; rather, he could eat of every **other** tree, including the Tree of Life, Gn. 2:8-9, 16-17.
 - B. However, the wicked, deceiving Devil **twisted** reality for man, and he tragically sinned by following an **errant MEANS** for fulfillment:
 1. Satan told Eve that the **reason** God did not permit her to partake of the forbidden fruit was that God was **jealous** of His **insight**, 3:5.
 2. By implication, Satan said that **eating** the forbidden fruit would actually **promote** Eve's **spiritual insight** to her **ADVANTAGE!**
 3. In **REALITY**, though Eve would have greater **insight**, **gaining** that knowledge that **WAY** would **KILL** as its **means** was **sinful!**
 4. Eve then **replaced God's command** with **Satan's idea** to partake of the forbidden fruit, and with Adam tragically sinned, Gn. 3:6-7.
 - C. This pattern of following a deceiving goal with all "good" intentions only to get hurt has plagued man throughout history:
 1. When God sought to reach the postdiluvian world with Abraham's seed, Israel, the nation **strayed** after idols and stopped following God and His prophets' teachings. That hurt Israel, 2 Chr. 36:14-17.
 2. When God sent His Son, Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah, Israel **rejected** Him since she followed the **unbiblical** guidance of her religious leaders, Mtt. 16:21 with Acts 2:22-23 and John 5:39-40.
 3. Even in the **Church**, **Christians** have been **misled** to their spiritual harm by false ideas entering the Church, 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-4.
- II. **Thus, God had Paul write out 1 Timothy as a Manual to equip the Church for proper DIRECTION to counter harmful DECEPTION:**
 - A. The 1 Timothy instruction equips a **pastor** to know how to direct **himself AND** his **hearers** to be **saved** from harmful deception, 4:1-16.
 - B. The **setting** in which Christians are thus equipped to retain spiritual **health** through sticking to the **truth** is the **local church**, 3:14-16.

- C. Thus, the **ministry** of the **PASTOR** in the **local church SHOULD BE** that of **preserving Bible truth** by means of exemplifying it in his life and teaching and preaching from the Scriptures, 1 Timothy 4:11-16.
- D. As such, the following **qualities** of a **Biblical** pastoral ministry arise:
1. The **Biblical** pastor must **discern** truth from error by using **Scripture** and **apply** his findings for his hearers' benefits in his preaching and teaching ministries, 1 Tim. 1:3-20 with 4:1-16.
 2. To **further** the assertion of **truth**, he must **also** promote proper **roles** for **men AND women** as this counters the **inverted** roles of Eve over Adam that **led** to man's **original waywardness**, 2:1-15.
 3. He must aim for **reliable** men to help **lead** toward **bolstering** the local church's commitment to Scripture's **truth**, 1 Tim. 3:1-13.
 4. In keeping with preserving the **gender roles** that help promote the **truth** (Gen. 3:16b), the pastor must **example** how to **relate** in the church by using the **Biblical human family** model, 5:1-6:2; 3:5.
 5. He must **downplay** the significance of **money** in ministry and life, which entity is often a **lure** for **false teachers** who infiltrate the church for it and destroy its stand through abuses, 1 Tim. 6:3-21!
- III. **1 Timothy adds to the "thread of redemption" by reaffirming the need for PASTORAL ADHERENCE to SCRIPTURE to escape errant deceptions that MISLEAD people to their spiritual harm!**

Application: *For a Church to be healthy, its PASTOR must (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 3:1-16. (2) As a believer, he must (a) confess his sins (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend on the Holy Spirit for behavior control and use of his spiritual gift (Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). (c) Then, he must FAITHFULLY example Scripture in life and relationships, and study, teach and preach it (1 Tim. 4:11-15). (d) In so doing, he will PRESERVE himself and his hearers from spiritual defeat and keep the church healthy, 1 Tim. 4:16. (e) In particular application to our contemporary Evangelical era, the Pastor MUST discount MONEY or NUMBERS ATTENDING as goals so as not to sidetrack himself or the body from the truth or risk luring apostates into the church who lust after money and fame: thus, programs, "numbers", etc. must not be SOUGHT as the church's GOAL, but handled as GOD'S RESULTS to the promotion of the TRUTH in the local church, cf. the model of this in Acts 2:42-47 in light of 1 Tim. 4:16.*

Lesson: *Contrary to pressures thrust upon him to the contrary, GOD wants the pastor NOT to be DERAILED into ministry pursuits that keep him from being God's "immovable hitching post" of SPIRITUAL REALITIES for the local church. The pastor thus KEEPS the body from WANDERING away from the TRUTH that sustains its spiritual health!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Viewing the topic of church growth in light of 1 Timothy as applied to Nepaug Church, I make the following analysis:

(1) On the **one** hand, it is my humble appraisal that in the last several decades of Nepaug Church history, including my **own** time, when its leaders have tried to **push** expansion or program growth, it has **consistently** led to **unedifying** problems contrary to God's will!

(2) On the **other** hand, I have always felt that Nepaug **nevertheless DOES** have great needs for such progress:

(a) From the time I first viewed the church plant while candidating as pastor back in January of 1982, I **immediately** felt its facilities were **inadequate** for long-range ministry in **today's** world. The building was excellent 150 years ago, but I honestly feel that from the pews to our land-locked status to the parking lot drainage to our sagging and possibly questionable roof to rather plain interior decorations, etc., we are limited in what we can accomplish for Christ.

(b) There is **also** a great **area** need for a **strong Bible teaching** church that is also **GRACE** oriented: (a) with legalism by some Fundamentalists on the one hand and (b) Charismatic license on the other hand and the (c) lack of **strong, male leadership** in **area** churches for decades, I believe this type of church is greatly needed!

(3) **Consequently**, what I **seek** to do is to take **advantage** of our **stressed** situation that I believe the **LORD** has **purposely permitted** to keep ministering the Word so that Nepaug might fill that void:

(a) I believe that God has **intentionally** allowed us to be **stressed** by program and facility shortages **so as to attract only people who place an absolute priority on the ministry of the Word**. In this way, we have the **luxury** of growing into maturity as individual believers **BEFORE** focusing on **externals**. Thus, **WHEN**--not **IF**--the building and program really **blossom**, the **RESULTS** will be **STRONG** enough to make Nepaug a **LIGHTHOUSE** in our **region** for Christ.

(b) Accordingly, I ask that you join the Board and me in praying for God's **clear** leading in this matter. We can use the example of God's provision of our computer equipment as His **encouragement** for **further** developing our ministry. **What growth will occur, we want to be in God's way and in God's time so that the results will edify everybody and LAST for His glory!**