

What is the Government of God in the Church? VI

Authority of the Ministry

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Now first of all, as we have been covering, you need to understand: What is the Church? The Church is called in the Greek: ‘ekklesia’—and that means *the ones who have been called out; the assembly of the called out ones*. That’s what ‘ekklesia’ means, that’s what the Church is. It is not a business corporation. And as we saw last time, it’s not composed of carnal people who have to be ruled over as they are marching in the desert to try and keep them in line and keep them from rebelling. *The called out ones* first repent and receive the Spirit of God. And the whole basis of everything in the lives of everyone in the Church, regardless of what function they serve—whether of brethren or ministers—is that they must have everything built upon the love of God.

So, let’s come back here to Matthew 22, and let’s read that; and think about the other Scriptures that I read in John 15, that ‘if you love Me, keep My commandments, as I have kept My Father’s commandments and dwell in His love. If you keep My commandments, you will dwell in My love.’ It has to all be based on the love of God, and the love of brethren, because Jesus said, “‘By this shall all know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’ Being based on love. Being based, first of all, on the love of God and the love of each other, we’re going to examine today what kind of authority do the ministers have?”

Matthew 22:35: “And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master... [I can almost hear how he says ‘Master.’] ...which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets’” (vs 35-40).

Everything that God does is based upon His love for His creation. When we are called, have repented, received the Holy Spirit—after being baptized and having hands laid on—we are likewise to love God and love each other.

Here is something that should never, *never*, NEVER be taken advantage of by anyone who’s a teacher, elder, minister, regardless of what you may call yourself. Here’s something that’s very, very important because this tells us what kind of calling and what kind of commitment that we have

to God. The brethren are unique!

1. they’ve been called.
2. they’re heirs of eternal life.
3. they have the Holy Spirit.
4. the *true* brethren have made an irrevocable commitment to God

—because there are some false brethren among those of the Churches of God, as we have found out, as well as false ministers. *This is one of total yieldedness to God; totally submission to God!*

Luke 14:25: “And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple’” (vs 25-26). What is important is this:

Everyone that God calls has to make this commitment to God irrevocable, unchanging in their submission to God. That’s why we have the baptism of the covenant of death, which then puts you into the New Covenant with Christ. What happens when people do this?

- They’re submitting themselves to God, are they not?
- They’re enduring many things,

Verse 27: “‘And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple...’ This means that they have

- personal trials
- trials with relatives
- trials in fighting the world
- trials in fighting Satan the devil

And their sum-total loyalty in love is *to God* and commitment *to Christ*.

Now, what happens when you have a hierarchical, Nicolaitan structure of government within the Church? Where they ***must obey*** the ministers? This is very much like what we saw when the apostles were hauled before the Sanhedrin—right? And the Sanhedrin told the apostles: ‘Don’t you preach in this name of Christ anymore.’ So, they did it and got called back in and they said, ‘Why didn’t you obey us?’ What did Peter say? ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’ So, this is the commitment.

Now, when you have a minister who comes

along with the wrong structure of government—not based on love and service—and he takes to himself the prerogatives of God in his authority over the brethren, and misapplies the Scriptures, and makes them subservient to himself, then he is sinning against God and he’s sinning against the brethren.

We’re going to read this the way Jesus said, but also you can take this Scripture like almost any other Scripture and you can misapply it:

John 12:42 “But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.” Politics! Politics! Now, did they have the Word of God? *Yes!* Did they believe Jesus? *No!* And in many cases, there is too much in the way of politics in too many Churches of God.

Remember: ***You cannot accomplish spiritual things with physical, carnal means!*** You cannot accomplish spiritual solutions by political activism. Remember when Jesus said to Peter: ‘Do you love Me?’ He’s going right to the heart and core of politics within the Church.

Verse 43: “For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” What is the ‘glory of God’? Jesus said in another place, ‘If you want to follow Me, deny yourself. If you want eternal life, sell all your possessions.’ So, we have those kinds of commands and those kinds commitments to God. So here we have in v 43, putting men between God and themselves.

Verse 44: “Then Jesus called out and said, ‘The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.’ We have a direct relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. That’s what it’s all based upon—isn’t it? We’re not dealing with an organization of how do you keep people in the Church, and how many do you have and what are the numbers that you have. You’re dealing with who loves God and do they have the Holy Spirit and how do we all work together to achieve what God wants us to achieve in this life. A total different thing!

Verse 45: “And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe...” (vs 45-47).

I want to direct this toward the hierarchical ministry:

- Have you heard the words that Jesus said, that the rulers of the nation exercise lordship over them?
- Those who are called benefactors exercise

authority over them?

- What did Jesus say? ***“It shall not be this way among you!*** But he who is the greatest among you will be the servant of all”—in love and humility.

I want you to understand, if you don’t hear those words and live by them, you are a hypocrite and do not believe Jesus Christ.

He says: “...I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.... [judgment is coming] ...The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words...” (vs 47-48). Will you receive the words of Jesus Christ? ***Do not exercise lordship over the brethren***, and do not exercise authority upon them in the way that is ungodly and carnal—which comes from men.

“...has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day” (v 48). You better consider that, all of you who exalt yourself in some great office; you better consider what Jesus said. If you have a dinner, don’t make it for your rich friends for they will recompense you; you call the blind and the lame and the weak—and we can say today, *the old, the battered and the bruised*—and you serve them and you help them in love and humility, because God is going to judge you.

Verse 49: “For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak.” That applies to every word that Jesus said; every word that is inspired in the New Testament, God breathed; and in the Old Testament that is God-breathed.

Verse 50: “And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me.” (vs

Let’s learn the lesson that He told concerning the washing of feet, John 13:13: “You call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and you speak rightly, because I am. Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also are duty-bound to wash one another’s feet; for I have given you an example, *to show* that you also should do exactly as I have done to you. Truly, truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord...” (vs 13-16).

If you’re a minister or teacher, you are to be a servant of God—correct? If you go against His Word and you set up a structure and organization that is hierarchical and demands loyalty, and to the absurdity of disfellowshipping other people in other churches by your authority, you’re making yourself greater than God; greater than Christ. You haven’t learned the lesson of foot-washing.

Verse 16: “Truly, truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord nor a messenger greater than he who sent him.” You carry no more authority than what God has given you. A messenger is to speak the words of the one who sent the message. *Yes! Do we not have the message? Yes, we do! The whole New Testament!* So therefore, we have to use it!

Those who set up a hierarchical government and demand ridged control and loyalty; demand it all you want, but you know for sure that the promise that Jesus gave to the Churches at Pergamos and Thyatira is going to come to pass. He’s going to come and fight against you, and everything you think you have you’re going to lose. And as we saw in Ezek. 34, God is not going to let you continue to batter and bruise His sheep. God wants them taught. God wants them edified. God wants us to grow in love and service and faith; because we are a spiritual organization; and that’s why we have the Word of God.

“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (v 17). So therefore, the Word of God distinctly gives the bounds of authority within the Church of God. What is the Government of God within the Church? ***It is the action of God’s Holy Spirit within each one of us.*** That’s the Government of God. How are we govern ourselves? *We are to have self-control!*

Let’s look at the fruits of the Spirit. This is what we are to bring about within the Church. ***You’re not to have loyalty to the ministry***, like to a football team or a baseball team, ***that you are loyal to whatever they say.*** Look at any dictatorship in the world: Is it of God? *or* Has it always caused problems because it is of Satan?

Galatians 5:14: “For the whole law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” And then we have the other one that Jesus gave, ‘We’re to love each other as He has loved us.’ Do we find that in the assemblies of the Churches of God today? Is it in the assemblies of the Churches of God that have a hierarchical system that no one can come in unless they have first talked to the minister? If there’s someone who’s really not loyal in the mind of the minister, he’ll have his own spies go out and listen to the brethren talk, and then come and report back to him.

- Is that the love of God?
- Is that the operation of love.

or

- Are not those carnal means to *police people*?

The truth is, don’t you think that God’s Spirit is capable of leading them? Don’t you think that God’s Spirit is capable of giving them

understanding and Truth? Well, if you don’t, then you’re not teaching them the way that Christ wants you to teach them. Jesus said ‘It’s sufficient if the disciple become as the teacher’—and what are we to develop? to have? *The mind of Christ!* Everything that is taught, and everything that goes on in the Church is to *bring it to that end*—is that not correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 15: “But if you bite and devour one another...” And that’s what’s been happening with the Church of God. Sometimes we’ve had to protect ourselves, and it may have seemed like at times that we’re biting and devouring; but that is not true. Someone asked me: Why have I mentioned certain ministers? Notice very carefully that I mention their actions and their sins first; because Jesus said, ‘That which is spoken in secret shall be shouted from the housetops.’ But, let’s just be honest. Let’s really, all of us, be honest before God and ourselves. Look at the various Churches of God today. Think about it. Analyze it.

- Have we learned the lessons of being scattered, or not?
- Have we learned that hierarchical government—with ‘the only apostle of God on the earth’—***God destroyed!***
- Have we not learned the lesson that everything must focus to God the Father and Jesus Christ?
- Have we not learned the lesson that we are to live by every Word of God instead of our own ideas?
- Have we not learned the lesson to love even the least in the Church of God?

There was a man one time who was suffering grievously from his illness. He happened to have a very severe case of diabetes. He asked to be anointed. He was anointed, and he needed to be anointed again, and they said, ‘No, we’re not going to anoint you because you don’t have faith to be healed.’ Well, to be healed is the operation of three parts of faith:

1. the *faith of Christ* in the minister and the believer
2. the *faith of the one doing the anointing* that God will hear his prayer, because he’s yielded to God and loving God
3. the *faith of the individual* who’s being anointed, as well as whatever repentance needs to accompany the anointing

That shows absolutely no love to someone by saying, ‘You don’t have faith so I’m not going to anoint you.’ Why don’t you teach him how to have faith? Why don’t you show and demonstrate by your faith? But truly, v 15, I think, applies to too many of

the Churches of God today—right?

Verse 15: “But if you bite and devour one another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another.” What happens with that? *You drive brethren away! You drive people away! You drive ministers away!* So, you issue stronger and stronger decrees that you can’t fellowship with anyone in any other Church of God. Well, if they’re all brethren—why not? The truth is, you’re afraid of losing tithes and offerings; and in losing tithes and offerings, you’re not going to be able to do the great, exalted work that you think God has called you to do.

What if you lost everything? Now what are you going to do? Maybe that day will come upon you and God may try you that way. But let me tell you this: a day similar to that happens to everyone to deepen their conversion toward God the Father and Jesus Christ so that they learn not to trust in physical things.

Verse 16: “Now *this* I say, walk by *the* Spirit...” We put that together with different Scriptures and we say, ***walk in faith, believe in hope, and live in love.*** That’s what has to rule in the minds and hearts with God’s Spirit in all of us. And I’ll tell you something else that is true, when you do that, as a minister you have very little governing over people to do, because Christ and God the Father are doing the governing.

Then when we come together as brethren, and we have prayed and we study, and we’re looking into God’s Word, then we all have an opportunity to learn

- more of the Word of God
- more of the Spirit of God
- more of understanding of our relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ

than if we have to come to church and we’re all intimidated and in fear and waiting for the minister to get up there and shout and yell and scream and pound down intimidation and shout loyalty and disloyalty. And as one minister did recently, got up and bragged: ‘Well, I’ve cleaned up the Church and disfellowshipped 25 people.’

- Did he go out to visit them, to help them with the Scriptures, to understand what they were doing?
- Did he inspire them with the love of God in his example? Did he really?

or

- Did he just get rid of them because it was inconvenient to deal with them?

Here’s the solution, v 16: “Now *this* I say, walk by *the* Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of

the flesh.” Doesn’t mean you’re not going to have things to overcome. It means you’re going to overcome the lust of the flesh. And when we are not *walking in the Spirit* in the Church, then we are walking in carnal things and fulfilling the desire of carnal things to try and implement spiritual things—and it will never work!

Verse 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do.” That’s what happens when we yield to the carnal things.

So therefore, it is an impossibility to go against the words of Christ to try and run a church. It’s like saying to pull your car over here and let’s fill up your gas tank with water so we’ll get more mileage. Water doesn’t work in a gas-powered car. Likewise, carnal methods within the Church in the government of the Church do not work. They may work for a while. But you will reach a glass ceiling where you’re stunted

- in doctrine
- in growth
- in love
- in understanding
- in serving
- in compassion

God is not going to allow His Church to be run by carnal means! When they do, read well Rev. 2 & 3, because God promises that He will correct.

Verse 18: “But if you are led by *the* Spirit, you are not under law.” That’s a very interesting thing—isn’t it? If you’re all led by the Spirit, what do you want to do? *You want to keep the commandments of God! You want to love God! You believe God!* If you’re all walking in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, you want to pray for each other, help each other—is that not true? If you’re led by the Spirit, you want to study, you want to pray—is that not true? *Yes!* Therefore, you are not under law for the minister to say, ‘Brethren, you’ve got to pray every day, by the clock, an hour. Brethren, you’ve got to be loyal.’ Those are laws, carnal laws of men!

What I’m going to read here many of these happened within the ministry of the Church and the brethren. And I’ll guarantee you another thing that will happen *if you try and run a church by carnal means, you’re going to end up with a carnal church!*

Verse 19: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery...” I got a letter the other day from a man who said, ‘Why do you have in your 2-Peter series the mention of this one evangelist concerning adultery.’ I wrote back and I told him this: ‘Because his example was so absolutely beyond the pale and outrageous that I’m

going to leave it in there as an example and warning to all who are ministers, that they don't do it. Furthermore, how can someone who's supposed to be the #2 in a hierarchy, and the voice of their great television and radio program—commit adultery with over 200 women and be spiritually-minded? *Because that's what happened!*

Then you have "...fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness..." (v 19). That was among the ministers. They got away with a lot of things. And at the headquarters of this church, among the brethren, the saying was this: The equal (that is the brethren) and the more equal (that is the ministerial hierarchy). They had all kinds of privileges and high, outlandish salaries, etc.

Verse 20: "Idolatry..." Note sermon series: *Invisible Idol, Visible Man and my resignation sermon*. What happens when they get a hierarchy? *They create idolatry!* Look at the Catholic Church. I remember it being said in the Church of God that I resigned from, 'if there's any one thing that the Catholic Church has right it is church government.' I remember sitting there in the congregation hearing the apostle say that—supposed apostle—and the thought came into my mind—that's long before I really learned about what is the true authority in the Church is, and I think it was a thought from God. ***Why would the Church of God use the government of Satan as its model within the Church?*** Think of that! One of the advisors that was pushing the 'one and only apostle on earth' wrote in the book *Against the Gates of Hell* that this man holds the office equivalent to his holiness, the pope. ***That's idolatry!***

"...witchcraft..." (v 20)—which can also be sorceries, putting up with many of the devices of Satan.

"...hatred..." (v 20). Ohhhh, did I find that when I was down at that church headquarters in every layer and level of the ministry.

"...strife, jealousies..." (v 20). Yes, arguing over who had the highest six-figure salary.

"...indignations..." (v 20). When the brethren would find out; because you see, God had a way of letting a lot of these things be known. And the hierarchy would say, 'Don't listen to any of that gossip or any of these things going on because it's not true'—and we all knew it was. Because what happened was, there's what I call *the underground truth*. That you can't hide anything

"...contentions, divisions, sects, envying, murders..." (vs 20-21).

Let's look at it this way: what if you take out of the brethren all hope and put in them so much fear that they just give up and go back into the world?

Have you not committed spiritual murder?

"...drunkenness... [that can physical or false doctrine] ...revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that those who do such things shall not inherit *the Kingdom of God*" (v 21).

Now I know it is not in the full degree that the world does a lot of these things, I understand that. Some of these things have been done in higher degree than in the world, but not all of them. So, we need to evaluate ourselves about entering the Kingdom of God, and we all have to make that judgment before God ourselves; because God alone knows the heart and knows the mind. I don't! You don't. The height of stupidity and arrogance is: 'I know what you're thinking!' You don't know what anybody is thinking. I don't know what you're thinking. You don't know what I'm thinking. But the Bible says we shall 'know them by their fruits.' That's how we judge everything. But God is a heart-knowing God, and *He knows!*

Here's the result of the right kind of authority within the Church, v 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy... [not fear] ...peace, long-suffering..." That means *a lot of forbearance and long-suffering with each other*; especially when there are difficulties that a person is working on to overcome—and it takes quite a while to overcome. Give them forbearance and space and pray for them that they can overcome.

"...kindness, goodness, faith, meekness... [not self-exaltation] ...self-control..." (vs 22-23). That is the key! ***Self-control by being led by the Spirit of God!*** That is the ultimate Government of God and authority in the Church. Self-control, obviously, with God's Spirit.

Verse 24: "But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit. We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 24-26). There we have some very good instruction from Paul.

Galatians 6:1 shows the operation of the Government of God—the authority of God—within the Church. "Ministers!" Whoops! I misread that: Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." Have you not experienced that?

Have you ever judged something in your mind about someone and held something against that person in your mind? *We all have! Let's all admit it,*

we have! If you haven't then you're perfect, and let's run the 'hatpin' test or the 'walk through the wall' test or 'become like the wind' test. None of us do that; I haven't. Guess how God brings His correction. He exposes that you yourself have done—or after you've made the judgment—find yourself doing, because you've condemned this person in your mind, and then lo and behold, you come down the road someplace and you do exactly the same thing. So, here it is right here.

“...considering yourself, lest you also be tempted” (v 1). A minister is not to come up—or an elder or teacher—and say, ‘Well now, tell me what have you done?’ That’s just like the ‘confessional’ that the Catholics have. And every time a talk with an ex-Catholic, I always ask them: When you went to confession, did you really tell the priest everything? *And they say, no!* Now if you’re really going to help someone, they need to know that you’ve gone through things and you have learned and you have stumbled and fallen, but God has helped you to learn and picked you up. If there’s anyway you can help them, then they’ll be happy to listen to you.

Verse 2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.” What is the ‘Law of Christ’? *‘To love each other as I have loved you.’* That’s what the ‘law of Christ’ is—and to love God the Father and Jesus Christ.

- to believe Them
- to believe Their word
- to walk in Their ways

You can say, ‘What is the Law of Christ?’ *The New Testament!*

Now, here’s something for someone to ponder, v 3: “For if anyone thinks himself to be something...” A lot of people do. And I’ll confess, the first time I read that I really didn’t understand it and I misapplied it. Because there are some people who read it this way: ‘For if anyone thinks himself when he’s nothing, but if I’m really something I’m not nothing.’ The truth is you breathe because God gives you every breath that you have.

“...if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, **he is deceiving himself**” (v 3).

How many ministers are deceiving themselves and deluding themselves with the great authority that they exercise over brethren? They need to stop and think and ask that question!

(go to the nest track)

Galatians 6:4: “But let each one prove his own work...” How do you *prove your own work*? You compare your behavior to that of what Bible teaches us, and your attitude toward what our

attitudes ought to be, etc., etc.] ...and then he will

“...and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone...” (v 4). In other words, he’s going to have the peace of God ruling in his mind. He’s going to have love and joy and peace and long-suffering and so forth.

“...and not in another; for each one shall bear his own burden... [we all have our own problems] ...Let the one who is being taught in the Word share all *his* good things with the one who is teaching *him*. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap” (vs 4-7). Here’s the whole story of our life right here.

Verse 8: “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh. But the one who sows to the Spirit shall reap eternal life from the Spirit.... [then a final word of encouragement]: ...Now, we should not lose heart *in* doing well because we who do not faint will reap in due time” (vs 8-9). So, we receive eternal life in ‘due time.’ If there are other things to come along to us, it will come in ‘due time.’

Like I’ve mentioned before. Whenever there’s a situation you need to pray about, *keep praying about it*. Claim the promise that God will answer. He will answer *in His time* and *in His way*, and when the answer comes, then you can look back and see that, yes, *God did answer that prayer*. You will see that God does, in His own way, answer every prayer that you have ever prayed.

CHARGES/COMMANDS for the ministry:

Now we are going to look at how a minister—in this case an elder, who is Timothy—was told by the Apostle Paul to do the work of an evangelist. Paul didn’t say, ‘Hold on till I come down and ordain you as an evangelist.’ He said, ‘Do the work of an evangelist’ because those ‘offices’ are *functions* of work. Let’s look at the responsibility that Paul shows that is upon everyone who is a teacher, minister, elder. There are certain things that are to be done. And, yes, there is a certain amount of authority that they have, and we will analyze what that authority is for. *This authority does not imply a hierarchy!*

1-Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to *the* commandment of God our Savior, and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ, *Who is* our hope, to Timothy, *my* true son in *the* faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus, in order that you might *solemnly* **charge some not to teach other doctrines**” (vs 1-3).

We're going to see that doctrine becomes very important, because doctrines are teachings. Anyone who is going to serve the brethren also has the charge from God to make sure that there are not false doctrines coming into the Church.

The brethren are also to be on guard and 'to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.' I'll tell you one way that you can keep a lot of false doctrines out is to *diligently teach the brethren the true doctrines*, so that when a false one comes around—BING!—a light goes on and they recognize it. Likewise, it will happen in your mind, too. So, there's the charge!

Now, notice what they were doing, v 4: "Nor to pay attention to myths..." A myth can be anything; any *humanly devised thing* claiming to be the will of God—in the case of understanding the New Testament and so forth—is a myth! We just saw some of them explode by a man who claimed that he and his wife were the two witnesses. What he said didn't happen, so it's a myth—correct? *Yes!*

"...and endless genealogies..." (v 4). Back then they had a lot of genealogies because there were a lot of Jews and Levites—and especially the Levites. Not all Levites were loyal to God. Many Levites were also wrapped up in Hellenistic Judaism and were teaching wrong things and they were going and saying, 'Aha! You have to be a Levite to teach.' "...endless genealogies..." It doesn't matter who you are, where you have come from, what you may think yourself to be, unless you're converted and following God, it does not make any difference what the genealogy is! 'You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise, not many noble born, etc. are called.' (1-Cor. 1)

"...which lead to empty speculations... [Hasn't that happened?] ...rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith.... [What is 'edification'? *To build up!* That's what we saw in Eph. 4:

- to build the Church
- to build up
- to strengthen
- to edify
- to fortify the Church

And that comes from God

"...which *is* in faith. Now, the purpose of the commandment... (vs 4-5). That is of the command that He is giving.

Verse 18: "**This charge**... [which ends up being the whole of 1st & 2nd Tim., and 'charge' in the Greek means *a strong commandment*.] ...I am personally committing to you, *my* son Timothy, in

accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you; in order that **by them you yourself might wage a good war, holding to the faith and a good conscience**. For some, having cast aside *a good conscience*, have made shipwreck in regard to the faith; of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I turned over to Satan in order that they may learn not to blaspheme" (vs 18-20).

This is one of the very important things for an elder to do; to make sure that everything is based:

- on the *love* of God
- the *service* of God
- *teaching* the brethren
- *up-building* the Church
- to *protect* it from ***false doctrine***

Paul said there in 1-Cor. 15 that some of them were saying that the resurrection had already past. Come on! Within the Church of God that's pretty miserable! That's why you have all of 1-Cor. 15 devoted to the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection when Christ returns.

Verse 5: "Now the purpose of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith." Notice that here are the problems that you are going to have; and they need to be handled on the local level.

"...from which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling... [We've seen that, too—haven't we? *Yes!*] ...desiring to be teachers of *the* law... [it always turns out this way]: ...neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming. Now we know that the law *is* good, if anyone uses it lawfully... [the whole purpose of the law] ...understanding this: that law is not enacted for a righteous man, but for *the* lawless and disobedient, for *the* ungodly and sinful, for *the* unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing *that* is opposed to sound doctrine" (vs 5-10). That's what the law is for. But if we are following the 'Law of Christ' in faith, none of those things should be among us—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 11: "According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted."

Let's look at the rest of the charges that we have here in 1-Tim., vs 3 & 18. 1-Timothy 4:1 also shows some of the duties and things that a minister is to do:

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith... [that agrees with Matt.

13 & Mark 4 in the sowing of the seed] ...and shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” Now we are getting into the spiritual warfare that is being lost; instead of following Christ and using the Spirit of God, they are being deceived with “...deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” You can see the whole result and fruit of that and the fruition of it with the Roman Catholic Church today.

Verse 2: Speaking lies in hypocrisy... [and we’ve heard that, too] ...their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*; forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by those who know the Truth*” (vs 2-3). They were saying you need to be a vegetarian. We’ve heard that, too—haven’t we?

Did it work in the Seventh Day Adventist Church? With their false prophetess, Ellen G. White? She said, ‘It has been revealed to me that in the end time meats will be contaminated, so we should be vegetarians.’ Have meats been contaminated? *Yes, indeed!* Can you get meats that have not been contaminated? *Yes!* If she were a true prophetess—the Seventh Day Adventist also have their invisible idol/visible woman, that they can’t get rid of. If she were a true prophetess—she would have said, ‘And don’t eat any vegetables either, because they will be cross-bred and contaminated, as well. Just breathe air and pray.’ *No! No!*

Verse 3 says, “...from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful...” Let’s take this backward: Who are the faithful? *The ones who obey God!* You pray over your meals—correct? Over *meats, which God created to be received*, which are listed in Lev. 11 and Deut. 14!

Verse 4: “For every creature of God...” [and then I to clarify what has been given above]: *...designated for human consumption is good...* Not every creature of God, but every creature of God that was ‘*created to be received*’ by thanksgiving’ is good.

“...and nothing to be refused, *if it is received with thanksgiving*, because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (vs 4-5).

Everything from Eph. 1:18 down to Eph. 4:6 is summarized; v 6—begins the summary: “If you are teaching these things to the brethren...” Everything that’s contained in here; all the doctrines of Christ, the Gospels, the Word of God, the love of God, etc.

“...you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished by the words of the faith and of the good doctrines [teachings] that you have closely followed” (v 6). That gives quite a bit of

responsibility and defines part of the work that a minister is to do.

Verse 7: “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables; rather, exercise yourself unto Godliness.” How do you exercise yourself to Godliness?

- prayer
 - study
 - praying for the brethren
 - teaching them
- all of those are ‘exercising “...yourself to Godliness.”’
- how you live
 - how you conduct your life

Ministers are not to be examples because they put on a show when they come to church. They are to be examples *by their very dedication and conversion to God and the Word of God and to serving the brethren*. That’s how you “...exercise yourself to Godliness.”

Verse 8: “For physical exercise is profitable for a short time...” How true that is. Doesn’t last very long if you exercise and then you don’t for a long time and you start out to exercise. What do you have to do? *You have to back up and start at the beginning!* If you’re use to doing 50-100 sit-ups, you got to go back and start at 10, because that’s about all you can handle. I’ve got my weight that I have to fight, so I know exactly what this is. If I don’t keep at it, lo and behold, that’s just the way it is, so I have to keep at it. It’s ‘profitable’ for a short while, unless you keep it up continuously, you’re going to fail.

“...but **Godliness is profitable for everything...** [living God’s way and everything like that] ...is profitable for everything, **having the promise of life—of the life that now is, and of the life that is coming.**” This is how we are to

- teach the brethren
- help them
- encourage them
- inspire them
- help them draw close to God and have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ on a continuous, on-going basis

The only way you can teach that is if you yourself are doing that. Is that not correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 9: “This saying *is faithful and worthy of full acceptance*. Now it is for this *reason that we are laboring*, and we are personally suffering reproach because we have hope in *the living God*, Who is *the Savior of all men*, especially of those who are believers. **These things command and teach**” (vs 9-11).

Now we come to more understanding concerning the way and the duties of the minister:

- he is to teach sound doctrine
- he is not to be lifted up with himself
- he is to conduct himself in a Godly manner
- he is to **command and teach**

How is he to command and teach? **According to the Word of God!** and according to the warnings that were given here!

Verse 12: “Do not allow anyone to despise your youth...” You have it working both ways. You have older people who despise the younger and younger people who despise the older. And that’s exemplified in what is called *the generational gap*.

“...but be an example to the believers... [here’s the example]: ...**in word**... [your speech, your language, and so forth] ..**in conduct**... [how you live your life] ...**in love**... [loving God and loving the brethren] ...**in Spirit**... [that it’s evident that you’re being led by the Spirit of God] ...**in faith**... [that it’s evident that you have faith in God] ...**and in purity**”—and that means *purity in conduct*; none of those things that we read in Gal. 5 about the works of the flesh.

Now, he tells them *how* to do it, v 13: “Until I come, devote *yourself* to reading, to encouragement... [edification] ...**and to doctrine.**”

- you know the Word of God.
- you *know* the true doctrines that are there
- you *understand* what is right
- you *teach* what is right
- you *encourage* the brethren

You live your life this way—***the way that God wants you to live***—and you can teach the brethren. You’ll be able to be affective in it, because yes, you do have the ability to teach, but unless it’s God doing the teaching in you and through you, and unless you are living God’s way, how are you going to teach the brethren? *You become a hypocrite!* Read Matt. 23, where Christ says ‘a hypocrite’—especially *religious hypocrites*.

Verse 14: “Do not neglect the *spiritual gift that is* in you, which was given to you by prophecy with *the* laying on of the hands of the elderhood.” When someone is ordained to be an elder, God does give spiritual gifts. Not to exalt him above anybody else, but to give him the ability to fulfill the responsibility that God expects. All of this has to do with the government and the authority of God within the Church of God.

Verse 15: “Meditate on these things... [in other words, think about these in a humble way] ...give yourself wholly to them so that your growth *in the faith* may be apparent to all. Be diligent with

yourself...” (vs 15-16). You have to discipline yourself; you have to watch yourself, because if one is a minister, that doesn’t mean he doesn’t have carnal nature and difficulties and sins that he’s got to repent of. *No, indeed!*

“...and with the doctrines; continue in them. For in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (v 16). That says quite a lot—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!*

1-Timothy 5:7—he’s talking about how to take care of the Church: “Now these things **command**... [a charge] ...**that they may be blameless.**” Then he talks about how they need to provide for their own.

1-Timothy 6:11: “But you, O man of God, **flee these things**... [that is striving after money, foolish and hurtful lust, etc.—stay away from them] ...and **pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance and meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith!** Take hold of eternal life to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the sight of God...” (vs 11-13).

Everyone who is a minister or thinks he wants to become a minister this is for you:

Verse 13: “**I charge you** in the sight of God... [everything that he has written here] ...Who gives life to every *living* thing, and Jesus Christ, Who *in* testifying before Pontius Pilate gave the exemplary profession *of faith*, **that you keep this commandment...**” (vs 13-14). That goes right back to 1-Tim. 1—the commandment, which then is a summary and means the whole book.

“...without fault *and* without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 14). These are really some instructions!

QUALIFICATIONS for someone who is to be ordained as an elder:

1-Timothy 3:1: “Faithful *is* the saying, ‘If any man aspires to *be* an overseer...’” The *King James* says ‘bishop.’ Well, that’s from the Church of England where they had bishops—but it means *overseers*.

“...he desires a good work” (v 1). *Good before God!* Good to help and serve the brethren.

Here are the guidelines that have to be, v 2: “Now then, it is obligatory... [meaning that these are *absolute requirements* that have to be held up to] ...**that** the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching.” These are the first things, the positive things.

Verse 3: “Not given to much wine... [and we’ve had in the Church, alcoholics, who were supposed to be ministers]

“...not a bully...” (v 3). That takes away from being a hierarchist or someone that is just a crass and forces his way.

“...not greedy for selfish gain...”—because he has to handle the finances of the tithes and offerings of the brethren in a way that is done properly.

“...but kind, not a quarreler...” (v 3). That is, not picking arguments and causing disputes that way.

“...not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well...” (vs 3-4). Here’s the word ‘rule’—now, that word is proper in this particular place.

“...having *his* children in subjection with all respect; (For if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* church of God?)” (vs 4-5).

Notice the difference: You rule in your house, because you have to teach your children; and your wife has to be in submission to you. You do this with ***the authority of the love of God*** and the Truth of God and whatever authority is necessary to exercise within the family so that there is discipline. That has to be. But notice, ***it doesn’t say how he will rule the Church of God.***

Notice the emphasis shifts; because the rule for the family is to take care of them—right? He has to work for them, provide for them, all of that sort of thing—is that not true? *Yes!* The children have to be obedient and yielded to God, yielded to the authority of father and mother at home.

Now, when they become of age and go out on their own, well then, that’s a different story. Even Moses’ grandson, Manasseh, the son of Gershom, led people away in idolatry. When your children grow up and they’re on their own they have to make their own choices. Hopefully, they’ll follow what you teach them. But carnal nature being the way it is, many times they will go out and do just the opposite of what you taught them, because they have carnal nature and they have a rebellious part of them. They want to go out to do the opposite of what you taught them. That does not disqualify one from being an elder, because once the children are of age they’re responsible for their own choices.

How will he take care of the Church of God? Not rule it; ***take care*** of the Church of God. It is something you are to ***watch over, take care, teach, lead, guide and direct in every way***, and teach the brethren to do the same thing.

Hebrews 13:7—the way it’s translated in the *King James* and that follows along with the improper translation of ‘overseer’ as *bishop*. “Remember them that have the RULE over you.... [And I’ve heard it said just that way. ‘Therefore, brethren, the ministers RULE over you!’] ...who have spoken the Word of God to you.”

Let’s read the proper translation, because that is not the way it should have been translated. Hebrews 13:7: “Remember your leaders, who have spoken the Word of God to you, considering the outcome of *their* conduct; *and* imitate *their* faith.” Yes, it is!

Let me again read this in the *King James*, first, v 17: “Obey them that have the RULE over you!” And every hierarchical church that you’ve ever been in, these are the Scriptures they go to, to what? ***Establish their hierarchical authority—right? Yes!*** That’s not caring for the Church. Caring for the Church of God is an entirely different thing.

Now let’s read v 17 the way it should be read: “Follow your leaders, and be submissive... [don’t be rebellious against them] ...because they are looking out for your spiritual well-being, as *those who must be* ready to give an account to God...” God is going to call every minister or elder into account as to how he’s watching out and teaching the brethren for their spiritual well being.

“...in order that they may do this with joy, and not *with* groaning because that *would be* unprofitable for you” (v 17). Quite different—*isn’t it?*

That’s why back here in 1-Tim. 3 it doesn’t say that he has to rule his own household well so that he may ***rule*** the Church of God. He is to ***take care*** of the Church of God. As Jesus told Peter, ‘Shepherd My sheep. Feed My lambs.’ There is to be the care and the love and the service.

Just to give you an example here. We’ve seen some of the haughtiness of one of the presidential candidates. As I said, when it started out, they had eleven midgets and we ended up with the three stooges, and now we’ve got two left. I got a nasty letter from a woman because I took Obama to task—and blah, blah, blah! Well, you need to take them all to task. Bush has his faults, everybody has their faults, so we’re not talking politically here; we’re talking about something that is very evident in the fruit.

If you love your country (which Obama says he does); and you are for the troops (which he says he does—but he doesn’t vote to supply them); and he had an opportunity to visit the wounded in Germany, who had been fighting there in Iraq; and

the Pentagon, in order to keep campaign things done with the wounded in the hospitals, they said ‘You’re welcome to come, you can bring whoever you want, but no cameras.’ Well, because he couldn’t bring the cameras and make a big show of himself at home, he decided not to go visit the wounded, but to go workout. Now, if you really cared for the wounded it doesn’t matter, you would go see them whether there was a camera there or not, or whether anyone else knew it or not. Is that not correct?

So likewise with caring for the Church! You are to care for the Church not considering yourself and your narcissistic own ways first. It’s the same way within the Church. If you’re a minister or elder and you want the respect of the brethren,:

- love them
- teach them
- help them to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

You don’t have to *rule* them! Listen, the truth is, if Christ cannot rule in them with His Spirit, do you think that all of your authority is going to make them more Godly because you rule over them? *I tell you NO!*

We are to let the ‘peace of Christ’ rule in our hearts; and then it is internal. All ministers and elders and all brethren, because how many times did Paul say, when talking of the brethren, *we*, including himself. Likewise with us. *WE*—not I, not me, not you—but *WE*. Are we all not brethren? *Yes, indeed, we are!* When you get yourself deep in trouble, and when you are sick and alone, and you’re in pain and misery, and no one comes to see you, maybe you’ll understand how you treated some of the brethren.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:35-40
- 2) Luke 14:25-27
- 3) John 12:42-50
- 4) John 13:13-17
- 5) Galatians 5:14-26
- 6) Galatians 6:1-9
- 7) 1-Timothy 1:1-5, 18-20, 5-11
- 8) Timothy 4:1-16
- 9) 1-Timothy 5:7
- 10) 1-Timothy 6:11-14
- 11) 1-Timothy 3:1-5
- 12) Hebrews 13:7, 17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 15
- Ezekiel 34
- Revelation 2 & 3

- 1 Corinthians 1, 15
- Ephesians 4
- Matthew 13
- Mark 4
- Leviticus 11
- Deuteronomy 14
- Matthew 23

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Invisible Idol, Visible Man*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 2-8-09
Reformatted: 10/13