



# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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## THE HUMBLE SERVICE OF PREACHERS

By Brian R. Kenyon

### Have You Ever Wondered?

Why is it that some preachers say “pastoral oversight” is unbiblical, yet, for all practical purposes, these same preachers “run” the congregations of which they are members? Why is it that some members of the church have such a high regard for the preacher that they blindly follow him, even when the church splits and he starts another church across town? Why is it that some churches of Christ, especially those without elders, are in constant turmoil, divided, and/or have little cooperation from the members? Why is it that some preachers who are having business cards or stationary made want to avoid the term “minister” as their description? The answer to these questions is found in the misunderstanding of the preacher’s role of humble service.

### The Problem In Corinth

In the midst of his discussion concerning division within the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 1-4), Paul clarified the role of preachers by stating their work within the framework of God’s team. By stating these roles, Paul addressed two faults the Corinthians possessed that contributed to their division. First, the Corinthians had a warped view of the role of preachers. Paul wrote, “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup>Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:11-13). Initially, we must realize that it is not always the preacher’s fault that members of the church put him on a pedestal. Sometimes it is, but surely we would not blame Paul, Apollos, or Peter for the Corinthians’ misguided thinking that these men were their head. This unbiblical view was the result of this next serious fault.

Second, the Corinthians were very carnal. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. <sup>3</sup>For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? <sup>4</sup>For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (1 Cor. 3:1-4). The word “carnal” is translated from a word that means fleshly, belonging to the realm of flesh, or simply put: worldly. All of us are “babes in Christ” when first converted, but what a tragedy it is to remain spiritually immature (Heb. 5:12-14; Eph. 4:14-16)! Being carnal prevents us from a deeper understanding of truth and results in “envying [jealousy, ASV]...strife...divisions.” In order for us not to imitate these faults of the Corinthians, we must truly understand the humble service of faithful preachers.

### Preachers Are Servants

Paul wrote, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” Instead of placing preachers on a pedestal, Paul informed the Corinthians that preachers are actually toward the “bottom rung of the ladder.” The word “ministers” is from *diakonos* (δῆρακονος). In its etymology, the word once referred to a table waiter, and by the time the New Testament was written, it referred to “one who executes the commands of another; esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister.”<sup>1</sup> The Greek word is found thirty times in the New Testament and generally refers to a servant, although in three verses it refers to the special servants of the church, “deacons” (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12). Paul was saying to the Corinthians that far from being head honchos, he and Apollos were merely servants of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 6:4; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23)!

**Preachers Are Helpers**

Paul wrote, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ" (1 Cor. 4:1). In this context, the term "ministers [servants, NKJ]" is from *hupertes* (ὑπηρέτης), which is a different word than First Corinthians 3:5. The word here means an attendant, assistant, helper, or servant. This word originally referred to an "under-rower," one who rowed in the lower part of a ship, and then came to mean one who served a master and/or superior.<sup>2</sup> This word was used of Paul elsewhere. When recounting his call on the Damascus Road, Jesus said to him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister [servant, ESV]..." (Acts 26:16). While preachers cannot do everything, they must be helpers in advancing the Gospel. Preachers, are we willing to help, or do we have the attitude, "Unless I'm in charge, it's not worth doing"?

**Preachers Are Stewards**

In the same context where Paul referred to himself as a helper,

he also wrote, "Let a man so account of us, as...stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1). A "steward" is simply one who is entrusted with another's property (cf. Lk. 16:1-2). He is in essence a manager of someone else's belongings. In this case, Paul was a steward of the "mysteries of God," which is another term for the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 2:7). To rightly fulfill the task, Paul said that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). "Faithful" means that the steward must be trustworthy and reliable (cf. Heb. 3:5). As it concerns preaching, this would certainly include "handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, ASV). The summary of a faithful preacher/steward is also found in Paul's words to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16); "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). Preachers, are we good stewards?

**Conclusion**

Like Paul and Apollos, all preachers are merely instruments of God who must rely on Him (1 Cor. 3:6-7 cf. 2 Cor. 4:7). Paul planted the seed in Corinth (Acts 18:1-8 cf. Rom. 15:19-20), and Apollos instructed them in the faith (Acts 18:24-19:1), but neither made the harvest grow—"God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6)! Preachers should not place themselves on a pedestal, nor should members of the church—God should be the one we regard the highest and desire to humbly serve!

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (1885; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 138.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, rev. edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 71.

The Spring semester starts January 7, 2008. Why not take a class? Check our website or call the office for extension class subjects in Alachua, Auburndale, and Jacksonville!

SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS JANUARY 7, 2008		
Monday 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:15	Life of Christ (12317) (Davis) Marriage and the Family (22354) (Kenyon)	Credit Hours 3 3
Tuesday 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:15 7:00-9:30	Preacher and His Work (12308) (Stearsman) Cults (22352) (Burgett) Hebrews and Galatians (22343) (Blackman)	3 3 2½
Wednesday 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:15	Computers and Churches (32390) (Stearsman) Holy Spirit (22350) (Kenyon)	3 3
Thursday 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:15	Debates (22367) (Stearsman) Psalms I (22368) (Wheeler)	3 3
Friday 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:15	Eph., Phil., Col., and Philemon (12336) (Kenyon) Isaiah and Jeremiah (12313) (Elledge)	3 3

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### “Do You Understand the Biblical View of Man?”

33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lectureship **Jan. 21-24, 2008** Jackie M. Stearsman, Director

#### MONDAY

9:00 The Biblical View of Jesus as a Man Blaine Cook  
 9:40 Man's Duty to Love God Timothy Kidwell  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 The Biblical View of Man and Sin Rick Kenyon  
 11:30 LUNCH  
**Forum: The Biblical View of Man and the Home**  
 1:30 The Home Impacts the Church British Carlton  
 2:00 The Home's Impact on Society Elvis Galbreath  
 2:30 Broken Homes, Handicapped Children Gene Burgett  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Man Must Love Truth Jeffrey McNeal  
 7:45 Man and Benevolence Jackie M. Stearsman

#### TUESDAY

9:00 Pop Psychology David Stearsman  
 9:40 Man as an Employer/Employee Mark Reynolds  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Philosophical Ethics Jody Apple  
 11:30 LUNCH  
**Forum: The Biblical View of Man and Eschatology**  
 1:30 The Biblical View of Death Freddie Clayton  
 2:00 The Final State of Man Glenn Burgess  
 2:30 Sources of Skepticism Freddie Clayton  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Man Is Created to Work James Johnson  
 7:45 Man as the Leader of His Family Jimmy Clark

#### WEDNESDAY

9:00 Man Is to Glorify God Rusty Hilliard  
 9:40 Woman as the Man's Helper Jimmy Clark  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Love the Brethren George F. Beals  
 11:30 LUNCH  
**Forum: The Biblical View of Origins**  
 1:30 Evolution and the Biblical View of Man Brad Harrub  
 2:00 Man in God's Image William Howard  
 2:30 Origin of the Soul in Each Individual George F. Beals  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Man Is to Seek God Ben Radford, Sr.  
 7:45 Man Needs Hope Robert McAnally

#### THURSDAY

9:00 Man and the Influence of Demos Jackie M. Stearsman  
 9:40 Man and Civil Government Raymond Sieg  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Radical Homosexuality Brian R. Kenyon  
 11:30 LUNCH  
**Forum: The Biblical View of Man and Restoration**  
 1:30 Restoration Needed Maurice Davis  
 2:00 Substance Abuse Daniel Stearsman  
 2:30 Recovery Programs Mike Elledge  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Man's Duty to Love His Fellow Man Daniel Cook  
 7:45 Man Is to Worship God Tom Holland

**Broadcast Live On the Internet at [www.fsop.net](http://www.fsop.net)**

As a compliment to this lectureship, the Florida School of Preaching proudly presents our fifteenth bound lectureship volume, *Do You Understand the Biblical View of Man?* Understanding our purpose, our nature, and our place in God's plan of redemption is necessary to our salvation. In addition to containing the manuscripts of the oral presentations, this book will include an appendix of related material written by faithful men and women. This book will make a valuable addition to any person's library, especially preachers, teachers, and elders.



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## The Widow's Mite Was Enough

By Gene Burgett

It is my privilege to talk with many people about the financial needs of the Florida School of Preaching. One thing I have learned is people will surprise you. One of the unexpected things I quite often hear people say, after having agreed to help us in our work of training men to preach, is, "I'm sorry I can't do more." At first one might take these words as a kind of wishful thinking. But often the meaning behind the words is more akin to a kind of embarrassment that the gift is, in their eyes, so small.

I want all of our supporters to know that at the Florida School of Preaching we are thankful to all who have fellowship with us in this work. We are thankful that out of the many good works you could be supporting you selected us. When one is selected by someone who had many options, that person has bestowed upon the work chosen a great honor.

I would also remind all of the Biblical story of the widow who placed two mites in the temple treasury (Luke 21:1-4). Concerning her two mites Jesus said, "this poor widow has put in more than all" (v.3). Exactly how the widow felt as she placed her two mites in the treasury is not revealed, but Jesus makes it clear that her gift was nothing for which she should feel embarrassment. Of her gift he stated that she, in giving out of her poverty, had put in "all the livelihood that she had." Generosity may be measured in many ways. Often men weigh generosity by the size of the number on the check, which is a legitimate measure that has its place. But Jesus teaches us that generosity may also be measured in terms of the sacrifice involved in giving the gift. We appreciate all who honor us with their support.

If you, or an individual or church you know, are considering selecting a good work to support, please give me opportunity to tell you about the Florida School of Preaching. I can be contacted via the phone or email.

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