

Class 202 Leadership in the New Testament Church, Part 2: Session Four Notes

He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes heavy with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. (Psalm 78:70-72)

The Christian Leader: An Ambassador

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you not receive the grace of God in vain.... Giving no offense in any thing, that the ministry not be blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Cor. 6:1, 3-4)

For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught... (Titus 1:7-9a)

Every Christian leader must not only care for the souls of those entrusted to him but also realize that he labors under the eyes of a watching world. In 2 Cor. 6, Paul points out how he must give no occasion for sin, so that the Christian ministry will not fall into disrepute. In Titus 1, he reminds Titus how the overseer must carry himself.

The steward of God

Before looking at Titus 1, we need to have some understanding of the role of a steward. Paul says that the bishop is God's steward and answers directly to God for the household of God. The image of the steward was a commonly used device in the Bible. Stewards were the most trusted servants of all, for they had the oversight of all the operations of the master's business. In Gen. 39:6a we read of Potiphar, "*And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat.*" In Genesis 24:2-4, we read this, "*And Abraham said to his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, 'Put, I pray you, your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that you shall not take a*

wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

The authority of the steward requires the clearest understanding of the master’s purposes, knowledge of the master’s resources, and true concern for the master’s entire family. A Christian who believes he is called to high positions of stewardship should prepare himself now by walking in the high levels of faithfulness that such a position requires.

The Three Spheres of Faithfulness Jesus Linked to Promotion

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:10-12)

While God may for His own purposes not promote us quickly, there are prerequisites to promotion and advancement, as Jesus points out here:

1. Faithfulness in small things.
2. Faithfulness in things of the world, particularly in the handling of money.
3. Faithfulness in the things of others.

The steward must be blameless in his character

Blamelessness in the steward of God literally means that he cannot be accused of anything. He is held to the highest standard of public behavior and without reproach. He cannot cheat on his taxes; cannot take paperclips from his office; he cannot violate the copyright laws of the United States

He is not what the KJV calls self-willed, which literally means pleasing himself, or arrogant. Arrogance is especially distasteful in the ministry, even though those caught under its spell may be deceived by it.

Not soon angry: he must not be hot-tempered.

Not given to wine: literally, he does not sit by the wine or hang around it. This may refer to his choice of companions as well.

Not a "striker" - that is, not quarrelsome.

Not given to "filthy lucre," which is sordid gain.

He must be:

- a lover of hospitality
- a lover of good men, or what is good
- sober (self-controlled in mind)
- just
- holy
- temperate (self-controlled in appetite)
- holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught

Ambassadors of Christ's Kingdom

As leaders we are ambassadors of Christ's Kingdom and so we must faithfully represent not only the policies of that government, but also its values. With that in mind, let's look at some ABC's of ambassadorship:

Appearance

Cleanliness

Grooming

Fashion

Bearing

An overly business-like attitude

Flippancy: inappropriate levity

Hurriedness

Impatience

Irritation

Judgmentalism

Superiority

Wrath: remember Moses misrepresenting God (Numbers 20:11)

Communication vices to avoid: a dirty dozen

Bluntness

Boasting

Coarseness

Discouragement

Flattery

Insults

Off-color comments

Racist remarks

Sexist remarks

Teasing

Threats

Vulgarity

Living and representing Christ before the world

By our success or failure in any of these areas we are not only communicating something about ourselves but also about the God whom we represent. Paul said to imitate him as he imitated Christ. For leaders, the sense of ambassadorship and stewardship cannot be a thing to which they simply aspire. Instead, the fruit of the Spirit must clearly be seen in their lives; they must model Christ to others in their actions and reactions:

- Love, including active compassion
- Joy
- Peace

Paul said in Philippians 4:5, "*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*" The here translated *moderation* means forbearance, gentleness, and reasonableness. While we are sometimes quick to prize and focus on the inward desire for holiness, Paul links our outwardly visible character to the end of the age. In so doing, he links it to: (1) the fact that we shall soon appear before God; and (2) the need for souls to be saved.