

# LESSON 5

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

### INTRODUCTION

We rest on the holiness of God the Father, the saving grace of Jesus Christ and are guided by Holy Spirit. We are called to a life of balance with our Triune God which helps to maintain balance in ministry and helps to avoid common pitfalls.

#### "IS CHRIST BECOMING A STRANGER IN OUR MIDST?"

- Address given by David Wilkerson

- "It is possible to gather Spirit-filled people in one place, praising and lifting up their hands, and still have Christ walking among them as a stranger."
- "It is true that Christ said, 'where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in their midst,' but He can be in our midst as a stranger." (Matt. 18:20)
- Example: "The Jews gathered every Sabbath in the synagogues to speak of His name and to prophesy of His coming...But when He came and walked among them, He was not recognized."
- "*Christ is a stranger to many who speak His name, who worship the Father who sent Him, who sing His hosannas and who call Him 'Lord, Lord.'*" (Matt. 7:21)

### THREE WAYS BELIEVERS MAKE CHRIST A STRANGER IN THEIR MIDST

WE MAKE CHRIST A STRANGER BY GIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT PREEMINENCE OVER HIM. CHRIST, AND CHRIST ALONE, MUST BE THE CENTER OF LIFE AND WORSHIP

Colossians 1:18-19

- Jesus must be exalted, He must have preeminence. He must be distinguished and spoken of above others. He must have first place in all things.

## LESSON 5

### AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

- Not even the Holy Spirit is to be exalted above the name of Jesus. The upper room must never overshadow the cross! The Holy Spirit is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. His work is to reveal Christ to us rather than draw attention to Himself.
- When the Holy Spirit and/or His gifts become the center of our attention, the church gets out of focus.

John 16:13-15

- The Spirit of God does not draw attention to Himself but exalts Christ instead.
- A true Holy Ghost meeting is where Christ is being exalted, where His holiness pierces the soul, where men and women fall before His throne, broken, humbled, crying, “holy, holy.” (Rev. 4:8; Isaiah 6:3-5)
- The moving of the Holy Spirit is a moving closer to Christ, deeper in Christ with a greater submission to His Lordship.

CHRIST IS MADE A STRANGER WHEN HIS PEOPLE PRAISE HIM BUT  
WILL NOT PRAY TO HIM

Jesus prayed.

- He asked the Father for daily bread even while teaching that God promises to provide all our needs. (Matt. 6:8, 11; Luke 11:3; Phil 4:19)
- He asked for God’s perfect will rather than His own will even while teaching that we may have whatever we ask. (Luke 22:42; John 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14-15)

Some people no longer want Christ as much as they want what He can do for them. “The church once confessed its sins, now it confesses its rights!”

# LESSON 5

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

“How many of us would serve Him if He offered nothing but Himself – no healing, no success, no prosperity, no worldly blessings?” (Job 1:21-22, 2:10, 13:15a)

“Very few of God’s people pray anymore. They are too busy working for Jesus to talk to Him!”

Our Savior, who has the care and concern of multiple universes, prays for us (Heb. 7:25). We work feverishly for a Christ we ignore.

Why we will not pray:

- Prayer is a bloody battleground; it is where victories are won.
- It is a place to die to self; a place where a holy God exposes secret sin.
- Satan tries to hinder it.
- Satan is not afraid of gift-hungry saints; he fears praying saints.

CHRIST IS MADE A STRANGER WHEN WE WANT HIS POWER MORE THAN HIS PURITY

Acts 15:8-9, 10:15

- Pentecost is more synonymous with purity than with power.
- Who has power? The one with a contrite heart....the one with purity.
- We cannot be ready for His coming without purity.
- Jesus is coming for a church without spot or wrinkle, a people whose affections are on things above, a people with clean hands and a pure heart, a people who are looking for His coming rather than their comforts. (Eph. 5:27)

Malachi 3:1-3

- God is going to purge the church before Christ comes again and no man or woman of God will escape.
- “Through the purging to come....God will bring about....a church that is repentant and holy, a people washed, cleansed

# LESSON 5

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

and offering praises in true righteousness as well as in prayers and intercession, a people of God who will discern between holy and unholy...a tested, tried people once again devoted to the person of Jesus Christ...a church where Christ is no longer a stranger in our midst but is crowned preeminent!

The above dangers are pitfalls we must avoid. Other pitfalls include:

- False doctrine and false relationships.
- Weak discipline and selfish faith.
- Deceitfulness, fleshliness, boastfulness, self-exaltation, greediness, blindness, divisions.

**AVOIDING PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL BALANCE IS  
A ROOT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT WE MUST DEVELOP**

---

### THE BALANCED MINISTRY OF PAUL

2 Corinthians 6:3-10, 4:16-18

The balanced ministry is:

- Simple, godly and sincere, without fleshly wisdom, a ministry commended by God.
- A ministry of glory, righteousness, hope, light and liberty.
- A ministry of constant transformation (from glory to glory).
- An honest and unselfish ministry.
- A ministry of power but also of suffering, of boldness but likewise of faithfulness.
- A ministry that looks more to the eternal than the temporal.
- A ministry that is confident in the future, hardworking, and overcoming in the present to please God.
- A ministry first, last, and always of reconciliation between God and man.
- An entreating ministry of God's grace.
- A blameless and approved ministry.
- A separated and clean ministry.

# LESSON 5

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

- A human ministry with ordinary feelings and emotions which yearns for fellowship and sharing.

A true minister of God should be:

- Approved by God.
- Innocent, longsuffering in afflictions, necessities, distresses and floggings, in imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings and fastings.
- Pure, knowledgeable, kind, loving, truthful, powerful, having good use of the spiritual weapons of warfare, faithful in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report, in honesty and in fame.
- Alert, expectant in preservation and provision, joyful and benevolent.

According to 1 Timothy 4:12, a true minister of God should be an example in five specific ways:

- In word: teaching sound doctrine. (Romans 1:16; 2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16)
- In conversation: conducting one's speech privately and publicly like Christ's own example. (Eph. 4:29)
- In charity and love: expressing a life of love as described in 1 Cor. 13.
- In spirit: living constantly in the manner and disposition of Christ in accord with the Holy Spirit.
- In faith: being faithful and pure before God.

---

### JESUS ADDS THAT TO BE BALANCED MINISTERS WE MUST:

- Be willing to pay the price of prayer and study so that we will not be ensnared by gossip and triflings.
- Be able to disperse the truth abroad, speaking both old and new truths. (Matt. 13:52)
- Pray to avoid pride after successes so as to assure the continued blessing of God. (Samson, Hezekiah)

# LESSON 5

## AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

### CONCLUSION

1 Thess. 2:1-20

- Paul had a balanced ministry of exhortation, comfort, and charging (testifying).
- He compared his ministry to parenting – gentle as a mother, yet instructive, comforting, and firm as a father in order that those he served might walk worthy of God.

Paul avoided the pitfalls and maintained balance in so Christ-like a manner that he shook the world with greater works.

That we may go and do likewise must surely be the heart's desire of our heavenly Father.

Some questions to ask ourselves:

- Does my life look different from a non-Christian's?
- Do I profess to know God, while my actions deny Him?
- Do I show who Jesus is by the way I live? By the way I love?  
Am I peaceful?
- Think back, why was I compelled to follow Jesus?
- Was it because of another Christian in my life?
- Who did God put in my life to minister to me?
- Who am I ministering to?
- Do my neighbors see Christ in me? Am I kind & helpful?

God will not look compelling if God's people do not look compelling.

To live a balanced life with our God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we look to Jesus Christ as our example of how to live in perfect communion and in relationship with our Heavenly Father, who is holy and just. Jesus Christ is our example because He humbled

## LESSON 5

### AVOIDING THE PITFALLS AND MAINTAINING BALANCE IN MINISTRY

himself and made himself nothing so we could have access to our Father. We are to look to Jesus as our example and to desire to be more Christ-like, allowing Holy Spirit to draw us closer to Christ and to Our Heavenly Father.