

# *Holiness*

## *The Holy Pastor*

*By*

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# Table of Contents

1.	Presiding Well Over Your Own Home.....	2
2.	Homes Totally Out Of Order.....	4
3.	Keeping The Standards At Home.....	5
4.	Involved In The Lives Of Your Children.....	7
5.	The Servant's Heart.....	9
6.	Praying For Family Holiness.....	11
7.	Follow Me As I Follow Christ.....	13
8.	The True Man Of God Is Blameless.....	15
9.	Holding To The Standard Of Perfection.....	17
10.	Nothing More Frightening Than Perfection.....	19
11.	Laying Your Life Down For The Sheep.....	21
12.	Lead Your People To Holiness.....	23
13.	Requiring A Holy Life.....	25
14.	Sheep On Steroids.....	27
15.	Find Your Young Timothys.....	28
16.	Perfecting Your Men In The Mundane.....	30
17.	Will Your Ministry Die With You?.....	32

# Presiding Well Over Your Own Home

*“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” (1 Timothy 3:4)*

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This passage of Scripture is so important to what God has called us to do in ruling our own homes. This word “rule” means “to preside over, to superintend, to stand before, to lead, to feed.” “Oh, you mean I’m not just pastor at church; I’m also pastor of the home?” That’s what it says. When it talks about ruling our homes well, it’s talking very clearly about our pastoral responsibilities to the home first.

What he’s saying to us very clearly is that if you can’t pastor your home, you can’t pastor the church. I’m going to say it again a different way. If you will not assume the pastoral care of your home, which is the first requirement, how can you say that God is calling you here or there, or to preach the gospel, or to run and do this or that? The first requirement for going to preach is pastoring your home first. Do you want me to tell you when you can go preach? You can go preach when you love your wife and lay your life down for her as Christ loved the church. *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 6,” Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday PM*

We talk about your role as overseer in your home because if you can’t rule your home, you have no business overseeing the church of Jesus Christ. Some of you just let that comment go right by. I’m telling you, God is not going to wink at it. He will never bless you when you reject Him, despise His Word, and lower His standards. We said the other day that the first requirement of the bishop, the man of God, the elder, is humility. Humility: God is right, not me. *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 4,” Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday AM*

# Homes Totally Out Of Order

*“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” (Romans 13:1-2)*

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It’s humorous to me to go to some of these countries we’ve ministered in, like Kenya and St. Kitts, that are more blatantly matriarchal than our society, that refuse to see the distinction that God has made between men and women and their roles of authority and responsibility.

A number of people in a particular fellowship, having come out of different backgrounds, church affiliations, and perceived religious organizations, wanted the pastor to be accountable to them. They wanted him to tell them why, when, and how come. We talked with them just a little bit. I asked them, “Is that how you operate your household? Does your home operate that way? Do you answer to your wife and children?” They said, “Yes.” That explained part of the problem. No, they didn’t actually verbalize that. They just do it; they live it with homes totally out of order, no authority, each person an entity to himself.

Do you operate that way in your home? When you dsy it’s time for bed, do your children say, “I’ll pray about it, Daddy. No, I don’t feel the Lord’s leading me to bed at this moment.”? The authority doesn’t bear the sword in vain, Romans 13 tells us. God is going to back the authority. To resist the power is to resist God. It’s rebellion; it’s confusion. Every evil work begins to move in that kind of an environment. *“Ordained of God, Pt. 1,” March 28, 2001, Wednesday PM*

# Keeping The Standards At Home

*“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.” (Titus 1:6)*

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We see that it talks about children also, faithful children. Interesting word, that word “faithful.” It’s *pistos* in the Greek, meaning “believing.” It’s talking about saved kids. When it talks about our children being “saved” and “not accused of riot,” the word “riot,” in the Greek *asotia*, really talks about “an abandoned mind or life.” It really means “unsaved.” They can’t have a life contrary to the Word of God. “Oh, so they’re to be saved?” Yes. “What if my children are not born again? Can I still be a preacher?” Yes, if their life is not “a riot,” if they’re not out of control, if they’re “pleased to dwell,” like the unsaved husband or wife in this home that you’re pastoring. If you’re keeping the standards at home, you can then oversee the church.

You can’t make people get saved. You can’t make your wife get saved. You can’t make your children get saved. Keep the gospel pure and the standards holy—those that won’t live by them have to go somewhere else—if you want to preach the gospel. If you want to keep them there, then get out of the ministry; but don’t think you can keep your home disorderly and then rule the house of God and set it in order. If you allow unsaved children in your home to riot or cause confusion, if you have a rebellious wife, then you’re going to have a rebellious church. If you’ll allow them in your home, you’ll let them in your church. I didn’t make up the rules; I’m just reading them to you. It’s very important, beloved.

You see the terms “riot” and “unruly.” “Unruly” means “not subject to your authority,” or “out of control.” Can I ask you something? Are your children under your control? They don’t have to be born again or regenerated. Are they under your control, or are they bringing a reproach on your home? They may not be saved, but do they obey? Are they disciplined? Are they doing what you require them to do? You may not know what they’re doing behind your back. You can’t do anything about that unless God exposes it, but that’s the requirement. *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 6,” Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday PM*

# Involved In The Lives Of Your Children

*“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” (1 Timothy 3:4)*

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When it talks about the importance of ruling our own homes well and having our children in subjection with all gravity, that word “gravity” means “to be serious, sober” about the responsibility you have as a father to your children. You are first to be involved in the lives of your children and see that they’re born again. You’re to train up your children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord so that when they’re old, they will not depart from it. The father is to train the child, to bring into his mind the biblical principles and then require them to be lived.

How dare we run around the streets of Nairobi or the countryside of Kenya preaching the gospel when we haven’t taken time to sit with our own children, to love them, and to teach them the Word! Do you know what your kids ought to hear you say every once in a while when somebody asks, “Brother, can you come and preach for us?” Your children ought to hear you say, “No, I can’t preach. I’m going to spend time with my son.” “You mean I’m to put my son before the ministry?” Your son is the ministry; your daughter is the ministry; your wife is the ministry. “Yeah, but if I don’t go preach there, maybe souls will go to hell!” God will send somebody else. He’ll send the guy who spent time with his son last week! Do you know that the world can get by without you being too busy every day and every week to minister in your home? When you stand before Jesus, you won’t have any blood on your hands.

Do you want to know one good way to do things? The way I used to do it was to take my kids with me. I involved them in the ministry. My daughter would sing when she was only twelve years old. My son would take care of tapes and sell books. He was barely big enough to see over the table, but he'd be handing people tapes. Make them a part of what you're doing so that they don't resent the ministry; they're part of the ministry. Let them understand how important their lives are, and then you won't end up like Eli, with children fornicating in the temple because you had no control over them.

We begin to see how awesome this responsibility is. If you can't rule your home (if your wife is not submissive, if your children are not obedient, if you're not loving your family), then you have no business overseeing the church. Does your family say, "Dad's always gone," or "My husband is always going and preaching somewhere," and do you respond, "What's wrong with you? You ought to give your life for the Lord. You ought to give up and realize that we've got to give our lives for God"? Well, giving your life is submitting to His lordship, and the Lord said to love your wife. The Lord said to teach your children. The Lord said to rule your home. That doesn't mean just to give commands and leave. If we rule our homes well, we're fit to oversee the house of God. *"Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 6," Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday PM*

# The Servant's Heart

*"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11)*

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There's a spirit that's imbibed. I want to tell you something. My wife is the way she is because of her mother and her mother's mother, and it's gone to my daughter, and it will be found in her daughters. Can you thank God for the holy seed? Your children and your grandchildren are going to be what you are. They're going to be just as selfish as you are, just as manipulative as you are, and just as non-forgiving and compromising as you are, because you reap what you sow. What we're talking about here, beloved, is not just the immediate conflict that some of you find yourselves in, but what spirit you are bringing into the next generation. Are you showing them how to live?

Spiritual maturity is being able to serve. The greatest of all is the servant of all. Janet has been very ill these last eight or nine months, battling some stuff that is kind of new. For her to get up in the morning, just to get out of bed, is a chore. She doesn't just get out of bed in the morning. If the grandbabies are there, she gets out of bed and before she eats or does anything else, those babies are taken care of. They're fed and everybody else is taken care of.

We were at the races one day, a while back. It was kind of humorous. We were working on the cars when I looked down and saw Janet coming across the parking lot with boxes and bags, carrying everybody else's food. She brought food because she was concerned.

Everybody had to get something to eat. I wasn't taken up with whether or not anybody ate, but there she was. She looked like a pack mule coming across the parking lot—the greatest among us.

“I'm so tired; I'm so weak. Would somebody run and get this for me, and would somebody do that for me? Please help me!” She has never acted like that, but models the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christlikeness. She can't help herself; she has to serve other people. What's that all about? “Look not every man on his own thing, but every man also on the things of others.”

During the years of our real popularity, we could have gone national or international with the ministry. At that particular time, you'd be surprised how many times Janet was asked to come speak at women's meetings. The perception at that time was that the preacher's wife should preach and teach and do all her stuff. Some were genuinely called, and for others it was a fad of team teaching, and there was no call on the lives of those individuals. They were just doing it because it was the fad. I've even had people ask me, “Well, why is it that your wife doesn't minister or doesn't want to minister?” I thought, “Dude, you don't have a clue what ministry is!” The fact that she doesn't get up here and parrot somebody else's teaching tape has nothing to do with ministry. Ministry is esteeming others better than yourself and looking to others, not vaunting yourself or wanting equal pulpit rights. “*A House Divided, Pt. 2,*” March 11, 2001, Sunday PM

# Praying For Family Holiness

*“And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”*

(Job 1:5)

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I pray a lot for my children, especially as they’re older now, in these areas of coming to know why God has placed them as He has and who they are. God sovereignly put them into a family order. I pray that there would be the awareness and the fulfillment of whatever the call might be. I pray for their contentment in the areas of whatever their call and gifts are, that they would be at peace in who they are. My family situation is somewhat unique.

These are some of the practical things that I pray for the kids, to experience in their lives, and that it would work. Those are things that I try to pray about, but as a rule, I pray in great generality. I pray principles because I really believe that God has a better grasp than I do on what’s going on and what they need. I pray a lot for them in the Spirit and with groanings that can’t be uttered. If I can step back from my own prejudices and pray for them in the Spirit, it’s going to benefit them more.

I thought it was humorous when Ronnie shared about one of the pastors in Africa really getting upset with him and Tera because Tera wouldn’t come up and preach in the church. She said, “I don’t want to,” and Ron said, “She doesn’t want to.” They said, “She needs to come up and give us a word.” He said, “No, she doesn’t want to!” It’s understanding, from the ministry aspect, how the wife fits. She isn’t

called; I'm called. She doesn't have to answer to the same things I'm answering to. My wife is not Mrs. Pastor. She's Mrs. Scott. She's my helpmeet, not yours. I pray that they would understand that role, because those are things they've had to go through over the years. "*Pray With Purpose*," Panel Discussion, January 17, 2001, Wednesday PM

# Follow Me As I Follow Christ

*“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)*

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The more I obey, the more I want to obey. The clearer I can see, the freer I am from the appetite of sin in my members. We’re purified by obeying the truth, the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit unto unfeigned love. I begin to live for others and serve others. I’m more concerned with others’ edification than my own. I’m not preoccupied with self. I now realize that as a holy individual, a living stone, I’ve been placed here not for my worth, not for what I get out of it, but as a vessel so that I can contribute to others. I’ve become an instrument to edify others, to encourage others, to be an example of the believer.

There is a lot of talk in the world today about role models. People say, “I don’t want to be a role model. I just want to be famous and have lots of money. I don’t want to be responsible for my own actions.” That’s the exact opposite of what the church is. The apostle says, “Be followers of me. Follow me as I follow Christ.” Be followers of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises of God. *“The Real Holiness,” July 29, 2001, Sunday PM*

It is our responsibility to set a course. Can I ask you a question? How many of you are confident enough to turn to people in your congregation, to your wife and children, and say, “If you follow me, you’ll get to heaven. If you do what I do, you’ll get to heaven. If you think what I think, if your heart is full of the same treasures as my heart, you’re going to get to heaven”? That’s what we need to do. Until we can say with confidence, “Follow me as I follow

Christ,” we are not properly representing our Head, Jesus. We need to examine our hearts and ask ourselves, “Am I really doing my job? Am I representing His lordship?” *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 1,” Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

Through the purifying of our souls, we begin to love one another and become role models who can say, “If you follow me, you’re going to make it to heaven.” What a responsibility. “I don’t want that responsibility!” That’s what God has called you to do, and then He gives you the grace and the strength to do it. Does that mean we’re going to be perfect and never fail? Of course not, but we’re able to do what? We’re able to comfort with the same comfort wherewith we’ve been comforted. You say, “I know what you’re going through, man! Yeah, I fight the same battles. I have the same problems with pride, jealousy, selfishness, and slothfulness,” or whatever it might be that you’re battling in your life. We’re all the same. Nobody here is free from the temptations and the “humanity” that we have from our father, Adam. Here we are, all battling in the same war, warring against all this ugliness in our flesh. We need each other. The Scripture says we are to lift up the hands that are hanging down, to comfort the feeble-minded.” *“The Real Holiness,” July 29, 2001, Sunday PM*

# The True Man Of God Is Blameless

*“A bishop then must be blameless....” (1 Timothy 3:2)*

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In English, “blameless” means you’ve never done anything wrong. I’d have to leave right now, because I’ve made a bunch of mistakes. Even since becoming a Christian, I’ve made mistakes and have sinned. Even since becoming a pastor, I’ve made mistakes and sinned. We make mistakes; we’re not blameless, but that’s not what the Greek word means.

In the Greek, the word “blameless” is a very interesting word. It means “one that cannot be laid hold upon.” What do you mean? What’s that got to do with anything? There’s another definition. It means “irreproachable.” In other words, a reproach is not being brought on the ministry by our lives. The word “reproach” means “accusation.” In other words, nobody can accuse you of doing wrong, of cheating others, of cheating on your wife. No one can accuse you of using worldly methods to bring the gospel. You’re blameless. No one can lay hold on you.

Another meaning is that no one can censor you. Do you know what it means to “censor” somebody? It means to shut you up. In other words, nobody has anything against you that he can bring out to shut you up. There are no hidden things that, if anybody found out, could shut you up. If those hidden things are there, ultimately they’re going to come out, and a reproach is going to be brought on the gospel. Then everybody’s going to say, “I knew it! Those Christians are no different than anybody else, especially those preachers. They’re the biggest liars of all.” That’s what the world says about us. “Why would they

say that? That's not nice." Probably because there's a lot of truth in it. I'm not talking about the true church. I'm talking about everybody that says he's a Christian and everybody that says he's a preacher, but brings a reproach. The true man of God is blameless. "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 6,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday PM*

# Holding To The Standard Of Perfection

*“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints...”*

(Ephesians 4:11-12)

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Pastors and teachers have some gifts in common. Evangelists and pastors have some gifts in common. Apostles and prophets have some gifts and responsibilities in common, but this is what all five have in common: these gifts were given by Jesus, number one, “for the perfecting of the saints.” If your ministry has a standard lower than perfection, then God didn’t send you. I’ll say it again. If your ministry has a standard lower than perfection, then God did not send you; you’re not His servant. If you have man’s standards and not God’s, Scripture makes it very clear what you’re trusting in. The wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

Let me just share something with you about the wisdom of God. We all know that the wisdom of man is foolishness to God, but the wisdom of God is also foolishness to man. The Bible says that the carnal mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. Carnal thinking is that which doesn’t originate in the heart of God. I want you to hear something very clearly, because this will help you when I talk about “perfecting the saints.” Just because something is good, doesn’t mean it’s God! We mistake morality and humanitarianism for Christianity, and they’re not one and the same. They are two different kingdoms running parallel to each other.

We know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We also understand that there’s a wisdom that came from the fruit in the midst of the Garden, which was knowledge of good and evil. What was it that caused Adam and Eve to partake of that fruit? Listen to

what was said: “Eat that fruit. In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. You’ll have the ability to know good from evil.” The warfare being dealt with in the Garden was between absolute dependence on God and independence (what we know, how we can apply truth and laws, etc.). I used the words “independence” and “dependence.” This is what we’re trying to do in perfecting our people: to make them totally dependent upon God. This is important because this is the original sin. Do you want to know what the definition of true humility is? True humility is absolute dependence upon God. “*Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 1,*” *Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday PM*

What was it that the Lord was trying to speak to His people and prepare us for in this hour? There is a remnant throughout the world of the true church of Jesus Christ. This highway of holiness that we’re walking on is a straight gate and a narrow way. There are a lot of professed “preachers,” but very few holy men that are called of God. When we talk about holy, it’s those that are set apart for God. I don’t just mean that you’re working for God; I mean that God is your only source. The deception in the minds of so many people is that America is the answer. America is not the answer; God is the answer. Amen? If you’re going to be the shepherds after God’s own heart, the lordship of Jesus Christ is what you’re going to have to infuse into the hearts of the people in your congregations. They’re going to have to see that they’re not an inferior people. They are a holy people, a peculiar people, that are set apart to bring praise to God through lives that are holy. “*Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 4,*” *Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday AM*

# Nothing More Frightening Than Perfection

*“But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.”*

(Jeremiah 1:7-8)

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I read in Jeremiah that if I fear men’s faces, I will be confounded before them. Do you know what Jeremiah, Chapter one, says? When God sent him forth to preach, he said, “I can’t go out there. I’m a child; I can’t speak.” God said, “I have sent you,” then He put the coal on Jeremiah’s lips to sanctify them and sent him forth. Then he preached the Word as a hammer that broke the rock in pieces—fearful in the beginning, invincible in the end.

There’s nothing more frightening than talking to your church about being perfect. Do you know why? A lot of them may not like that standard. They’ll go down the street to the other church where the standards aren’t so high—which means your offerings have gone down, so now you have to eat fewer beans. Now the perception of your worth has gone down in the community. You used to have a big church of one hundred, and now you’ve got twenty-five. “You know what? There must be sin in that church!” becomes the gossip of the neighborhood. “That’s why they’re not growing. If they were a biblical church, God would be blessing them.” “I’ve got to keep these people here. I’ve got to keep them happy. I know what the Bible says about that area, but I’m just going to have to tone it down a little bit.”

As we make a stand—not on our emotions, but on the declared will of God—we can speak, and it doesn’t matter what anybody has to say.

What I could not do with thirty thousand people I can now do with three hundred. Is that the message of Gideon? Then let's raise the standard in our churches to perfection. Let's start looking for the people. I'm looking for three hundred warriors. I'm looking for three hundred people who aren't afraid of what men can do to them, three hundred young Davids who'll take a stone and go forth, not in the world's methods of Saul with his armor. "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 1,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

# Laying Your Life Down For The Sheep

*“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”*

(John 10:11)

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We’re talking about shepherding God’s flock and what our job is, your responsibility and mine. The Scripture says that the Good Shepherd does something. What is it? What is one of the first things we have to do? Lay down our lives for the sheep. Does that mean we’re supposed to do everything for the people? That is not what that means. Laying down your life for the sheep means that you do what is not natural: you’re willing to die to yourself. You’re willing to have people get upset. You’re willing to have people misunderstand. You’re willing to have the sheep maybe even say among themselves periodically, “I don’t know if he has us on a good path today or not. What do you think?” Can you see some sheep walking along and saying, “I don’t know.... I don’t see anything to eat. Do you?” “Well, I don’t know.” “Does anybody see any water?”

The shepherd knows where he is going. He knows where the still waters are. He knows where the green pastures are. Once you begin to show your people that you know where God is and you know how to access the presence and the power of God, they’ll follow you. Do you want to know what it means to lay your life down for the sheep? It means that you need to start dying to yourself and stop making life easy on yourself. Your prayer, your study, and your application of the Word of God begin to build confidence in the peoples’ hearts.

When you read these Scriptures, you begin to see what your responsibility is in putting the house of God in order. I may have gotten some of you in trouble. You're going to go back and say, "Praise God, I've studied and that's the Word," and your people are going to put a knot on your head, but don't faint! Don't fear their faces. Love them better than you love yourself. Be a good shepherd; die to self for the flock, and God will honor you. "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 4,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday AM*

# Lead Your People To Holiness

*“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12)*

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Your responsibility is to perfect the saints. That word “perfect” means “to be brought to completion or maturity.” It’s not the false doctrine of sinless perfection. Some of you may have heard that. Over the years there have been groups that have taught the doctrine of sinless perfection. They teach that there is a second work of grace, and that, from that moment of “sanctification,” they never sin again. “I am sanctified and from that moment on, I never will sin again.” Well, you just sinned by saying that because now you’re lying! I could follow you for fifteen minutes and catch you sinning. This doctrine of sinless perfection was created because of a misunderstanding of biblical sanctification. Sanctification is a process. They wanted to be sanctified. Their motives were right. They wanted to be holy before God, but their methods were wrong. They didn’t understand sanctification. Sanctification is not an instantaneous work; it’s a process. We’re being sanctified and will be sanctified until we’re glorified. At that moment—then and only then—sin is no longer a power or force in our members that we have to contend with.

When I say “perfection,” don’t think that I’m saying the people in our churches have to be perfect in a sinless manner. They have to be perfect in their pursuits. A “perfect” man is one who is perfectly pursuing God. It doesn’t matter where he is on the scale of our perceived holiness—and we all have those scales. What you think is holy might be different from what I think is holy. We call

that “conscience.” You need to realize that conscience is a whole different subject than holiness. We have liberty in our consciences. We can all be led into different areas of conscience, but we’re all static, or the same, in our perception of holiness. It’s the same standard for everybody.

Let me define holiness for you. “Holiness” is a term that you’re very familiar with, and it has to do with all of the Old Testament types of consecration: the utensils of worship that were consecrated, the table of shewbread, the laver that they washed their hands in, and the altar of incense. These things were “consecrated,” or “holy.” The word means “set apart for God only.” In other words, the spoon that you dipped in the incense at the temple can’t be taken home to eat with; it’s only for God.

God has called you to lead your people to holiness. Our job is to get them to see that they are only for God, not for the world, not to make a better living, not to provide for their children to go to college, but to make sure that their household is only for God. For us as pastors, this is not an easy job. Even though people may be regenerated, new creatures, there’s still that gravitation toward the world because of the sin that’s in our members. Every one of us is drawn into the world. Every one of us wants life easier on our flesh. Every one of us has physical appetites that we want to pursue. “Lust” means “the inability to control,” and “an uncontrollable appetite.” All that’s in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. That’s what we’re warring in our churches. Every time you stand up to preach the gospel, you’re warring against those three things that are in the church: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 1,” Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

# Requiring A Holy Life

*“...Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine....”* (Ephesians 4:13-14)

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We have a few people telling everybody, “You need to grow up!” It isn’t done in a harsh way, but in the biblical demand that says, “Look, God has called us to perfection.” Many of these things that you keep bothering people with, you need to be praying about. You need to be studying for yourself, to show yourself a workman that needeth not be ashamed. It’s not written just to Timothy.

He says we’re to minister in this way: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth [this is very important] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (verses 13-15). Beloved, this is the requirement, so when a visiting pastor comes to town and starts pushing people down, mimicking the work of the Holy Spirit, your congregation doesn’t think that’s what you’re supposed to do. When an evangelist comes to town and tells your people that everybody in the church is supposed to be rich, you’ve established enough of a doctrine that they’re not tossed to and fro, and they understand the Scriptures because you’re requiring of them a holy life. It’s very important that we understand these things. If we don’t—Listen! I’m talking to you as pastors—the blood is going to be on your hands. We are the watchmen who stand and declare the sword of the

Lord, or the judgment, that is at hand! If we don't declare what false doctrine can do in the lives of the congregation and in the lives of brothers and sisters in the ministry, then the blood is going to be on our hands.

If we're going to protect people from false doctrine, then we need to have sound doctrine, don't we? Do you know what I'd like to encourage some of you to do? You'll think this is strange. One of your jobs is to make your church as small as you can get it. It's a straight path, and few there be that find it. It's very unusual to have large—and "large" is relative—organizations without mingled seed. It's very difficult.

The thing that will protect you as an overseer, as your ministry grows and gets larger, is the standard that you keep. I would much rather have a large church of perfect people than a small church of perfect people; but I'd also rather have a small church of perfect people than a large church of carnal people. You can get more done with Gideon's three hundred. Send the fearful ones home, and let's go to battle! If God is for us, who can be against us? I shared with you, practically, one of the things we experienced at home. We lost a thousand people in a very short period of time, and our income went up—and we doubled our missions giving! That tells me that all of those people were parasites. Study the Scriptures and see if God doesn't refine and try to reduce to the lowest common denominator of righteousness. Let's stop being seduced by the world's standard of success into thinking that "more" or "big" is better. Holy is better. Mighty is better. "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 1,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

# Sheep On Steroids

*“That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” (1 Corinthians 12:25)*

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Corinthians says the church is to have the same care one for another. The church is to be interwoven to where they are supporting and lifting up the hands that hang down and encouraging one another. It’s your job to train them and feed them so they are not fearful and they are not dismayed and they are not lacking. How healthy is your flock?

Do any of you know what steroids are? A steroid is a substance that athletes and body builders use to make their muscles grow much faster than normal. Our congregation is sheep on steroids. If a wolf comes into our flock, our sheep can kill it, because they are stronger than wolves. Those are the kind of sheep we need to start raising. If a wolf comes into our flock, it’s dangerous. Do you know that every time there are visitors, they cannot leave without people coming around and saying, “Hey, how are you doing?” and trying to minister to them? They will bring them sound doctrine. If they see someone out of order, they will reprove him, rebuke him, and instruct him in righteousness. You don’t even want to step out of line in our church. Those folks will jump you, jealous for the gospel and for the holiness of God. I love it; I love our people. It is a great place to be. They love God, and they love the Word of God. If you’re a preacher, they’ll wear you out. They will sit and listen and take notes until you collapse. *“Shepherds After God’s Own Heart, Pt. 4,” Africa Missions Trip, August 10, 2001, Friday AM*

## Find Your Young Timothy

*“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

(2 Timothy 2:2)

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That’s what we’re really supposed to be doing in each one of our ministries: finding faithful men that we can pour our lives into. Isn’t that what Jesus did? He found twelve and emptied Himself into them. He did minister to the masses periodically, but His life was given to twelve men who turned the world upside down. That’s the principle that God has called us to walk in. You see it when Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, came to him and said, “You’re wearing out yourself and the people.” How many of you remember that? Moses was doing everything. He was hearing all the problems in the church, and he was giving the counsel. The Scripture says that from morning until evening, he sat and heard all of these different problems. Jethro said, “This isn’t wise.” What did they do? They chose out an eldership, men who were full of the Holy Ghost who could begin to oversee this. Then Moses said, “Bring the difficult matters to me.” This is the wisdom of God.

We see it flowing into the New Testament, don’t we? When the church began to grow beyond the apostolic oversight, the individual oversight, what happened? They began to choose out men full of the Holy Ghost whom they ordained as deacons. We want to talk a little bit about our role in building the church. What is your responsibility as the gift of God—called of God and placed, as the Scripture says, as it pleased Him? The first responsibility you have is to find people among you that are faithful, that you can begin to commit to, and who are able to teach others also. You need to find your young Timothy, your sons

in the faith. You need to find the aged men that are wise, that you can count on. Your ministry will never grow beyond the foundation that you build in finding faithful men, in pouring your life into them to assume the ministry. The reason most of us don't do that is because we're so afraid and insecure that they might become better than we are. I have people on my staff that are better than I am in all kinds of areas. If they weren't, they wouldn't be on my staff. I wouldn't need them if I could do it myself. What is our standard, the standard for all of us? The perfecting of the saints. The standard for your church is perfection—nothing else can be tolerated—perfect in pursuit, hearts that are perfect in panting after God. *“Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 1,” Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

# Perfecting Your Men In The Mundane

*“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” (Acts 6:2)*

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Don't let your deacons be limited to mundane tasks. Bring them to the place where they can begin to counsel with the Word of God. Bring them to the place where they can begin to speak wisdom into hearts, just as Moses was able to use those elders so that he didn't have to deal with every issue. We've trained our deacons at home to the point where every one of our deacons could pastor a church with no problem; but they're not called to that. You don't graduate from deacon to elder. It's not a promotion. There's nothing inferior about the office of deacon if that is where God has placed you. We see one evolution of it, don't we? Who was a deacon that became a five-fold ministry gift? Philip, the evangelist. We realize that God can reach in and touch one of these hearts and move them into a five-fold ministry position. Primarily, though, they're serving the local church, waiting on the tables.

Somebody in the church is in need of prayer; they're physically sick, and they're in need of prayer. Do you call the pastor? You have a need. The Scripture says if you're sick to call on the elders of the church, right? They can anoint you with oil. You can call, because this is a true ministry of eldership.

What if I have need of food? “We don't have any food.” Do I call the pastor? Whom do I call? I call a deacon, and I say, “We're in a situation here. We don't have food; we don't have provision.” This man then prayerfully represents this need to the overseers—the mundane things. What about counseling? What about marital prob-

lems? What about all of the other things that are involved in ministry? The ministry belongs to the church.

Listen. If you don't hear anything else, understand this: God is calling you to perfect men so you don't have to do many of those things that you're spending your time doing now. This is so that you can pray and study to bring a more in-depth word to your people, to stand before them, and to expect of them a greater degree of holiness. "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 1,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday AM*

## Will Your Ministry Die With You?

*“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Deuteronomy 34:9)*

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As the man of God looking for these Timothy's, look for faithful men, not talented men. The requirement of a steward, the Scripture says, is that he be found what? Faithful. That is the greatest quality in serving. The man of God is looking across the congregations and in his travels for men that are faithful. Faithful to what? Well, Elisha wasn't looking for a position. He was just pouring water over the hands of the prophet, and yet the mantle fell on him. You never know whom the mantle will fall on. You don't just pour water to get the mantle. You pour water because you're a servant. Then God chooses whom He's going to ordain and raise to another capacity, but every one of us needs to have a servant's heart.

The necessity of choosing a Timothy is seen in the lives of Moses and Joshua. Somebody had to carry on the vision and get the people to the Promised Land. If you have a heart as a man of God for your flock, it's not enough for you just to teach them, instruct them, provide for them, and then die, leaving the church without any oversight. Paul said, “I have no one else that I can commend to you that has the same faith and the same heart as my son, Timothy.”

That's what it's all about, being able to commend to another generation and say, “Even when I'm gone, this is the gift of God still working in your lives.” It was taken from Moses and conferred

upon Joshua. Hands were laid upon Timothy by the presbytery; gifts were given to him by prophecy of the apostle, and it carried on. Is your ministry going to die with you, or do you have someone that's being raised up to lead that next generation into the Promised Land? "*Shepherds After God's Own Heart, Pt. 3,*" *Africa Missions Trip, August 9, 2001, Thursday PM*