

LESSON FOUR

THE PASTOR'S TRAINING

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15).

There is no short cut to success. If the young prospective minister desires to be at his best for Jesus, and to be a success as a soul winner, he must be prepared to work hard, and to study much that he might measure up to what the ministry demands of him. The young man entering the ministry should be willing and ready to devote his whole life to diligent study of God's Word that he might become a workman who will not be ashamed. Needless to say that if he is unable to rightly divide the word of truth, there will be many times that he will be ashamed: ashamed of his own poor workmanship, lack of knowledge and inability. There is no easy road to success. Much prayer, study and hard work alone can insure the minister that he need never be ashamed.

A. THE PASTOR'S TRAINING BEGINS IN HIS HOME CHURCH.

The starting point for any young minister after his call into the ministry is in his own local church, and sitting under the teaching of his own pastor. He should purpose in his heart never to miss a service, and especially Bible Study and Prayer Meeting should always find him in his place. He should always be punctual. He should always keep a teachable attitude and be willing to occupy a humble place in the church until such time when he is ready for advancement and promotion in the church. He should do what ever his hands find to do willingly and with a spirit of humility as unto the Lord. Promotion and responsibility in the church should come slowly. Too rapid promotion for the young Christian can later be detrimental to his usefulness to Christ.

The young minister must remember that one day he will be the pastor of a church and will be teaching others. Therefore, he must maintain the same spirit towards his pastor, as he will expect from his own young people in years to come. If he cannot be taught, he immediately disqualifies himself from being able to teach others. Certainly the first step towards his training as a minister will be to sit at the feet of his own pastor, and with humility and respect learn from the man of God. Not only should he faithfully attend all Bible classes but he should seek out his pastor for spiritual counseling. There will be much he may learn in private discussions with the man who is his shepherd.

B. THE PASTOR SHOULD ATTEND A SPIRITUAL PENTECOSTAL BIBLE COLLEGE.

After he has been proven in his home church for a few years, there will come a time when the young worker will desire to attend Bible School. In Pentecostal ranks in years gone by, there has been opposition to Bible School training, but more and more is growing the realization that God is blessing our Bible Schools. One simply cannot be too well prepared to be at his best for the Master.

A Bible School training cannot and does not make the preacher. God alone makes the preacher, giving him a special call, ministry and message. Bible School training does not make a soul winner. Bible School is only the means of training but the final result rests with the individual

and God. In other words Bible School training is only the means towards an end and not the end itself. Bible School training does develop talents that may be otherwise unused, help students to know their calling, prepare and train students for lives of greater usefulness.

God has used countless numbers of individuals who have had little or no training. Nevertheless the fact still remains that God can use and does use training and ability when it is dedicated to Him. There are two outstanding examples of this in the Bible: Moses and Paul. Moses received all the learning the world had to offer in his day, as he was forty years in Pharaoh's palace, and still God had to teach him for another forty years out in the desert. Paul who was a learned man, had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and after his conversion went into Arabia where he apparently learned many things from the Lord.

Education is never a liability when it is kept dedicated. There is an explosion of knowledge in the world, and the wise pastor endeavors to prepare himself as best as possible to deal intelligently with men and women in all walks of life.

C. THE PASTOR MAY ENROLL IN A CORRESPONDENCE BIBLE COURSE.

There are some young men who are converted and receive their call into the ministry after they are married and have the responsibility of a home and family. Others may have heavy financial obligations that they have to meet which were contracted before their call into the ministry. In these cases it is impossible for them to enroll in a Bible College.

The alternative is for the man preparing for the ministry to enroll in a Correspondence Bible Course. This should be a Pentecostal Bible Course. Before the Student enrolls in such a course he should consult his pastor and have it endorsed by his pastor.

As soon as he enrolls he should place himself upon a regular timetable and follow it faithfully. If he becomes careless in his studies, he will soon lose interest. His interest will be maintained if he keeps his studies to a regular time each week. The self-discipline needed is in itself good training and fine preparation for the ministry.

D. POSSIBLY THE BEST SCHOOL FOR A MINISTRY IS THAT OF EXPERIENCE.

Possibly the best source of training is personal experience. This is the best teacher for what is learned through experience is certainly remembered. After all, knowledge and wisdom come either through personal experience or the experience of others. Much knowledge may be gained at a school but wisdom which is knowing how to use that knowledge, comes mainly either directly from God through inspiration, or through personal experience. It will not be long before the young convert will have ways and means open to him for doing something for the Lord: testifying, praying at the altar, teaching in Sunday School, playing in the orchestra, singing in the choir, acting as an usher, taking part at street services or house to house visitation, etc., and his experience will have begun as a soul winner. His part is to do everything as unto the Lord, faithfully and humbly, and willing to be directed by those over him in the Lord.

Although the school of experience is most profitable, one must remember that it is the school of "hard knocks" and there may be some bitter experiences that come with it. One must never be fearful of making mistakes. However, he must be willing to acknowledge mistakes and profit from them. A mistake need never be repeated.

There are many aspects to the ministry that the young minister can only learn by doing. Like swimming, riding a bicycle, playing the piano, a person only learns by doing. Therefore the young pastor should take advantage of every opportunity to be active and gain experience.

E. THE PASTOR'S TRAINING IS NEVER COMPLETED.

It should be clearly understood that the pastor's training is never completed. When he graduates from Bible School and assumes the responsibility of a pastorate, his training is actually only beginning. His study and training continue on throughout his ministry until the Lord is pleased to call him home to higher service.

No matter how many years of experience a pastor may have, there will be constantly new experiences and problems that will arise almost daily. Each of these new experiences and problems will be a school of learning to the dedicated minister of the gospel. Apart from this he must be a constant student of the conditions in a changing world. Only as he applies himself as a student can he hope to keep abreast of current events.

His entire ministry will prove to be one continuous school of training for him. This will never be completed until he is called to higher service.

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

A. State FOUR ways in which a prospective minister may receive his training:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

B. Explain the difference between "wisdom" and "knowledge" as far as the ministry is concerned.

C. Write a short paragraph explaining how a young minister may gain experience.

D. What should the minister's attitude be towards the possibility of making mistakes?