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EXPOSITORY PREACHING THROUGH THE BOOK OF  
1 CORINTHIANS AS A MEANS OF FORMATIVE  
CHURCH DISCIPLINE AT LEBANON BAPTIST  
CHURCH, TALBOTT, TENNESSEE

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by  
Todd Jeremy Stinnett  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

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1 CORINTHIANS AS A MEANS OF FORMATIVE  
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## PREFACE

I could not have completed this project without the help and encouragement of many. First, I want to thank my wife, Charisma. Her name means “gift of grace.” What an amazing gift she has proven to be. She is a wonderful wife and my best friend. I thank God for her and the six wonderful children He has given us.

Second, I want to thank my mom and dad for providing me the opportunity to complete my education. Neither of them had the privilege of education past high school, but they labored tirelessly so that my brother and I could pursue our educational dreams. They are the embodiment of hard work and loving sacrifice.

Third, I want to thank the church families of Grace Baptist Church, Morristown, Tennessee, and Lebanon Baptist Church, Talbott, Tennessee. My project began at Grace and ended at Lebanon. Without their prayers and participation, my project would have never been completed.

Fourth, I want to thank Betsy Fredrick. Without her careful proofreading, my work would have been filled with style errors and silly mistakes. She is a godsend.

Finally, I want to thank my Heavenly Father. Apart from His power, I would not be alive. Apart from His Son, I would not be saved. Apart from His Spirit, I would not be conformed to the image of my Savior. “From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord’s name is to be praised” (Ps 113:3).

Todd J. Stinnett

Talbott, Tennessee

December 2013

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to utilize expository preaching through the book of 1 Corinthians as a means of formative church discipline at Lebanon Baptist Church in Talbott, Tennessee.

#### **Goals**

This project intended to accomplish four goals that served as the criteria by which evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the project was made. The first goal was to increase the congregation's understanding of the problems that existed at the church in Corinth during the first century. The primary means of achieving an increased understanding was through the expository preaching of God's Word. The texts to be preached were selected after a careful study of the book of 1 Corinthians. I selected those passages that dealt primarily with the challenges and problems that the church at Corinth faced after I studied the literary and historical context of the book.

I identified, explained, and expounded the Corinthian problems through the means of preaching. I also appointed a focus group comprised of some of the church's most committed members that were charged with a more extensive investigation of those problems. Each member of the focus group had his or her knowledge of the Corinthian struggles evaluated both before and after each message through a questionnaire.

The second goal was to identify any particular areas of the church's ministry that might head toward problems similar to those experienced at Corinth. Once again, the focus group helped in making some of these determinations. Each member of the focus

group responded to another questionnaire following each of the expository messages. This questionnaire aided the focus group participants in identifying any potential areas of adversity in the life of the church.

The third goal of the project was to determine and implement any actions steps that may have been needed to prevent the Corinthian problems from becoming our own. For instance, if the focus group had determined that there was a possible problem with one church member suing another after the preaching of 1 Corinthians 6, then we identified action steps and implemented them in an attempt to prevent the problem. Rather than asking the focus group to complete another questionnaire, I encouraged them to dialogue openly with me about what steps to take to prevent a repeat of the Corinthian sins. A recording secretary noted actions steps determined by the focus group. It was the responsibility of both the pastor and the focus group to work together to determine when and how to implement all action steps into the life of the local church.

The fourth goal was to increase the overall clarity and effectiveness of application within my expository preaching ministry. The focus group served as the team of evaluators who helped to determine the aforementioned clarity and effectiveness of application within my preaching. Each of the group members received an evaluation form at the beginning of every message. Once they completed the evaluation, I asked members of the focus group to share with me any thoughts they deemed appropriate to the improvement of application within my preaching. Because this was one of the goals of the project, not only did the church benefit, but I hoped to benefit as well.

### **Ministry Context**

In order to understand the value of this project, one needs to know something about its context. First is a discussion of the geographical context.

### **Geographical Context**

Lebanon Baptist Church is located in Talbott, Tennessee, in the beautiful East



Tennessee Valley. The population of Talbott is 8,762. Of those 8,762, 96.3 percent are white, and the remaining 3.7 percent are black, American Indian, Asian, or Hispanic. 49.8 of the population is male and 50.2 percent of the population is female. The median age in Talbott is 36.7, making it a fairly young community. Of those residing in the area, 36.8 percent are high-school graduates, 24.4 percent have some college training, 11.2 percent have a college degree, and 6.8 percent have at least some graduate education. Only one in every five (20.8 percent) have never completed high school.<sup>1</sup>

There are a variety of household income levels present within the Talbott community. Households earning \$50,000 or less make up 55.3 percent of the community, 33.8 percent earn between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and the remaining 10.9 percent earn more than \$100,000. The median household income is \$45,482. Financially speaking, Talbott could be described as a working-class community. Yet, Talbott is a melting pot of folks from all walks of life. Much of that probably has to do with the fact that the north end of the community runs against Cherokee Lake—one of the largest reservoirs in East Tennessee. There is quite a bit of premium real estate on the lake. Lebanon Baptist Church is situated on the lake in a section of the community affectionately called “church cove.”<sup>2</sup>

Within just a 10 minute drive of the church, no less than four different demographic groups can be identified. The most dominant group is classified as “Metro Fringe (MF).” This particular group makes up about one in every ten (10.63 percent) of all American households. MF is “a collection of five racially-mixed, lower-middle-class types.”<sup>3</sup> Many of the group’s households consist of young singles and couples who work

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<sup>1</sup>Demographic information provided by the Tennessee Baptist Convention based on the Talbott, TN, 37877. Report provided from Scan/US June 1, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

at blue-collar and service industry jobs. Overall, this group is relatively active and pursues sports-oriented lifestyles. As shoppers, they patronize discount retailers where they can buy the latest fashions and tech gear at low prices. At home, they are fans of electronic media: watching youth-oriented cable channels, perusing chat forums, surfing social-media sites, etc.

A second dominant group within the church's demographic is "Upscale America" (UA). This group makes up 13.26 percent of all American homes and is comprised of "mainly-white, college-educated couples and families living in the metropolitan sprawl."<sup>4</sup> Most UA adults work as executives and white-collar professionals. Their upscale incomes often provide them with large homes and comfortable lifestyles. UAs like to spend their time getting exercise and are commonly members of business clubs, environmental groups, and arts associations. They are selective media fans that prefer magazines and cable TV channels that cover business, fashion, and the arts.

A third group found in Talbott can be classified as "Affluent Suburbia" (AS). This group makes up 11.19 percent of all American homes and is set apart from UA in that its members comprise "the wealthiest households in the nation."<sup>5</sup> Concentrated in exclusive suburban neighborhoods, these households are predominantly white, college-educated, and filled with Baby Boom parents and their children. AS adults and their families enjoy "the good life" in fashionable houses outfitted with the latest technology. They drive luxury cars, belong to country clubs, travel abroad, and relax by sailing, skiing, and golfing. Their high incomes also afford them opportunities to attend the theater, the symphony, and various other artistic outlets. As one might imagine, their interests often include money management, computers, and gourmet foods.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

A final group common to the Talbott community is “Small-Town Contentment” (STC). STC makes up 7.64 percent of all American households and represents “the nation’s middle-aged, upper-middle-class families living in small towns and satellite cities.”<sup>6</sup> STCs share moderate educations and a mix of well-paying jobs in white-collar, blue-collar, and service professions. This group enjoys outdoor sports like hiking, fishing, and camping. STCs tend to have varied media tastes: television, music, magazines, etc. They are active internet users who go online for instant messaging, exchanging email, and getting the latest sports scores and news.

Simply stated, Talbott is an eclectic mix of white-collar and blue-collar residents. There are million-dollar lakefront homes within just miles (or even yards) of family farms and subdivisions. This combination of residents makes Lebanon Baptist Church a unique mix of “haves,” “have-nots,” and everything in between. Located in a more rural section of the community, Lebanon is a church that typically operates with the professionalism of many city churches, while maintaining the family atmosphere of a small, country church. Truly, I can say it is like no other church I have ever served.

### **Ecclesiastical Context**

Having considered the geographical context, it also aids the reader to know something of the ecclesiastical context of this project. In the late 1800s, the leadership of Mossy Creek Baptist Church (now First Baptist Jefferson City, Tennessee) indicated a desire to plant a church in the Greenbriar community of what is now called Talbott.<sup>7</sup> In 1880, Jesse Baker, pastor of Mossy Creek, preached in the Greenbriar Schoolhouse, one mile from the church’s present location. On February 19, 1882, the church officially organized as “The Church of Jesus Christ at Lebanon.” On that day, 2 people were

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ecclesiastical information was gathered from the unpublished historical archives located in the library of Lebanon Baptist Church.

baptized and 10 other names were recorded as the first members of the church.

The church met in the old Greenbriar Schoolhouse until 1898. About that time, the church obtained a parcel of land from the Hull family for \$25. The land was used to erect the church's first building—a white frame structure with green shutters that was dedicated in 1899. In 1937, that building was declared unsafe and was torn down. A new white frame church was built at that same location, but it was destroyed in a fire on a cold December morning in 1953.

Bryan Putnam, a recent graduate of nearby Carson-Newman College and the church's new pastor, dropped out of seminary and helped to rebuild the church. In the process, he became the church's first full-time pastor. Construction began on the new building in April of 1954 and was completed in July of 1954. The red brick building served the church well until September of 1981, when a new 10,000 square-foot building valued at \$200,000 was completed—the facility the church still worships in. The church has been faithfully served by 27 pastors. When the church moved into its new building in 1981, the pastor was R. J. Seal. Seal is by far the church's longest tenured pastor, having served the church from 1973-2011.

A discussion of the ecclesiastical context would not be complete without a consideration of the church's recent membership and financial history.<sup>8</sup> The church's resident membership has decreased by 6.6 percent since 2007. Some of that decline can be attributed to attrition, but some of it has to do with a controversy involving staff members who chose to leave the church in 2009. When the staff members and their families departed, about 25 active members departed with them. As a result, as of the Spring of 2013, the church averages about 175 in worship compared to 225 in 2007. The largest number of people Lebanon has baptized in any year since 2007 is 16. The church

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<sup>8</sup>Membership and financial history was obtained through the Tennessee Baptist Convention. They provided statistics from the church's 2007-2011 Annual Church Profiles.

baptized 10 or less during all other years within that five-year span.

The church's receipts have also been affected by the aforementioned controversy. Where the church took in \$321,056 in undesignated receipts in 2008, she took in only \$256,646 in 2011—a decrease of 20 percent. The church's total receipts have also declined—from \$354,097 in 2008 to \$294,135 in 2011. However, most recently the church finished the 2012 year having collected \$275,000 in undesignated receipts and set a new budget goal of \$277,000. In short, it looks as though the financial tables are beginning to turn. Visitors in nearly all of the services of worship indicate that perhaps even the baptism and membership totals are on the way back up.

I was called as pastor of Lebanon Baptist Church in August of 2011 and assumed my duties the second Sunday of the following month in September 2011. Since that time, the church has implemented several changes in its ministry. For instance, much more emphasis has been placed on outreach and discipleship. When I arrived in 2011, the church allocated only \$500 (less than 1 percent) of its total budget to outreach. Since then we have increased our annual outreach budget to \$6,500—a 1,300 percent increase. Consequently, we have expanded the number of outreach events and begun mailing invitations into the community. Those invitations reach just over 5,100 mailboxes in the Talbott community and beyond. The church witnessed the baptism of 10 souls from 2011 to 2012 and are praying for even more souls in 2013.

My preaching style would be defined as expository. Though there have been occasions where I have led topical studies and perhaps even preached topical messages, my pulpit ministry almost exclusively offers the congregation Bible exposition. During the year and a half I have spent at Lebanon Baptist Church, I have been preaching through the Book of Acts on Sunday mornings. I also preached through the Book of James on Sunday nights. Sermons through these texts have not been broad “fly-overs,” but have been attempts at verse-by-verse exposition, explaining the text and providing the listener with appropriate application.

My leadership style reflects my preaching methodology and is heavily influenced by my conviction about the Scriptures. Because I believe all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16) and because I have made it my aim to offer the flock genuine exposition, I constantly encourage members to be instructed by God's Word. I do not dictate to the church what I believe it must do. Rather, I encourage the flock, primarily through the preaching of the Word, to do that which would be pleasing in the sight of God.

I consistently search for ways that I can work through the church's existing committees, and I seek to delegate as many tasks as possible. I understand that it is my role to equip the saints for the work of ministry rather than attempting to do the entire ministry on their behalf (Eph 4:12). Thus far, the loving people of Lebanon Baptist Church have accepted both my preaching and leadership styles.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for this project focuses upon the fact that God desires his church to be a holy church. Ephesians 5:25-27 expresses this divine desire:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

In these verses, Paul uses Christ's love for the church as a template for the way in which a husband is to love his wife. Paul goes to great lengths to explain exactly why Christ would be willing to lay down his life for the church that he loved so dearly. Jesus paid sin's atoning price so that he might "sanctify and cleanse" his church, and so that she would be found "holy and without blemish." The terms "sanctify," "cleanse," "holy," and "without blemish" all seek to capture the idea of holiness. The Greek term translated as "holy" is *hagios*, and it carries the idea of being set apart or separate. That

which is holy is that which is “dedicated or consecrated to the service of God.”<sup>9</sup>

Having established the fact that Christ desires his church to be a holy church, Paul then discusses the means by which their holiness is achieved: “The washing of water *by the word*” (Eph 5:26, emphasis added). The reference to water is an allusion to the bridal bath that was customary both among Jews and Greeks at the time of Paul’s writing.<sup>10</sup> Just as the bride was physically cleansed prior to her being joined with her husband, so Christ desires His church to be spiritually cleansed prior to his rapturing of them into glory. The water of a bath cleansed the first-century bride, but the water of the Word cleanses the child of God.

There is some question as to what “word” refers in the Ephesians passage. Some have suggested that it is a reference “to the gospel which is proclaimed.”<sup>11</sup> A more likely explanation is to see the “word” as a reference to the “preached Word,” namely within the church at Ephesus.<sup>12</sup> This interpretation finds support in the fact that as Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, he said, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

If the proclamation of the Word is the means through which the bride of Christ is to be kept from “having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” it is only reasonable to argue that God desires to accomplish formative church discipline through Christian preaching. My contention is that the homiletical method that is most conducive to the

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<sup>9</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “*hagios*.”

<sup>10</sup>Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), s.v. “Ephesians 5:26.”

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>Harold W. Hoehner, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs: ChariotVictor, 1983), 641.

achievement of formative church discipline is expository preaching. While formative church discipline can and has been accomplished through the means of topical preaching, such preaching runs the risk of glossing over those texts that deal with what are often labeled sensitive and problematic issues.

Throughout this project, the expository treatment of those texts that addressed the Corinthian problems provided the foundation for all the formative measures taken by Lebanon Baptist Church. To that end, it was my prayerful expectation that the church would be edified. Yet, there was also the need for my own personal improvement as a preacher. That was why I chose to focus on the improvement of application within my preaching. I believed that as my application improved, my preaching would be enhanced and God's people would be more readily equipped with the tools they need to be victorious over the devil and his demonic forces.

### **Definitions and Limitations**

For the sake of clarity I define "expository preaching" as follows: Expository preaching is the Spirit-empowered public proclamation of Biblical truth that seeks to disclose the main thought of the Biblical writer to the congregation through the means of explanation, illustration, argumentation, and application, so that the hearer is both encouraged and equipped to know and do the will of God.

In regard to formative church discipline, David W. Huckabee has observed,

*Formative* church discipline consists of the teaching and training of believers relative to their responsibilities as Christians and church members, and this teaching and training might well be called *preventive* discipline in a great number of cases, for the teaching of the Word is an adequate antidote to all manner of sin.<sup>13</sup>

The preventive aspect of formative church discipline is of particular importance to the work of this project. Therefore, the definition of "formative church

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<sup>13</sup>Davis W. Huckabee, *Studies on Church Truth*, <http://www.pbministries.org/Theology/Davis%20Huckabee/Studies%20on%20Church%20Truth/Chapter07.htm> (accessed February 25, 2008).



discipline” is the means through which preventive measures are taken to safeguard the church from falling into all manner of evil thinking, speaking, and acting.

The project also contained certain limitations. One limitation of this project is that it consisted of 15 weeks. The purpose of week 1 was to organize the focus group, and the remaining 14 weeks included expository preaching through the Book of 1 Corinthians. The latter 14 weeks included weekly meetings that gauged the focus group’s understanding of the Corinthian situation. Weekly meetings also included the identification of existing and potential problems, drafting of actions steps, and the evaluation of all preaching.

Another limitation of this project dealt with the selection of participants in the focus group. Each member of the focus group was an active member of Lebanon Baptist Church. For the purposes of this project, the term “active” is descriptive of those who consistently commit their time, talent, and treasure to the ministry of Lebanon Baptist Church. Because the number of those who could have be included in the “active” group would be too large for a focus group, it was my responsibility to appoint a focus group from among the most committed of the church’s congregants. The focus group included 7-10 members and was comprised of men and women.

### **Research Methodology**

As stated, the purpose of this project was to utilize expository preaching through the book of 1 Corinthians as a means of formative church discipline. To that end, the first goal of this project was to increase the congregation’s understanding of the problems that existed at the church in Corinth during the first century. A series of expository messages that covered 14 weeks introduced the Corinthian problems to the congregation. The development of a questionnaire helped to determine the congregation’s knowledge of the Corinthian struggles. Because the weekly surveying of the entire congregation posed quite an undesirable challenge, only the previously

mentioned members of the focus group had their knowledge of the Corinthian problems evaluated.

The second goal was to identify any particular areas of the church's ministry that could elicit problems similar to those experienced at Corinth. The use of an additional questionnaire aided the focus group in making the necessary determinations. With all potential areas of concern under consideration, the focus group began work on the third goal of this project.

The third goal was to determine and implement any actions steps needed to prevent future maladies. The focus group selected a recording secretary charged with the responsibility of chronicling all necessary action steps. It was the duty of the focus group to work in conjunction with the pastor in seeing the implementation of each of the action steps into the life of the church.

The fourth goal of the project was to increase the overall clarity and effectiveness of application within my expository preaching ministry. I gave each member of the focus group an evaluation form at the beginning of each week's message. The form asked members of the focus group to evaluate various elements of my preaching: content, presentation, oratory, personal appearance, etc. The form then went a step further by asking them questions tailored to improve the applicatory elements of my preaching. After the completion of the forms I asked the members of the focus group to provide me with any input that would improve the applicatory elements. Also, I asked members of the focus group to provide me with verbal feedback, either within the focus group or in a more private setting (such as the pastor's study).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FORMATIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The Bible teaches about the vital importance of formative church discipline and its relationship to Christian preaching. One clear example of this is found in 2 Chronicles 18:1-19:3. Those verses introduce the reader to the prophet of the Lord, Micaiah. This is the only mention of Micaiah in all the Word of God, save the parallel passage found in 1 Kings 22. The story tells how Micaiah faithfully delivered God's Word to both Kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat. Rather than listening to the prophet of God, the kings decided to go to war with the people of Ramoth Gilead, enemies of Israel. Ahab's reaction to Micaiah is especially insightful: "I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil" (2 Chr 18:7). Ahab even promised torture to God's prophet because of his willingness to preach God's Word: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him the bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace" (2 Chr 18:26).

Rather than promising God's servant affliction, both Kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat should have heeded his warning. Had the kings listened to Micaiah, Israel would have avoided defeat, Ahab would have dodged death, and Jehoshaphat would have escaped the wrath of God. Clearly, the punishment for not listening to God's Word was sure and severe.

Many churches in modern culture seem to be in a similar situation. While there is no study that tells exactly how many churches have a man that faithfully preaches God's Word, it is safe to reason that there are still some churches where God's truth continues to prevail. In those congregations, there is a choice that must be made. Either

the people can heed the voice of God's instruction, or they can choose to despise God's Word and go their own way. I contend that churches will be spared from the wrath of God if their pastors continue to preach the Word and the parishioners heed the whole counsel of Scripture. I also contend that the testimony of Scripture will verify this truth and it is the purpose of this chapter to make the case both biblically and theologically.

This project focuses on preaching through a New Testament book and aids the reader to see how the earliest and most influential preachers of that era understood the relationship between preaching and formative church discipline. If modern churches desire to be biblical, they need to consider the practices of the early church.

### **Second Timothy 3:13-4:5**

This passage is one that is familiar to many Christians. References to this text typically arise when discussions concerning the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture take place, and rightfully so. One finds that it also has a great deal to say about preaching and its relevance to the work of formative discipline.

The occasion of this text is very similar to that of the previous passage. Paul is writing to instruct his younger associate and to encourage him to pursue steadfast Christian living in the face of threats and difficulties. The words of this passage are also very similar to those of 1 Timothy 4. Just as he did in that text, Paul warns of "evil men and imposters" who would "grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim 3:13). The term "imposter" carries the idea of a swindler in this passage. Some of these imposters even resorted to howling, practicing magic, and sorcery.<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to understand why Paul encouraged the young pastor to "continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of" (2 Tim 3:14). The "things" Paul

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<sup>1</sup>Charles J. Ellicott, *The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1883), quoted in Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 505.

spoke of are contained in “the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). While this project is concerned primarily with the preventive aspect of formative discipline, one must not miss the wisdom that Scripture provides. In this case, the provision of wisdom would make Timothy’s hearers wise unto salvation, protecting them from an eternity filled with the wrath of God.

Were there any doubt as to what Timothy should preach, verse 16 answered all questions. There, Paul says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The “Scripture” Paul refers to is the Old Testament—the only texts the church would have had access to during Timothy’s ministry (with the exception of Paul’s letters).<sup>2</sup> Philip H. Towner writes, “Paul has in mind the Old Testament Scriptures, not because the apostles’ teaching lacked authority, but probably because the opponents had so misused them.”<sup>3</sup>

The Scriptures Paul referred to were “given by inspiration of God” (v. 16). Other translations say that Scripture is “God-breathed.”<sup>4</sup> In this case, “God-breathed” is a much more literal and picturesque capturing of the meaning of the term in question. “The Scriptures owe their origin and distinctiveness to God Himself. This is the abiding character of Scripture.”<sup>5</sup>

Because the Scriptures come from God Himself, Paul says that they will profit Timothy as he seeks to do the work of a faithful shepherd. First, he says that Scripture is

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992).

<sup>3</sup>Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 200.

<sup>4</sup>The New International Version of the Bible is one translation that renders the term “God-breathed.”

<sup>5</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 236. For more on the discussion of Scripture’s inspiration, the authors point their readers to B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 245-96.

profitable “for doctrine” (v. 16). This idea has already been seen in some of the other passages included in this study. The necessity of sound doctrine was especially clear in Acts 20 and 1 Timothy 4. The link to formative discipline is also clear. The Scriptures are able to equip God’s people with what they need in order to believe those doctrines that are necessary for faith and practice. Paul has more to say about the need for sound doctrine further into the passage.

Paul also states that the Scriptures are profitable “for reproof.” In this context, reproof in as “expression of strong disapproval.”<sup>6</sup> The term refers to a “rebuke for wrong behavior or wrong belief.”<sup>7</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin write, “Whether the reproof is personal or doctrinal, Scripture can show sinners their failure, clarify the point of the mistake, and lead them to a new sense of peace and wholeness.”<sup>8</sup> Reproof lends itself to the work of formative discipline because it seeks the redirection of an erring Christian, and encourages him to choose a more godly course of action.

Scripture is also profitable “for correction” (v. 16). Paul invited Timothy to place his hearers on godly ground if any of them had fallen into holes of doctrinal heresy or unrepentant sin. Just as children receive correction when they err, so the Body of Christ must receive correction when it steps aside from following the footsteps of Jesus. Formative discipline translates into corrective action that will help to prevent sinful beliefs and actions in the future.

Paul concludes that Scripture is also profitable “for instruction in righteousness” (v. 16). The training in view here “is designed to produce conduct

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<sup>6</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “*elegmos*.”

<sup>7</sup>John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Timothy, MacArthur Bible Studies* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 98.

<sup>8</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

whereby righteousness is actualized.”<sup>9</sup> Paul’s desire was that the preaching of his young associate would turn his hearers away from ungodliness by directing them down the paths of righteousness.

Having clearly delineated the inspiration, inerrancy, and profitability of Scripture, Paul then explained the sufficiency of Scripture to Timothy. He said that Scripture was given so that “the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (v. 17). The term translated “complete” is only used once in the New Testament and means “to be well fitted for some function; able to meet all demands.”<sup>10</sup> This definition describes one who is “in fit shape or condition.”<sup>11</sup> The idea is that the Scripture provided Timothy everything he would need to accomplish the work of formative discipline toward those God placed under his care. Furthermore, God’s Word would bring to full Christian maturity those who would heed its counsels.

Having reminded Timothy why he had been trained in the Scriptures since his childhood, Paul then charged his young associate: “Preach the word!” (2 Tim 4:2). There are several terms used for preaching throughout the New Testament, but in this verse it is the familiar “*karusso*.” The term is concerned with the manner of preaching, and specifically that it is a “public declaration.”<sup>12</sup> Quite simply, Timothy was to proclaim the truths of God’s Word publicly. In like manner, if formative discipline is to occur in the modern church it will be because God’s ministers are publicly proclaiming the words of Scripture.

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<sup>9</sup>George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 449.

<sup>10</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*artios*.”

<sup>11</sup>Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946), 847.

<sup>12</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*karusso*.”

Paul even explained to Timothy the means through which proclamation was to occur. The first means was to “convince” (2 Tim 4:2). While there are a range of possibilities for what Paul meant with this term, scholars prefer the idea of conviction. “The task in mind is essentially that of revealing sin, bringing the hearers to the point of awareness and acknowledgment.”<sup>13</sup> Clearly, formative discipline will not occur unless God’s people are willing to acknowledge their current pattern of behavior as sin.

Preaching for the purpose of discipline must also include a word of “rebuke” (v. 2). This term is similar to the aforementioned ideas of reproof and correction. If conviction is to come, it will be because God’s man has confronted God’s people with a loving word of rebuke. The final means Paul mentions in this verse is exhortation. Paul instructed Timothy to allow God’s Spirit to bring conviction through the confrontation of sin. With the exposure of sin, it is then the duty of God’s servant to encourage the flock on how they might live an exemplary life in the sight of God. The convincing, confronting, and encouraging that formative discipline requires is to be carried out “with all long-suffering and teaching” (v. 2).

But why the need for all this preaching of God’s inerrant Word? Paul even addresses that question: “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (v. 3). The term translated “endure” means “to bear up or put up with.”<sup>14</sup> Paul was simply telling Timothy that a day was coming when men would not even tolerate the sound doctrine that accompanies the faithful preaching of God’s Word. Instead, he said they would “heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim 4:3-4). That being the case, Paul challenged his young co-laborer to “be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:5).

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<sup>13</sup>Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 601.

<sup>14</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, s.v. “anexontai.”



The verses of this passage inform the reader about the work of formative discipline in a number of ways. The faithful preacher of God's Word need not expect formative discipline to be easy. Because "imposters will grow worse and worse" (2 Tim 3:13), the tendency to rebel against biblical teaching will only increase. Yet, God's men should not be afraid to proclaim His Word in the modern age. The Scripture that Christians have been given is more than enough to equip both pastors and parishioners alike. Rather than cowering before the threats of a wicked age, God has called his preachers to courageously convince, exhort, and encourage. It is through the means of faithful preaching that God's servant can witness the salvation of the lost and the growth of God's flock.

#### **Acts 6:1-7**

The first five chapters of the Book of Acts describe a vibrant, growing church. To this point in the biblical record, the church had experienced no internal adversity or division, though God chose to take the lives of some church members that lied to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 5:1-11). The first internal problem comes to the surface in Acts 6: "There arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1). The word translated "complaint" is the same term used by the Septuagint for the grumbling of the Israelites against the Lord in the wilderness.<sup>15</sup> Knowing the unpleasant nature of that Old Testament episode, it is safe to reason that the complaint of the Hellenists was quite serious and equally harsh. By Hellenists, Luke is making reference to the Greek-speaking Jews that lived in the community of the early church.<sup>16</sup>

On this occasion it happened that the Hellenists were overlooked in the daily

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<sup>15</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina, vol. 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), s.v. "gongoosmos."

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

distribution. This was not an intentional overlooking of the Hellenists, but still a failure to care for the poor adequately, for which the Jews deemed a serious offense (cf. Deut 27-19). The “daily distribution” spoken of was a “Jewish custom that provided a “*tamhui*” to the casual poor and a *quppah* to members of the community.”<sup>17</sup> Distribution for the widows would have fallen into the latter category.

Understanding the serious nature of the problem before them, the apostles reasoned, “It is not desirable that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables” (Acts 6:2). “Desirable” is most likely a reference to the desires of God rather than those of the Apostles.<sup>18</sup> This was not just a matter of pleasing widows or leaders—it was a matter of pleasing the Lord. For that reason, the apostles developed a plan to call out seven men from among the disciples who would give themselves to the work of distribution. The delegation of the daily distribution responsibilities allowed the apostles to “give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). The proceeding verses indicate that seven men were set aside for the work and that they accepted the call of duty. Evidence of their acceptance rests in the fact that “the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem” (Acts 6:7).

There are two main points to consider as they relate to preaching and formative church discipline. First, when problems arose, the apostles knew they had to do something to keep the ministry of the Word from falling into neglect. They knew “it was not their primary business to supervise the financial arrangements of the community or to take an active part in the ‘daily grind.’”<sup>19</sup> The apostles knew that time spent in neglect of God’s Word would harm the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the infant church God had

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<sup>17</sup>C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 87.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 120.

placed under their care. They acted to protect their preparation of the Word and the proclamation thereof.

Further, the text describes the powerful impact that preaching can have on evangelism and discipleship—areas of church life that reinforce the work of formative church discipline. Because the apostles freed themselves to continue the ministry of the Word, the early church was challenged to make disciples. Apart from the apostles’ preaching, it seems very likely that far fewer disciples would have been made. Preaching activated an environment of formative discipline that propelled the church toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). The modern application is very simple: Where a church is focused on making disciples above all else (resulting from the ministry of biblical preaching), there is much less time for in-fighting and “majoring on the minors” of church life. Biblical preaching fuels formative church discipline because it prevents God’s people from falling into a state of evangelistic lethargy.

### **Acts 18:24-28**

Acts 18:24-28 is the most exhaustive statement in the New Testament about the person and work of “a certain Jew named Apollos” (Acts 18:24). The Scripture tells that Apollos was from Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria was the capital of Egypt during the Greek and Roman periods. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea at the western edge of the Nile delta, the city was established by Alexander the Great when he conquered Egypt in 331 BC.<sup>20</sup> As part of his conquests, Alexander ordered 120,000 Jews to be taken to Alexandria.<sup>21</sup> The city boasted the finest library in the ancient world with over 500,000 volumes in its possession.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ronald F. Youngblood, ed., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), s.v. “Alexandria, City of.”

<sup>21</sup>Gary C. Huckabay, *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman Bible, 1991), s.v. “Alexandria, City of.”

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

It was by God's providence that Apollos was born and raised in a city such as Alexandria. God used Apollos' scholastic surroundings to make him "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24). The text says that he "had been instructed in the ways of the Lord" (Acts 18:25). The Greek term (*katacheo*) employed in verse 25 is used "only of instruction in theological matters."<sup>23</sup> This means "to teach by repeating, dinning into the ears, to teach orally by word of mouth."<sup>24</sup> While Apollos' early instruction may not have come through the means of conventional preaching, God used his scriptural training to make him "fervent and spirit . . . speaking and teaching accurately the things of the Lord" (Acts 18:25). Apollos experienced transformation because someone was willing to plant the precious seed of God's Word into his life time and time again.

Having been changed through the power of God's Word, Apollos was in a position to help many Christian believers. The Bible tells that "he greatly helped those who had believed through grace" (Acts 18:27). Of special interest to this work is the means through which he helped those early believers: "He vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing them *from the* Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 18:28, emphasis added). Apollos' public proclamation of the Scriptures edified the early church, even though His public statements were intended to repudiate the claims of the unbelieving Jews. In this case, Apollos' preaching accomplished the work of formative discipline because it prevented the early church from believing the heresies foisted against Jesus—specifically those heresies that suggested Jesus was not the Christ.

The aforementioned Acts 6 passage demonstrates that the ministry of the Word accomplishes formative discipline because it prevents an environment of evangelistic apathy caused by in-fighting related to matters of ministry. Acts 18:24-28 shows that the

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<sup>23</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "*katachamenos*."

<sup>24</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical*, s.v. "*katachamenos*."

public proclamation of Scripture also prevents the acceptance of heretical doctrine. In Apollos' example, it seems clear that the public refutation of the Jews served as apologetic formation for the early believers. Perhaps there has never been a greater need for doctrinal clarity than now. A study completed by the Barna Group shows that only half of the nation's senior pastors possess a biblical worldview.<sup>25</sup> Barna asserts that someone advocates a biblical worldview when he affirms "the accuracy of biblical teaching, the sinless nature of Jesus, the literal existence of Satan, the omnipotence and omniscience of God, salvation by grace alone, and the personal responsibility to evangelize."<sup>26</sup> If only half of the nation's pastors would be willing to affirm the aforementioned doctrines, it is quite safe to reason that the doctrinal health found in most church pews is not much better.

Equally disturbing is that those charged with theological instruction have not avoided similar doctrinal pitfalls. One glaring example is seen among the membership of the Evangelical Theological Society. In 2003, the scholarly group refused to dis-fellowship two men known as "open theists." That is, the two men believe that the future is "open" to God—he does not have exact knowledge of forthcoming events.<sup>27</sup>

The expository preaching of God's Word could help reverse this trend. Just as Apollos helped the early church to avoid doctrinal error, so pastors could do the same today if they would simply preach "thus sayeth the Lord." Many could be "greatly helped" if only they had access to sound biblical instruction (Acts 18:27). Because

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<sup>25</sup>Michael Foust, "Barna: Only Half of Nation's Senior Pastors Hold Biblical Worldview," *Baptist Press*, 14 January 2007, [www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=17435](http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=17435) (accessed February 7, 2012).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>Jeff Robinson, "Theological Society Retains Open Theists Pinnock, Sanders," *Baptist Press*, 20 November 2003, [www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=17132/](http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=17132/) (accessed February 7, 2012).

Apollos was willing to provide that instruction, the work of formative discipline was manifested.

### **Acts 20:26-32**

The occasion of this passage is Paul's departure from Ephesus and his farewell address to the elders being left behind to shepherd the flock. Paul's ministry to the church at Ephesus began during his second missionary journey through Asia (cf. Acts 18:19, 19:10-11, 20). As was his custom, Paul appointed elders in the city to carry on the work of the early church. In Acts 20, Paul called for the elders of the church to come together. While many have opined as to the exact roll of these elders, there is no doubt that they were "leaders in the church."<sup>28</sup>

Having summoned the elders together, Paul was quick to remind them of his ministry among them. Paul's ministry included "serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews" (Acts 20:19). Of particular interest are the references that Paul made to his preaching ministry. In verse 20, Paul reminded the elders that he "kept nothing back that was helpful," and that he publically proclaimed the Word of God "from house to house." In verse 25, he reminded the elders how he had gone to each of them "preaching the kingdom of God."

The most articulate statement of Paul's preaching is found in verse 27: "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." The word translated "counsel" means "that which one decides; a resolution or a decision."<sup>29</sup> In this case, it is a reference to the divine will—the whole of God's declarations and decisions.<sup>30</sup> The proclamation of those counsels was of profound importance to Paul. It was because of

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<sup>28</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, s.v. "presbuteros."

<sup>29</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "boulae."

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

his faithful proclamation of those truths that he deemed himself “innocent of the blood of all men” (Acts 20:26). “Paul is responsible for no man’s (eternal) death through neglecting to preach the Gospel to all and to deliver it in all its fullness.”<sup>31</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson explains, “Paul’s innocence is based in having declared to them openly all they needed to know; the decision is in their hands.”<sup>32</sup>

Not only was Paul concerned about preaching the whole counsel of God, but he called his fellow elders to share his concern as well. Paul said that the elders were first to “take heed” to themselves (Acts 20:28). The verb is a present imperative, and thus it “calls for a habitual action.”<sup>33</sup> English translations might well say, “Keep on taking heed to yourselves.” While this project is concerned with the effect of God’s Word on the church, the pastor should consider that it is his responsibility to allow God’s Word to first transform his own life. Only through adequate time spent in the Scriptures will the pastor avoid the many pitfalls that he would seek to warn his parishioners against. In that sense, formative discipline begins with the pastor.

Paul also commanded the elders to “take heed . . . to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). This passage is not unlike 1 Peter 5:1-4, in that three Greek terms are used to denote the office and work of the pastor. The first is *presbuteros*, and it simply carries the idea of “elder.” In this context, it is a reference to an official among the Christians of the early church. The second term is *episkopos*, and in this passage it means “overseer.” The third term is the verb *poimeno*, and it is translated “shepherd.”<sup>34</sup> The pastor is to exert the authority of God’s appointed official,

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<sup>31</sup>Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 315.

<sup>32</sup>Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 362.

<sup>33</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 286.

<sup>34</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*poimeno*.”

while also overseeing and shepherding the Body of Christ.

Paul said that these responsibilities would prevail only as the elders proclaimed the whole counsel of God's Word. The urgent need of their proclamation resonates in verse 29: "After my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock." Paul used some picturesque language in describing those that would seek to devour God's flock. Most vividly he described them as "savage." It is a word that means "heavy, difficult to bear, fierce, and cruel."<sup>35</sup> In this context it describes a group of people having an "unbearable temperament."<sup>36</sup> Scholars write that Jesus had already so described false teachers who would "raven the fold."<sup>37</sup>

Paul identified the manner in which these "savage wolves" would harm the flock. He said they would "rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30). Paul said that false teachers would draw members of the church unto themselves by perverting God's inerrant truth. Paul knew that these perversions were coming, and that is why he had "not ceased to warn everyone night and day with tears" for a period of three years (Acts 20:31).

In Acts 20:26-32, verse 31 gives the idea of formative discipline where public proclamation stands out most clearly. The text says that Paul warned the people—he purposefully tried to prevent them from walking down the paths of doctrinal heresy. Hermann Cremer has described Paul's warning: "Its fundamental idea is the well-intentioned seriousness with which one would influence the mind and disposition of another by advice, admonition, warning, putting right and according to circumstance."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, s.v. "barus."

<sup>36</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "barus."

<sup>37</sup>Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Acts*, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 3: 353.

<sup>38</sup>Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1878), s.v. "nouthetone," quoted in Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1886).



The means Paul used to issue his warning was the declaration of the whole counsel of God.

Having reminded the elders of his passionate warnings, he then exhorted the elders to follow his example: “I commend you to God and to the word of His grace” (Acts 20:32). So that hermeneutical precision might prevail, it is vital to identify what Paul meant by “the word of His grace.” The phrase could easily be translated “the word that comes from Him (God) by gift/favor.”<sup>39</sup> In this context, “the Word of God’s grace” is a direct reference to the Scriptures. “If they would cultivate a knowledge of God and His Word, they would become strong.”<sup>40</sup> The instrumentality through which the Ephesian Christians were exposed to the Word was “preaching and the Holy Spirit employed by God.”<sup>41</sup>

Paul was adamant about the preaching of the Word. He explained that the preaching of the whole counsel “is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Paul longed for the sanctification of the elders and their hearers—he wanted them to be “set apart” for the glory of God.<sup>42</sup> He wanted the Ephesians to enjoy edification on earth and an inheritance in heaven.

The words of Paul to the elders leave no room for debate. If formative discipline is to occur, it will be through the public declaration of the whole counsel of God’s Word. The preaching of the Word will act as a sturdy warning that will protect the flock from ravenous wolves by encouraging their progressive sanctification.

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<sup>39</sup>Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 364.

<sup>40</sup>John Phillips, *Exploring Acts, The John Phillips Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1986), 407.

<sup>41</sup>Robertson, *Acts*, 355.

<sup>42</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 286.

### First Timothy 4:12-16

The occasion of this biblical text is when Paul wrote his first letter to a young minister named Timothy who was set aside to lead the church at Ephesus. This particular passage comes back to a recurring theme—the need for doctrinal precision in a world of theological chaos. The words of Paul make the need very clear: “The Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim 4:1). Of vital importance is that the apostasy would come from *within* the church, perhaps from the “savage wolves” that Paul warned the Ephesians about in Acts 20.

Paul told his young associate how he could help keep his flock on the right path. He said, “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 4:6). The King James Version of the Bible translates the verse, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things.” Paul was imploring his young associate to instruct his flock through the means of doctrinally sound reminders. From Paul’s instruction to the elders of Ephesus, the reader can see that those reminders were to come through public declaration of God’s Word. The declaration of God’s Word was to be ongoing, as seen in verse 11: “These things command and teach.” Both verbs are present active imperatives. The present indicates the continuation of an action and the continual, habitual carrying out of the command.<sup>43</sup> For that reason, the verse could easily be translated “continue to command and teach.”<sup>44</sup>

Paul commanded Timothy, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers” (1 Tim 4:12). There were a number of ways that Timothy was to be an example, but of special interest is that Paul commanded him to be an example “in word.”

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<sup>43</sup>W. F. Bakker, *The Greek Imperative* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1966), 154.

<sup>44</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 495.

This type of example included “teaching and verbal intercourse of every kind.”<sup>45</sup> While it is certain that Timothy was to exemplify Christ in all that he said, he was to give special attention to his preaching ministry. That is, to “give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine” (1 Tim 4:13). Each of those three actions affects Christian preaching and it is necessary to consider them one at a time.

The term used for “reading” in verse 13 appears only three times in the New Testament. It is usually a reference to public reading and in post-classical Greek it is also used of “reading aloud with comments.”<sup>46</sup> One can see both uses of the term in the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians 3:14, the term is used of the general reading of the Law and the Prophets that happened in the synagogue on each Sabbath. Yet, in Acts 13:15 the term is used for the public reading of the Scriptures and the comments that followed by the apostle Paul. In 1 Timothy 4:13, it seems clear that the use of the term falls into the latter category (reading and comments), especially since it is linked with “exhortation and doctrine.”

The term translated “exhortation” in verse 13 appears numerous times in the New Testament and can carry a number of meanings. In this context it is a reference to the “act of emboldening another in belief or course of action.”<sup>47</sup> It is interesting that this term also appears alongside the aforementioned use of “reading” in Acts 13:15. After the Scriptures were read in the synagogue at Antioch, “the rulers of the synagogue sent to them (Paul and his party) saying, ‘Men and brethren, if you have any word of *exhortation* for the people, say on’” (Acts 13:15, emphasis added). The parallels between 1 Timothy 4:13 and Acts 13:15 are very clear and should remind the reader that God’s Word is to be both read and preached publically. The aim of the pastor’s preaching should be to

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<sup>45</sup>Vincent, *Vincent's Word*, s.v. “*logos*.”

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*paraklasis*.”

embolden and to encourage the Body of Christ.

Paul also instructed Timothy to give attention to “doctrine.” While the term employed by Paul can sometimes be a reference to that which is taught, in this context it is used of the act of teaching.<sup>48</sup> Some scholars even translate the term as “preaching.”<sup>49</sup> Once again the parallels between 1 Timothy 4 and Acts 13 are unavoidable. The very things Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to are the very things he practiced at Antioch. Paul honored the reading of God’s Word and then exhorted both Jews and Gentiles through the expository teaching of Scripture (Acts 13:16-45).

The careful reader will notice the ultimate reason for Paul’s imperatives to Timothy. After instructing him yet again to “take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” and to “continue in them,” he reveals the purpose of the reading, exhortation, and teaching: “In doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim 4:16). So then, the overarching aim of the pastor’s preaching is to be salvation. Looking back to Paul’s example in Acts 13, his reading, exhortation, and preaching resulted in the salvation of some Jews (v. 43) and many Gentiles (v. 48). Simply stated, Paul’s preaching prevented the eternal damnation of many who would have been misled by blasphemy and false doctrine.

This is another example of how preaching, and especially expository preaching (in Paul’s example), fuels the work of formative church discipline. First Timothy 4 reminds the reader that expository preaching actually prevents damnation as the Holy Spirit exposes people to the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, even believers can be encouraged to “continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43) as the teaching of sound doctrine helps them to be “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

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<sup>48</sup>Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 320.

<sup>49</sup>Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 385.

The filling of the Holy Spirit that comes through preaching prevents God's people from departing the faith as a result of "deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1).

### **Summary**

Each of the passages included in this study reveal the power of preaching and its influence on formative church discipline. The calling of the first deacons in Acts 6 shows what the priority of every pastor must be. While God calls the shepherd to tend the flock, the first and most important means through which he does that is prayer and the ministry of the Word. If the pastor guards his times of prayer and preparation, Scripture bears witness that his people will avoid the sluggish state of evangelistic apathy.

Furthermore, the ministry of Apollos shows that God's people will be kept from a number of harmful heresies if God's man will preach God's Word. Just as Apollos greatly helped those who had believed through faith, so followers of Christ will continue to grow as they come under the sound of Christian preaching. The example of Paul also reminds Christians that God's people will dodge the carnage of ravenous wolves if they are exposed to the whole counsel of God. Expository preaching lends itself to the revealing of all God's counsel as it does not pick and choose those texts that are preached.

Paul's words to Timothy also show that faithful preaching fuels formative discipline because it is through the public declaration of His Word that salvation occurs and Christians are sanctified. No matter what manner or what number of false teachers may attempt to scatter the flock, the expository preaching of God's Word will insure constant growth both in season and out of season.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF APPLICATION TO EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH APPLICATORY ELEMENTS CAN BE IMPROVED

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of application to Christian preaching. Addressing preachers, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said,

You must apply the message as you go along. This again shows that you are not just lecturing, that you are not dealing with an abstract or academic or theoretical matter; but that this is a living matter which is of real concern to the people in the whole of their life and being. So you must keep on applying what you are saying.<sup>1</sup>

Some have gone even further in their attempts to emphasize application. Charles Spurgeon once said, “Where the application begins, there the sermon begins.”<sup>2</sup> Still others have suggested that application should drive all Christian preaching because “the real ‘point’ of the sermon is *always* application.”<sup>3</sup>

Of particular importance to this study is the role application plays in expository preaching. John MacArthur has emphasized a notorious critique of expository preaching: “Probably the biggest criticism against expository preaching is that it doesn’t provide enough application.”<sup>4</sup> Many expositors have heard this critique assigned to their

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<sup>1</sup>D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 77.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Haddon Spurgeon, quoted in John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed. Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1979), 165.

<sup>3</sup>Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 142.

<sup>4</sup>John MacArthur, “Your Role In Expository Preaching, Part 3: Application,” *Grace To You*, 2012, [www.gty.org/resources/print/articles/A387/](http://www.gty.org/resources/print/articles/A387/) (accessed September 25, 2012).

preaching. Alistair Begg even observed, “The reason most preaching is ignored today is because it deserves to be.”<sup>5</sup> While Begg may not have been speaking of a lack of application, it seems clear that the absence of relevant application keeps much preaching from being heard and obeyed. Perhaps listeners have concluded that God’s Word—or at least preaching—has no real bearing on their present situation.

“Preaching is application. . . . Application, no matter how skillfully structured or helpfully delivered must never be viewed as an ‘add-on.’”<sup>6</sup> If the lost are to be saved, the saved are to be disciplined, and God is to be glorified, it will be because preachers have made Christ-centered application to the lives of their listeners. Preachers simply cannot allow themselves to abdicate their application duties any longer. If there is to be a return to serious application within Christian preaching, and especially expository preaching, one must know what is intended by the term “application.”

### **Definition of Application**

Wayne McDill has said that application is that which “presents the implications of biblical truth for the contemporary audience. It is a call to action, for putting the principles of Scripture to work in our lives.”<sup>7</sup> Application deals with attitudes, behavior, speech, lifestyle, and personal identity. It appeals to conscience, values, conviction, and commitment to Christ. Application includes “those parts of the discourse in which we show how the subject applies to the persons addressed, what practical instruction it offers them, and what practical demands it makes upon them.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Brent Hobbs, “Preaching Quotes,” *Deeper Into Grace*, 2010, [www.brenthobbs.com/preachingquotes.html](http://www.brenthobbs.com/preachingquotes.html) (accessed September 25, 2012).

<sup>6</sup>John F. Bettler, “Application,” in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Samuel T. Logan (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), 332.

<sup>7</sup>Wayne V. McDill, *The Twelve Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 187.

<sup>8</sup>Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery*, 167.

Application answers two questions: “so what?” and “what now?” The first question has to do with the relevance of preaching. In other words, “What does this passage of God’s Word have to do with me?” This is not always an easy question to answer. For instance, the average church attender may not have the slightest clue how the genealogy of Christ has anything to do with his life. It is the preacher’s responsibility to bridge the gap between the world of Scripture and the world of the listener. The preacher that spends his time answering the “what now” question will do a much more effective job of bridging the gap than those that do not.

It is worthy to note that while application has its own definition, it is also mentioned in many definitions of preaching. Ligon Duncan has said that expository preaching is “the faithful explanation and application of the Bible.”<sup>9</sup> John Piper concurs, “All Christian preaching should be the exposition and application of biblical texts.”<sup>10</sup> In his classic definition of expository preaching, Haddon Robinson has said that application actually begins with the preacher:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.<sup>11</sup>

To summarize, application begins in the preacher and proceeds to the listener, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and is a distinct call to action. Much of the remainder of this work focuses on the various means of application, but for now it will suffice to say that application can include specific instructions, questions, and a number of other literary devices. Because application is ultimately a work of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for the preacher to make specific application to each particular aspect of the listener’s

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<sup>9</sup>Hobbs, “Preaching Quotes.”

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21.



situation. Yet, that must not discourage the preacher from applying the biblical text as specifically as possible. The wise expositor realizes that it is not only about helping his listeners understand what they are to do—it is helping them understand how to do it.

### **Necessity of Application**

One writer has said that good expository sermons are those “that remain faithful to the text of Scripture while producing homiletical propositions with clear and relevant applicational imperatives.”<sup>12</sup> Nineteenth century preacher Charles Simeon was so persuaded of the vital importance of application in Christian preaching that he urged for the “perpetual application” of the text.<sup>13</sup> Haddon Robinson was even more emphatic: “Application is not incidental to effective expository preaching—it is crucial!”<sup>14</sup> Simply stated, expository sermons can be preached without application, but *good* expository sermons will keep a call to action in front of the listener.

Application is necessary because “multitudes of regular church attenders have failed to make the connection between the truths of the Bible and their moral implications for daily life.”<sup>15</sup> As such, listeners walk out of churches each week feeling good about themselves, yet having little or no idea what to do with the truths they have just heard. It behooves the preacher to understand the necessity of application for a number of individuals.

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<sup>12</sup>Keith Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 62.

<sup>13</sup>Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 22: 291.

<sup>14</sup>Haddon W. Robinson, *We Believe in Biblical Preaching* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary Publishers, 1972), 13.

<sup>15</sup>Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 182.

## Application for the Audience

A prominent twentieth century expositor once remarked, “It would be safe to say that there is no part of Scripture that is unrelated to some aspect of faith and life.”<sup>16</sup> If that is so, then it is also safe to surmise that churchgoers will not be able to please God if they fail to make the connection between the biblical text and their own lives. They absolutely must know what to do with the truths they have received from the pulpit.

Ramesh Richard is even more graphic as he explains the importance of application to the audience: “Biblical exposition without application leads to spiritual constipation.”<sup>17</sup> While not the fondest of images, Richard’s analogy does capture the lowly state of the listener who has been victimized by preaching that lacks adequate application. The listener is filled with all sorts of information—the Red Sea crossing, the tragedy of Israel’s divided kingdom, the fiery furnace, etc. Yet, he has no idea what any of those things has to do with his present situation. As a result, he carries about all sorts of biblical information but his life lacks a serious dose of transformation. Richard continues, “There is no point in being academically accurate if the information does not transform your hearers.”<sup>18</sup> Apparently application-free preaching is pointless preaching.

It is the expositor’s duty and privilege to offer his listeners application that is both customized and concrete.<sup>19</sup> Customized application will aid the listener in applying the biblical text to his particular situation. Because the spiritual, cultural, economic, and environmental variables of each audience are different, that audience will need forms of application that are tailored just for them. I have experienced this as a pastor. I served an

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<sup>16</sup>Stephen F. Olford and David L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 251.

<sup>17</sup>Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 113.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

inner-city church as pastor for eight and a half years prior to entering the much more suburban/rural ministry in which God has presently placed me. While the truth of God's Word remains the same, the application in both contexts has often been quite different.

As previously mentioned, the audience also stands in desperate need of application this is concrete. The faithful expositor will be specific about what God is asking his listeners to do. For instance, it is not enough for the preacher to tell his audience that God wants them to be holy. While that is certainly the case, it is the expositor's obligation to show them *how* they can be holy. By providing application that is both customized and concrete, the preacher will arm his hearers with the weapons they need to engage in successful spiritual warfare.

### **Application for the Preacher**

There are a variety of reasons that application is essential, not only for the audience, but for the preacher as well. Speaking from his own experience, John Stott had this to say about one of the more germane reasons: "It is amazing how you can conceal your laziness with a little pious phraseology! The Holy Spirit certainly can and does apply the Word for people. But it is wrong to deny our own responsibility in the application of the Word."<sup>20</sup> Others have echoed this sentiment: "It comes to this—the preparation of sermons involves sweat and labour."<sup>21</sup> This is especially true of application-minded preaching. If the preacher intends to provide his listeners not only with an abundance of information but application as well, he will have to work hard to uncover the various means through which each passage can be applied.

Labor-intensive application is of vital importance to the preacher because it keeps him from the clutches of laziness. The kind of labor that is required to produce

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<sup>20</sup>R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Creating the Bridge: An Interview with John R. W. Stott," *Preaching* 4, no. 5 (1989): 4-5.

<sup>21</sup>Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 80.

application-minded messages is a type of labor that is pleasing to the Lord Jesus who has said, “To whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48). Applying the text will force the expositor to know his audience. It will require him to exegete the culture in which that audience lives, works, and recreates. It will force him to consider not only those things that have come, but to cast a glance toward those things that are on the horizon.

### **Application for the World**

While the proclamation of the pulpit certainly affects the preacher and his audience, its influence does not stop there. There is a world beyond the four walls of the church that stands in desperate need of the gospel and the truth of God’s Word. Just a cursory look at the condition of culture should remind preachers of the need for application of biblical truth. Since 1960, there has been a 48 percent increase in the American population, but a 467 percent increase in violent crime, a 463 percent increase in prison inmates, a 461 percent increase in illegitimate births, a 200 percent increase in children living in single-parent homes, a 100 percent increase in teen suicides, a 150 percent increase in welfare, and a shocking 1,000 percent increase in couples co-habiting.<sup>22</sup> Forcible rapes have increased from 17,000 in 1960 to over 90,000 at the turn of the century.<sup>23</sup>

Clearly the people outside of churches are vexed with a sin problem that can only be healed through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That is exactly why it is so important for the expositor to make application to the biblical text. If his listeners do not understand what they are to do with what they have heard, it will not transform their lives. If the life of the listener is not transformed, one should not expect the lives of the

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<sup>22</sup>Randy Davis, “The Desperate Need for Awakening” (speech delivered at the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Barlett, TN, November 13, 2012).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

unchurched to be altered either. If the lives of the unchurched remain unaltered, the aforementioned statistics will become exponentially worse and God will not receive the glory that is due His name. Biblical preaching can and absolutely must be applied.

### **Problem of Application**

Sidney Greidanus has done a tremendous job identifying what is commonly referred to as the “problem of application”:

Since the message was first addressed to an ancient church, it requires explication; since that message now needs to be addressed to the contemporary church, it requires application. The problem preachers face is how to integrate explication and application so that the whole sermon comes across as relevant communication.<sup>24</sup>

Others have written about this problem as well: “We want to have a ‘Thus sayeth the Lord’ about specific things in people’s lives, but we can’t always have that.”<sup>25</sup> As such, Harold Freeman warned biblical expositors that it is “here we enter hazardous waters and caution is in order.”<sup>26</sup> The tension of application rests in the fact that while the preacher “has biblical authority for proclaiming the principles in a biblical text, he cannot speak with the same authority regarding exactly how those principles are to be implemented in the lives of the listeners unless Scripture delineates such.”<sup>27</sup>

While the problem of application obviously presents the expositor with a daunting task, it is not one that is impossible. As the Scripture says, “With God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37). Just as Greidanus identified the problem of application, he has also provided some insights that aid the preacher in working toward a solution. First, the preacher will need to determine how much application-work each sermon text

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<sup>24</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 183.

<sup>25</sup>Haddon Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,’ *Leadership* 18, no. 4 (1997): 25.

<sup>26</sup>Harold Freeman, *Variety in Biblical Preaching* (Fort Worth: Scripta, 1987), 42.

<sup>27</sup>Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 187.

needs. Greidanus rightly concludes that “the message of some texts is so universal that the theme of the text can become the theme of the sermon. If the message is relatively free of historical-cultural discontinuity, it can be immediately transmitted to the church today.”<sup>28</sup> Some passages will require more work than others, and it is the responsibility of the preacher to make those determinations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Further, the expositor will need to make adequate time for sermon preparation.

Leander Keck has made this point quite clear:

The move from understanding what the text meant to what it may mean, from historical, descriptive exegesis to proclamation, need not be made in the pulpit . . . that interpretive move must be made, but in many cases it must be made in the study rather than in the pulpit.<sup>29</sup>

If the preacher does not set aside sufficient time to make the connection between the ancient text and the modern context, then he will not be able to make specific application to his audience. Clearly, if the preacher is not able to make the connection, neither will his listeners. If the expositor is to meet the challenge presented by the problem of application, he must guard his preparation time with loving intensity.

One final consideration that will aid the preacher in working toward a solution is to avoid the temptation of using the same pattern for every sermon. A popular pattern employed by many expositors is explanation/application—explaining what the text meant in the original context and how the text can now be applied in the listener’s modern situation. Many who make consistent use of this pattern prefer to do all the explanation at the beginning of the message, while withholding the application to the end. While homiletics often refer to this as an inductive approach, there is nothing wrong with using a more deductive pattern if the text lends itself to that form. Greidanus agrees, “One can develop the sermon or any of its points deductively or inductively and use a

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<sup>28</sup>Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 183.

<sup>29</sup>Leander Keck, *The Bible in the Pulpit: The Renewal of Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 114.

variety of forms.”<sup>30</sup> Variety makes the preacher’s message more enjoyable and enhances his attempt to solve the problem of application.

### **Guidelines for Application**

Before wading through all the particular means of application, the preacher will want to consider some application ground rules—guidelines that will help him to become a much more adept applier of biblical truth. James Earl Massey and Stephen Olford have provided a great service to expositors everywhere by providing several beneficial guidelines. First among them is this: “Any true application will be related to what has been said and to those who heard it said. It must link some truth or wise counsel with a person’s life.”<sup>31</sup> Stephen Olford has put it even more plainly: “We must be personal in our application.”<sup>32</sup>

The expositor should always keep in mind that the writers of Scripture were writing to a specific audience for a specific purpose. Moses wrote to provide God’s people with an accurate history of what God had done among them. The prophets wrote to warn God’s people on impending judgment or to comfort God’s people in the midst of the judgment that had overtaken them. The Gospel writers penned their messages to Jews and Gentiles alike—each of them attempting to show that Jesus is God’s only Messiah and the only Savior of the world. The biblical writers were *personal* in their writing. Even so, preachers must be personal in their application, or else they run the risk of being seen as Sunday morning dinosaurs.

Another guideline set forth by Massey is this: “Whether immediate or final,

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<sup>30</sup>Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher*, 184.

<sup>31</sup>James Earl Massey, “Application in the Sermon,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 210.

<sup>32</sup>Olford and Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*, 255.

application in a sermon should always summon a decisive action.”<sup>33</sup> William Merrill also alluded to this truth: “Every sermon aims at definite action. It is meant to make a difference in the lives of the hearers, or it is no true sermon.”<sup>34</sup> This principle is inescapable in the preaching of Christ. Many times He would share a parable or some other teaching only to follow it with the words, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). Christ’s was a call to immediate and decisive action. A failure to provide this call to action will leave the listener wondering when and how to apply the text of Scripture to his life.

A third guideline of sound application is this: “The application, whether a sentence or larger section, should grip and motivate the hearer.”<sup>35</sup> John Henry Jowett expressed, “Our ultimate object is to move the will, to set it in another course, to increase its pace, and to make it sing in ‘the ways of God’s commandments.’”<sup>36</sup> Application is that portion(s) of the message in which the preacher is calling upon the volition of the hearer. Application is found at the moment of decision when the listener must decide, “What must I now do?” This is no small matter, for it is in these moments that the lives of men and women are often changed. While the expositor will certainly want to avoid anything “base, unworthy, threatening, or manipulative,”<sup>37</sup> he will not want to miss the opportunity to make the application as compelling and persuasive as it can possibly be.

A fourth guideline worthy of consideration is that “the application may either

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<sup>33</sup>Massey, “Application in the Sermon,” 211.

<sup>34</sup>William Pierson Merrill, *The Freedom of the Preacher* (New York: MacMillan, 1922), 35.

<sup>35</sup>Massey, “Application in the Sermon,” 211.

<sup>36</sup>John Henry Jowett, *The Preacher: His Life and Work* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), 172.

<sup>37</sup>Massey, “Application in the Sermon,” 211.



be indirect or direct.”<sup>38</sup> There is a good amount of debate on which approach is best, but there is no compelling reason why the expositor should not use both types of application in his message. A good biblical example is provided within the prophetic ministry of Nathan as he confronted King David after his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12). He came to the king and shared a parable of a rich man, a poor man, and a little ewe lamb. Though the story had no direct connection to the life of King David, it evoked within him a sense of rage as he considered the rich man’s unthinkable treatment of the poor man and his lamb. Yet, with only four words direct application was made: “You are the man!” (2 Sam 12:7) Every situation and sermon will dictate the type of application that is needed. It is the preacher’s duty to be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and to make the application that would be most acceptable to God and most faithful to the text.

Stephen Olford offers a final guideline: “We must be practical in our application.”<sup>39</sup> It is at this point where preachers seem to fail most often. Bible expositors have long been known for their fidelity to Scripture. The fact that many preach through Bible books is precisely because they want to remain close to the text. Yet while they often do a good job of capturing the meaning of the text, they may fail to demonstrate the relevancy of the text to the listener. And even those that do attempt to make application often fail to make their instruction practical.

Those listeners that are striving to please God will want to know the facts surrounding Noah’s flood, the collapse of Jericho’s walls, and a number of other historical events. Yet, much more they will desire to know what to do in light of those events. The expositor must give his listeners some practical instructions that they can take and apply to their lives immediately. The inclusion of practical instruction will bring the truth of God’s Word down from the ivory tower to which most listeners have relegated it.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Olford and Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*, 255.

Practical application will compel them to apply the Word to their lives, where it rightly belongs.

### **Means of Application**

Having laid the groundwork for purposeful application within Christian preaching, now is the time to identify the means through which meaningful, practical, and biblical application takes place. It would be impossible to include all the various means of application, so this work focuses on those that could prove most beneficial to the preacher of Scripture.

### **Use of Applicational Wording throughout the Sermon**

Timothy Warren said that the expositional process is itself comprised of three processes: exegesis, theology, and homiletics.<sup>40</sup> The exegetical process rests primarily in the world of the ancient text. The theological process has its feet in both worlds, as sound theology is timeless and to be applied across all generations. The homiletical process rests in the present world as the preacher seeks to apply the truth of Scripture to the life of the listener. While the exegetical and theological processes will employ language that is declarative in nature, the homiletical process must make use of contemporary imperatives if the listener is to understand the relevancy of the text.

To illustrate this point, if an expositor were preaching a passage on Philippians 2:5-12, exegetically he might say that “Paul commanded the Philippians to take on the attitude of Jesus so that they would serve one another.”<sup>41</sup> Theologically, he could say that “serving one another requires the same attitude that Jesus had in coming to earth as an

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<sup>40</sup>Timothy S. Warren, “A Paradigm for Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (October-December 1991): 463.

<sup>41</sup>Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance*, 65.

atonement sacrifice.”<sup>42</sup> Homiletically, he would employ the imperative, “To be a servant, be like Jesus—submit to God’s plan.”<sup>43</sup> He would also want to go further by providing practical examples of how the listener can submit to God’s plan for his life.

Hershael York and Rod Decker have done a tremendous job of explaining the importance of applicational wording throughout the sermon.<sup>44</sup> They mention that many preachers make the mistake of dividing their sermons into descriptive points rather than applicational ones. Expositors are often tempted to use outlines that are very symmetrical, but reveal very little about the text of Scripture. For instance, the preacher might use the outline “The Sent One, The Scorned One, The Saving One.”<sup>45</sup> While such an outline might provide a grand description of the parts of the biblical text, it does very little to call the listener to action.

Instead, they offer this word of counsel to the preacher: “By moving from descriptive points to applicational points, you make the outline itself have content and interpretive impact, not merely structural value.”<sup>46</sup> When the expositor develops his preaching outline, he will want to include imperatives that call the listener to action. For instance, instead of saying, “Jesus died for our sins,” he will want to say, “Accept Jesus as your Savior.”<sup>47</sup> This type of instruction is practical and personal, leaving the audience with no room to wonder what must be done with the text that has been preached.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 140

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 140.

## **Make Application More Concrete**

Making application more concrete begins with identifying the purpose of the sermon, or what Richard refers to as “the brain of the sermon.”<sup>48</sup> Determining the purpose of the sermon is done by answering this question: “On the basis of the central proposition of this text, what does God want my people to understand and obey?”<sup>49</sup> This question can only be answered as the expositor seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit shows the expositor those truths that are to be understood and obeyed, then he must work to assist his listeners in answering a second question: “Now what do I do with God’s claims in this sermon?”<sup>50</sup>

An effective way for the preacher to make his application more concrete is to identify several arenas of life that will be touched by the text of Scripture. The arenas could include personal life, home life, work or study, church life, community life, recreation, etc. For instance, the preacher might be preaching a sermon on Matthew 7:12: “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Making application more concrete might force the expositor to ask his hearer if he has considered several specific individuals in the various arenas of his life. He might very well ask, “Have you done unto your spouse as you would have her to do unto you? Your children? Your employer? Your coworkers? Your brothers and sisters in Christ?” Having confronted the listener with specific individuals, the expositor would then want to ask a follow-up question: “If you have not treated your spouse, children, etc. with the same care you would desire, what will you do to correct the situation?” These sorts of questions promote immediate, concrete action as they illicit a call to repentance.

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<sup>48</sup>Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 78.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 115.

## Focus the Claims of Truth

While some preachers have chosen to leave the more particular aspects of application to the individual, others are convinced that speaking in generalities is not the correct approach. John Broadus wrote,

That [speaking in generalities] is not for the ordinary people of this world. The finger must often be put on the very spot of the illness. If truth is not focused sharply enough to “spot light” some particular principle or habit, or practice, or motive, or sentiment, or prejudice, or disposition, or need, it will not be very effective. And sometimes it must be made sharp enough to burn.<sup>51</sup>

Broadus has suggested the use of three literary devices to help focus the applicatory elements of the expositor’s message: remarks, inferences, and lessons.

Remarks are “certain noticeable matters belonging to or connected with the subject, to which attention is now especially directed.”<sup>52</sup> These sorts of remarks should always be very practical in nature, bearing down on the feelings and will of the audience. Yet, these remarks should not point people in a multitude of directions, but should have a common aim and make a uniform impression. It will be especially important for the expositor to know his audience when forming and sharing these remarks. For instance, some remarks will be more appropriate for the unregenerate while others will be reserved for the saved. Broadus offers a caveat to the preacher: “It is never judicious to make an application to any particular individual, and very rarely to a small and well-defined class.”<sup>53</sup> He warns that such an approach will nearly always do more harm than good.

Inferences are those statements that focus the truth by implying some particular form of application. According to Broadus, these inferences should be carefully limited in two directions. First, “Nothing should be presented as an inference which does not logically and directionally follow from the subject discussed.”<sup>54</sup> Further, “No inferences

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<sup>51</sup>John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1979), 167.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

should be drawn in applying a subject which are not of practical importance.”<sup>55</sup> While it is certainly not the preacher’s place to exhibit all the ways in which a particular passage can be applied, it behooves him to highlight those inferences that are most prominent in the text and most germane to the situation of the audience.

Lessons are those principles that leap from the text and are normally provided after an examination of the life of some biblical character(s). For instance, the expositor might be preaching a sermon on Joshua 9—the occasion when Israel mistakenly entered into a treaty with the Gibeonites. Joshua 9:14 says that “the men of Israel took some of their provisions, but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.” A lesson flowing naturally from the text is that God’s people should not make such decisions without first seeking God’s face through prayer and the study of His Word. The preacher could then ask his listeners to evaluate how much time they are spending with the Lord and if they are making decisions without the Lord’s consent.

### **Suggest Ways and Means**

Ways and means are “suggestions as to the best means and methods of performing the duty or duties enjoined in the sermon.”<sup>56</sup> Broadus explains the necessity of such suggestions: “It is exceedingly useful to give suggestions about the actual doing of a particular duty, to make it seem a practical and a practicable thing, to awaken hope of doing better, and thus stimulate effort.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, it is the expositor’s duty to demonstrate that the Christian life is one that can actually be lived. Further, it is his privilege to show his listeners that it is not just a life reserved for the preacher, deacons, or missionaries. The Christian life is one that can be enjoyed by everyone that is willing to receive Christ by faith.

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

Ways and means move beyond the philosophical to the practical—from the general to the specific. In the aforementioned example of Joshua 9, one can see how an appropriate lesson might be to spend more time seeking the counsels of God, especially prior to making important decisions. Ways and means can be found in a number of suggestions: purchase a daily Bible that includes Scripture readings for each day. If limited resources would forbid the listener from doing so, then the preacher might encourage him to meet with the pastor who would probably be more than happy to place Bible study resources in his hand. The expositor could also suggest a prayer outline to assist the listener in seeking God’s counsels before decisions have to be made. These kinds of ways and means go a long way in encouraging the listener to serve God more faithfully than he ever has before.

### **Persuasion to Response**

Broadus says that “the chief part of what is commonly called application is persuasion.”<sup>58</sup> In that sense, it is not enough merely to convince the listener of truth, nor to make him see how it applies to himself, nor even to help him see how he might live out the truths of Scripture. The wise expositor is one who does all those things, but then proceeds to the point of persuasion. An example of biblical persuasion can be seen in the apostle Paul: “We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). Persuasion is necessary because a person may see his need to respond to the Holy Spirit and still neglect his obligation to do so. For that reason, it is proper to persuade, exhort, and entreat.

While calling upon the volition of the hearer, it is entirely appropriate for the preacher to call upon his emotions as well. Of course, the preacher will want to take great care to insure that his attempts at persuasion do not morph into manipulation. Many have

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 170.

had the unfortunate experience of witnessing what seemed to be attempts at manipulation during the invitation of a preacher's message. I once watched as an evangelist prolonged an invitation because no one responded after several stanzas of an invitation hymn. He conjured up tears, yelled, and screamed until finally a small boy moved to the altar. The boy was probably no more than 5 years old and did not seem to have an idea of what was really happening. This sort of manipulation is appalling and is by no means a biblical form of persuasion.

### **Use an “Abstraction Ladder”**

While use of an abstraction ladder was first suggested by Haddon Robinson.<sup>59</sup> Vines and Shaddix have done a good deal to explain the use of the homiletical resource.<sup>60</sup> The abstraction ladder begins with the idea that each text of Scripture has a principle that underlies the text. It is the duty of the expositor to climb the ladder until he unearths the principle. The expositor climbs the ladder by asking the following questions: “What does this text teach about God? What does this text teach about human nature?”<sup>61</sup> While answering these questions, the preacher will sometimes find that the connection between biblical and modern worlds will be specific and concrete. At other times, the connection will be much more abstract.

Climbing down the ladder of abstraction will force the preacher to consider how much “translation” is necessary as he seeks to deliver God's message to his contemporary audience. For instance, the preacher will have to aid his listeners in understanding that “don't boil the kid with the mother's milk” means “don't participate in idolatrous

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<sup>59</sup>Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” 23, 25.

<sup>60</sup>Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 186-87.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.



practices of the surrounding culture.”<sup>62</sup> Connecting the modern listener with the truth of Scripture is what the abstraction ladder is all about.

### **Summary**

Application is of vital importance to Christian preaching. It is a call to action, for putting the principles of Scripture to work in lives. While application is not without its own problems and difficulties, those hardships can and must be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. The expositor of Scripture will be much better equipped to overcome the tension of application if he acquaints himself with good guidelines of application. Those guidelines can be heeded as the preacher identifies and uses the means through which Christ-honoring application takes place.

It is said that as Alexander Maclaren studied the Scriptures during his sermon preparation, that he would place an empty chair across from his desk. He imagined a person sitting in the chair and would carry on a dialogue between himself and the imaginary person.<sup>63</sup> This sort of exercise would help expositors everywhere to remember that they are not preaching to pews and windows. Rather, they are preaching to real people with real lives who need to glorify God where they are. Application of biblical truth will provide those people with the tools they need to glorify God in this life and the life to come.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Chevis F. Horne, *Dynamic Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 137.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE STORY OF THE EXPOSITORY PREACHING PROJECT AT LEBANON BAPTIST CHURCH, TALBOTT, TENNESSEE

This chapter reports the implementation of the ministry project conducted at Lebanon Baptist Church from August 2012 to December 2012. The strategy for implementation grew from a careful study of both theological and applicational principles for expository preaching and from an understanding of the context of Lebanon Baptist Church.

#### **The Initial Meeting**

Several weeks prior to the first meeting of the Help the Preacher (HTP) Committee (the name affectionately given to the project committee), I asked church members to pray about their involvement with the ministry project. I also took the liberty of personally asking several committed church members if they would be willing to serve on the HTP Committee. On August 5, 2012, an announcement was made from the pulpit that the initial meeting of the committee would occur the following Sunday night at 6pm.

On the evening of the August 12, 10 people attended the initial meeting in the pastor's study. The study also served as the location of each of the committee's remaining meetings. Once everyone was seated, I explained what I would be asking each participant to do. First, each person was thanked for his or her willingness to consider participation in the project. I then explained what I was looking for: 7-10 people who would be willing to attend regular services of worship plus 1-2 additional meetings each week following the preaching services. I emphasized that the meetings would not be

long and that they would focus on how my preaching could be improved and what could be done to prevent the church from experiencing some of the same problems encountered by the church at Corinth.

Each of the participants in the initial meeting were also told that they would be asked to fill out three small forms every week. The first form was a pre and post-worship questionnaire that was used to gauge each person's understanding of the struggles experienced by the church at Corinth (see appendix 1). The second form was a preaching evaluation that was completed during and after worship (see appendix 2). The third form was used to help each person identify any actions steps the church needed to take to prevent a repeat of the problems encountered by the church at Corinth (see appendix 3). Apart from my preaching, the third form was used to accomplish the goal of formative church discipline that was laid out as part of the project proposal.

Participants were also informed that my doctoral project would include a series of 14 messages. The messages were originally intended to be preached over the course of 14 consecutive weeks, however, the implementation of the project during the holiday months meant that some weeks would include 0, 1, or 2 messages. Events such as the church's annual Fall Festival, Community Thanksgiving Service, and Christmas required each week's preaching schedule to be adjusted accordingly. It was further explained that all messages would be preached during the evening services of worship—Sunday and Wednesday nights.

After describing all the demands of the project, I asked each of the 10 attendees to sign a "List of Willing Participants." The participants agreed to the following commitment:

By signing below, I am committing myself to participation in Rev. Todd Stinnett's doctoral project. I understand that my participation in this study is totally voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I will alert Brother Todd if I am no longer able to participate.

Each of the 10 attendees signed the list and the HTP Committee was formally established on the evening of August 12, 2012.

### **Implementation of the Project**

Having set the members of the HTP Committee, each person was given a copy of the three forms that were used to gauge each person's understanding of the Corinthian situation, to evaluate the preaching, and to identify any action steps that could be taken to prevent a relapse of the Corinthian struggles. What follows is a sermon-by-sermon explanation of each occasion's message and the committee's deliberations. I acted as recording secretary for each week's meeting.

#### **Meeting 1: Avoiding Division in the Body of Christ**

The preaching text was 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and 3:1-9. Ten members of the HTP committee were present. Prior to preaching, the committee rated their familiarity with the biblical text as above average. The sermon identified the problem at Corinth as a church that was divided because some were choosing allegiance to particular leaders rather than the Savior, Jesus Christ. Detail was given to how the members of Lebanon could avoid divisions within our fellowship. Listeners were instructed that divisions within the Body of Christ can be avoided by sharing the same speech, the same power, and the same mind.

After hearing the sermon, members of the committee said their understanding of the Corinthian struggle improved to an above average level. The committee also felt that I attempted to apply God's Word to their lives, rating the application at 7.7 (above average) on a scale of 1-10. One example of application is found in my first preaching point. When discussing the need to share the same speech, I asked the listeners to consider what they spend the majority of their time talking about. Reminding them that

Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt 12:34), I reminded each person that we should be spending a good deal of our time talking about the Lord if He is truly the love of our lives.

Overall, the committee members deemed the possibility of divisions in the Lebanon fellowship as unlikely. When asked what action steps could be taken to avoid unwanted divisions, members identified several possibilities. The two most popular suggestions were the announcement of an open-door policy by the pastor and a renewed emphasis on the prayer ministry of the church. The open-door policy was suggested in the hope that members would feel welcome to come and settle differences with the pastor (and with one another) rather than speaking behind one another’s back. Already the policy has been announced and the results are encouraging. The church also acted on the action step of a renewed prayer emphasis. A Sunday morning 9:30 a.m. prayer time has been created prior to Sunday school and is drawing a larger crowd with each passing week. An altar prayer time has also been added to the Sunday morning worship service, just prior to preaching. Discussions have also taken place regarding the addition of a prayer room to the church. Consequently, no noticeable divisions have been witnessed within the fellowship.

### **Meeting 2: The Antidote for Arrogance**

This occasion’s preaching text was 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 and 4:14-21. Nine members of the HTP committee were present. Their level of familiarity with the text was not quite as high as the previous meeting. Where they had rated their previous level of familiarity at 6, this meeting’s level was placed at 5.5. The Corinthian problem identified in this occasion’s sermon was the arrogance on display at Corinth. Listeners were encouraged to receive God’s “antidote for arrogance.” The antidote began with an admission that only God is wise and that men should not be placed on a pedestal.

Listeners were also told that involving themselves in disciple-making and desiring the power of God would keep them from the snare of arrogance.

The committee rated the applicatory elements of the sermon at 8.5. While preaching on the importance of seeing men as they truly are, I challenged the listeners to avoid the “Superstar Christian” culture that the church or Christian industry has created through periodicals, conferences, and music. I reminded the listeners that Christians sidetrack themselves when they elevate men rather than worshiping the Maker.

Greater advances were shown in this meeting’s message as opposed to the previous occasion. For instance, HTP members said that their understanding of the Corinthian struggle increased from 5.5 before the message to 8 following the preaching—well above average. The committee also felt that it was possible that the church could be slouching in the direction of arrogance. One member even commented that arrogance had prevented some members from getting along and “lifting up one another.”

For that reason, actions steps were identified. One suggestion was made that seemed to be the most appealing to the group. It was proposed that the church periodically “adopt a verse” to help keep the church focused on the Lord. The idea was that focusing on the Lord’s holiness and glory would keep us from the tendency to elevate ourselves beyond measure. One verse was proposed: “It’s time to seek the Lord” (Hos 10:12). Already the verse has been adopted by the church’s Vision Team and has been added to the church’s monthly newsletter. Other passages were also recommended, and among them was Proverbs 6:16-19. As the months and years roll on, we hope to continue the practice of adopting a verse that keeps the bride’s attention fixed on her bridegroom.

### **Meeting 3: A Return to Church Discipline**

This meeting’s preaching text was 1 Corinthians 5. There were 10 HTP

members present and they rated their pre-sermon familiarity of the highlighted Corinthian struggle as slightly above average. The problem identified in this occasion's text was the failure of the Corinthian church to practice church discipline on an erring member. This sermon was somewhat different than the two previous messages in that it was very instructional in nature. The sermon posed a series of questions and attempted to answer them throughout the course of the message. Questions included: Why do we need church discipline? Why do we do church discipline? Where is church discipline carried out? How is church discipline done?

The committee rated the sermon's applicatory elements as above average. While attempting to apply the reason for church discipline, I asked listeners to pose this question to themselves: Are you genuinely concerned with the welfare of the local church and its various members? I explained that the purpose of church discipline is never to be cruel, but to restore erring members to the body. Not only did the committee's post-sermon understanding increase, but some indicated that the church could be slouching in a direction that would cause us to refuse discipline to an erring member.

A multitude of actions steps were suggested. Two of the steps emerged above the rest. First was a new emphasis on the church's covenant. The church covenant is displayed prominently in the foyer of Lebanon Baptist Church, as it is in many other Southern Baptist churches. The church will soon be remodeling the foyer, but it has already been decided that while the church covenant may be relocated, it will not be removed. In fact, the church has discussed the possibility of reprinting it with a more modern script. Further, it was suggested that the church encourage greater accountability in small groups. Our Sunday school superintendent has been made aware of this need and discussions are already underway concerning the addition of care groups to Sunday school classes.

#### **Meeting 4: Do God's People belong in the People's Court?**

The focus of this meeting was 1 Corinthians 6:1-11. There were 8 HTP members present and they rated their familiarity with the preaching text at 6, slightly below the average of the previous meeting's message. The problem at Corinth was identified at the outset of the sermon—church members taking one another to court rather than resolving differences within the body of Christ. This sermon was treated very much like sermon 3 in that it included a very didactic outline. The message asked and answered the following questions: When do God's people stay out of the people's court? Why do God's people stay out of the people's court? Why do God's people often end up in the people's court?

The application of this message was much more inductive than deductive. That is, the application was primarily reserved for the end of the message. Listeners were asked if they had been “washed . . . sanctified . . . (and) justified” (1 Cor 6:11). If so, they were reminded that they would finally receive justice when standing before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Listeners were encouraged not to avenge themselves, but to allow themselves to “accept wrong” and “let (themselves) be cheated” (1 Cor 6:7), awaiting the time when God would make all things right.

Once the message concluded, members reported that their understanding of the Corinthian struggle had been enhanced. Five of the committee members indicated that members of our church might be slouching in a direction that could prompt them to take matters to court rather than resolving them within the church. Consequently, action steps were identified to prevent a relapse of the Corinthian situation. Of all the steps identified, the one that seemed the most practical was to develop a way of helping people to resolve conflicts with one another. The church has honored the spirit of this action step by encouraging people to seek out a member they are at odds with during the invitation portion of the worship service. The committee hopes that this will encourage members to



resolve differences proactively before they are tempted to take matters to the people's court.

### **Meeting 5: The Truth about Sexual Immorality**

The preaching text for this meeting was 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. This meeting occurred during Labor Day week so several HTP members were out of town. Consequently, there were only 6 members available to serve as the committee. The members rated their familiarity with this meeting's text at 6.5—higher than any of the passages that had been preached thus far. The problem at the church in Corinth was identified as sexual immorality among the church's members. Much like the previous two messages, the preaching outline was very didactic in nature. It attempted to answer the following two questions: What is sexual immorality? Why is sexual immorality forbidden?

The application of the message was primarily inductive. At the conclusion of the message, listeners were encouraged to put up "guardrails" in their life that would keep them from the pitfalls of sexual immorality. For instance, spouses were encouraged to pursue a more passionate relationship with one another. A number of practical suggestions were offered: date nights, going to bed at the same time, and spending more quality time with one another. All listeners were encouraged to never allow themselves to be left alone with members of the opposite sex and to keep themselves from obvious situations of sexual temptation.

While members of the HTP committee rated their pre-sermon familiarity with the text as above average, they also said the sermon increased their understanding of the Corinthian struggle. While a majority of the committee did not see the church slouching in a direction of sexual immorality, they still felt it necessary to identify some action steps that would keep members from infidelity and impurity. The most practical of the

action steps was greater accountability through small groups. As a result, men's and women's small groups are now meeting on Sunday nights at 6 p.m. Attendance in the small groups has been strong and has provided both sexes with the opportunities for accountability they need to keep them from sexual perversion and promiscuity.

### **Meeting 6: Biblical Teaching on Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Singleness**

The text for this meeting was the entirety of 1 Corinthians 7. Following Labor Day festivities, attendance at this week's meeting was back up as 8. They rated their pre-sermon familiarity with the text as above average, yet below where they had indicated their knowledge of the previous week's text. In this case, the primary problem encountered by the church at Corinth was one of ignorance. The church had questions about marriage, divorce, remarriage, and singleness, and they were looking to the apostle Paul for answers.

Admittedly, the preaching of this text was quite a challenge as it dealt with forty verses and a multitude of issues. While a reading and brief exposition of the text was offered to listeners, the whole of the passage was handled in more of a topical approach than previous passages. Biblical issues surrounding marriage, divorce, remarriage, and singleness were handled in that order. Because the nature of the message tended more toward teaching, application was primarily (though not exclusively) reserved for the end of the message. Listeners were especially encouraged to find and fulfill God's plan for their life, even if that plan included a life of singleness for the glory of God.

More than any of the other issues covered throughout the course of this project, committee members felt that church members were sliding in a direction that could end in divorce. In fact, many church members have already experienced the heartbreak of divorce and some are currently going through divorce. For that reason, at least four

action steps were identified by the committee. Among them was a need to insure that couples were receiving adequate pre- and post-marriage counseling. Consequently, the church has initiated a Holy Matrimony Committee that has been charged with the duty of revisiting the church's wedding policy. The committee and the deacons have encouraged the church to require couples to undergo pre-marriage counseling before they may use church facilities for weddings. It is the hope of the HTP Committee that the Holy Matrimony Committee will also provide other means of encouragement to existing and established couples seeking help in times of marital distress.

### **Meeting 7: Are You a Stumbling Block or a Stepping Stone?**

This meeting's preaching text was 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1. The 6 members of the HTP Committee present indicated that this passage was one of the more familiar ones of the entire study, rating their familiarity at 6.3 (above average). The problem of the Corinthian church was identified—the Corinthians did not know how to deal with meat that had been sacrificed to idols.

The sermon was very expositional in nature. It was explained to the listeners that Paul said there was nothing wrong with eating meat sacrificed to idols since “food does not commend us to God” (1 Cor 8:8). Yet, there were some immature Christians who did not know that it was acceptable for believers to partake of meat that had been offered to idols. For that reason, believers could unknowingly cause others to stumble in their faith by partaking of meat used in idol worship. Likewise, twenty-first century Christians can cause their fellow believers to stumble in their faith by participating in practices that might be deemed “questionable” by the spiritually immature. Applying the text, listeners were encouraged to ask themselves the following questions before engaging in any questionable behaviors: Will doing this action cause my brother to stumble? Will the action edify my brother? Will the action bring glory to God?

Though their familiarity with the text was above average at the beginning of the message, committee members felt that their understanding of the Corinthian situation improved during the sermon. Half the committee members also indicated that our church members were leaning in a direction that would cause weaker Christians to stumble. Action steps were identified and among them was the need for members to discontinue the airing of “dirty laundry.” This action step has been re-emphasized in sermons preached since the conclusion of the project. For instance, a recent sermon on 1 Peter 2:1-3 reminded listeners to “put away all . . . evil speaking.” It was the prayer of the committee and the pastor that a reduction in gossip would keep weaker Christians (and all Christians) from stumbling in their faith.

### **Meeting 8: The Financial Support of Christian Leaders**

The preaching text for this meeting’s sermon was 1 Corinthians 9:1-18. As with the previous week’s message, there were 6 members of the HTP Committee present. I can honestly say this was one of the most unique meetings throughout the entire course of the project. Part of that uniqueness had to do with the committee’s lack of familiarity with this meeting’s text. They rated their overall familiarity at a project-low of 4.8—only vaguely familiar. The problem at the church in Corinth had to do with the fact that some were having trouble with the monetary compensation of Christian leaders.

The sermon followed an expository format with inductive application. Two primary application points were identified following the exposition of the text. One of the points was for pastors, the other for parishioners. First, it was explained that the pastor’s motivation for ministering the gospel must never be a paycheck. Yet, it was explained to parishioners that it is up to God’s people to support God’s men. At the conclusion of the message, members were encouraged to ask themselves this question: Are we satisfying God with the way we are currently providing for our leader(s)?

While members of the committee rated their overall familiarity with the text as very low prior to the message, they said their understanding of the text increased dramatically during the message. While the reason for their pre-sermon lack of familiarity was not identified, it could be that they have seldom heard this text preached. It is understandable why a preacher could see the exposition of this text as self-serving, but because it is part of God's Word, clearly God's people need to be exposed to its truth.

Also unique to this week's preaching text was that only 1 of 6 members felt that the church was slouching in a direction of failing to provide adequately for its leaders. Their opinion was that it was unlikely that their leaders would cease to be adequately compensated at any time in the future. In spite of those findings, the committee still identified some helpful actions steps. Two of the steps seemed most practical to the committee: maintain the church's Personnel Committee, and keep a watch over the Southern Baptist Convention's compensation studies each time they are released. The church consulted the compensation studies when I was called as pastor in September 2011, and the Personnel Committee has pledged to seek out the counsel of the studies moving into the future.

### **Meeting 9: Landmines of Lust We Must Avoid**

The preaching text for this week's meeting was 1 Corinthians 10:1-13. This was by far the lowest attended of all the project's meetings with only 4 members of the HTP committee present. Several members of the committee were sick, traveling, or entertaining family members who had traveled in to stay with them. The committee rated their pre-sermon text familiarity as average.

The problem of the Corinthian church was explained from the outset of the message—members of the Corinthian church were being tempted to “lust after evil things” (1 Cor 10:6). For that reason, the sermon encouraged listeners to avoid four lust-

filled landmines addressed by the text: idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God, and ingratitude. Because the sermon was preached in a deductive format, application was made throughout the message. For instance, while encouraging the listeners to refrain from testing God, I asked them to consistently remind themselves of two verses: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31), because “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29).

As with the previous sermons, committee members felt that their understanding of the text improved over the course of the sermon. In fact, 3 out of 4 members felt that they could adequately explain the truth of this meeting’s text to someone outside the church. This sermon also marked the first occasion when members of the committee rated the preacher’s application as “outstanding.” All 4 members of the committee felt that it was very probable our church was leaning in a direction that could end up in idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God, or ingratitude. As a result, action steps were discussed and among them was the creation of a more detailed disciple-making ministry. Already, appeals for willing disciple-makers have been made in church publications and about 10 members have volunteered to train new and spiritually immature believers.

### **Meeting 10: No One Can Drink from Two Cups**

This meeting’s preaching text was 1 Corinthians 10:14-22. Attendance at this week’s meeting was back to normal as 9 members of the committee were present. The 9 members rated their familiarity with the text as average. This meeting’s text had some overlap with the previous week’s text in that it addressed the sin of idolatry, only this time in much more detail. It was explained that Paul plainly stated his main idea in 1 Corinthians 10:14—“Flee from idolatry.”

This sermon followed the exposition/application format of some of the

previous sermons. As such, the application was inductive in nature and reserved for the end of the message. Listeners were encouraged to guard themselves against some common culprits of idolatry. Among them were other gods/religions, counterfeit Christianity, and the “stuff of self.” In regard to this last idol, Christians were given some questions that would help them gauge whether or not they were spending too much time focusing on themselves. Some of the questions included: What do I want to do? Where do I want to go? How much money can I make? Driving home the application, listeners were encouraged to allow God to set each day’s agenda.

Two-thirds of the committee felt that our church was slouching in a direction that could lead us toward idolatry. Action steps were identified in an attempt to change that perceived trend. One of the best steps mentioned was to keep the traditions of the church in proper perspective. In an attempt to honor the spirit of this suggestion, the church has consulted the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Already they have sent three members of their ministry team to come and evaluate the church’s facilities and to make recommendations as to how the church can update its appearance. The committee hopes that a willingness to change the church’s physical appearance will keep the members from making idols out of traditions—no matter what form they may take.

### **Meeting 11: Are You Acknowledging Your Appointed Authorities?**

The preaching text for this meeting was 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. There were 8 members of the HTP committee present and they rated their pre-sermon familiarity with the text as below average. This is a unique passage of Scripture in that it deals with head coverings—a concept that is almost totally foreign to churches in the twenty-first century. That probably explains the lower than average familiarity demonstrated by the committee. While the subject of the text is head coverings, it was explained that the main problem the Corinthians struggled with was a failure to acknowledge their appointed

authorities—a problem that was apparently being demonstrated by a failure to cover the head in an appropriate manner.

This sermon followed the now familiar exposition/application format used in previous messages. The exposition of the text offered a word to both men and women before concluding with statements of authority and equality from verses 7-12. The application of the text attempted to answer an overarching question: Why did God give us this Word? I explained that God inspired Paul to write this passage because he wants Christians to acknowledge their appointed authorities through outward appearance and external submission. The final word of application came through a reminder of who some God-given authorities are and how God would have Christians to submit to each one.

As action steps for the formative discipline of the church were determined, special attention was given to the men of the church. The sermon seemed to inspire a common response from the entire committee—the men of Lebanon Baptist simply are not doing enough to act as responsible authorities in the home and the local church. It was determined that more needed to be done to emphasize the men's small group that currently meets together on Sunday nights at 6 p.m. It was also decided that the men need to give serious consideration to a men's retreat sometime in the near future. The retreat would offer a time when men could get away from their responsibilities and take time to pray and seek the Lord's counsel on how to be better spiritual authorities.

### **Meeting 12: Avoiding an Improper Observance of the Lord's Supper**

This meeting's preaching text was 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. There were 7 members of the HTP committee present, and they rated their familiarity with the text as average. That was a little unusual to me, especially since I read this text almost every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper together. In any event, the problem experienced by



the church at Corinth was identified—failure to observe the Lord’s Supper in a holy, Christ-honoring manner.

The preaching of this text was more didactic and deductive than some of the previous weeks’ messages. There were three main movements of the sermon: the problem was identified, the purpose of the Lord’s Supper was highlighted, and the protocol for the Lord’s Supper was explained. Application appeared in various places throughout the message, but it was especially clear when the protocol for the Lord’s Supper was explained. Listeners were encouraged to ask themselves the following questions before any observance of the Lord’s Supper: What am I doing here? Why am I partaking of these elements? Listeners were also reminded that God’s judgment would meet those who would dare to partake of the elements in “an unworthy manner” (11:27).

Members of the committee said that their understanding of the text improved during the course of the message. In fact, all 7 said they felt they could adequately explain the meaning of the text to someone outside the church. When the time for action steps arrived, several good recommendations were made. One member said it would be good if the observance of the Lord’s Supper were announced weeks ahead of time so that members could have adequate time to prepare themselves. Another member said it would be good if the pastor would encourage children to sit with their parents while the Supper is being observed. It was also suggested that adequate time be made for confession and testimonies prior to each observance. All these steps will be implemented as we observe the Lord’s Supper in the future.

### **Meeting 13: Spiritual Gifts and an Orderly Body of Christ**

The preaching text for this meeting was 1 Corinthians 12-14. There were 7 members present to serve as the HTP committee, and they rated their pre-sermon familiarity with this text higher than any of the others preached throughout the project.

They gave themselves an overall familiarity grade of 6.7—well above the average. Frankly, I am glad they expressed a high acquaintance with the text because this passage presented the greatest challenge I had throughout the project. Three chapters in one sermon is not a model I would recommend very often.

Because the text was of such great length, I had to narrow the focus of the message to spiritual gifts. The preaching of the message included ten points, and all of them were very didactic in nature. The points attempted to treat the chapters as expositively as possible. Preaching points covered everything from the source of spiritual gifts, the recipients of spiritual gifts, etc. The application of the text presented a significant challenge because there were so many things that needed to be taught before they could be applied. Yet, I was able to manage some application. For instance, I encouraged all listeners to discover and use their spiritual gifts for the edification of the entire church.

After the preaching of the message, 5 of 7 committee members felt that our church could be leaning in a direction that might not allow its members to discover and use their spiritual gifts. Action steps were identified and they included some very helpful suggestions. Among them was the need to contact inactive members. The idea was that members probably will not be using their gifts for the benefit of the local church if they are not in fellowship with the body of Christ. Steps have already been taken by the church to identify inactive members and to contact them and compel them to come back into fellowship with the church. It was also suggested that the church help its members identify their spiritual gifts through courses on the gifts and the use of spiritual gift inventories. Both of these are strategies that the church plans to utilize in the near future.

#### **Meeting 14: What If Jesus Lied about the Resurrection?**

The preaching text for this concluding meeting of the HTP committee was 1

Corinthians 15:12-28. There were 10 members of the committee present and they rated their pre-sermon familiarity with the text as above average. It was explained to members that Paul identified the Corinthian problem: “Some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor 15:12). It was also explained that the problem at Corinth was not just unique to Paul’s time, but that it is still a problem in many so-called churches of the twenty-first century.

The sermon approached the subject of Christ’s resurrection from two distinct perspectives—the consequences of no resurrection and the consequences required by the reality of resurrection. The first part of the sermon dealt with the consequences of no resurrection as they were laid out by Paul in verses 13-19. Seven such consequences were identified. Likewise, the latter part of the message was given to a discussion of what must be true if Christ is risen from the dead. The latter seven consequences were drawn from the words of Paul in verses 20-28. The application of the sermon was inductive and focused on the following question: Does it really matter what we believe about the resurrection?

Thankfully, all 10 members of the committee walked away from the preaching satisfied that they could adequately explain the consequences of denying or believing the resurrection. Committee members also felt it very unlikely that the church was leaning in a direction that could encourage a denial of the resurrection. Yet, they felt it necessary to identify some action steps that would prevent any such denials in the future. One action step that garnered a good deal of support was a screening of the church’s teachers as to their level of doctrinal soundness. While no one felt that there was currently any teacher denying the resurrection, everyone thought it was a good idea to make sure that all teachers were instructing their students according to the church’s doctrinal statement—the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. Adherence to the doctrinal statement should insure

that no one remains in a teaching position that does not affirm the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Having completed the project, there were several noteworthy items I noticed. Committee members typically rated their familiarity with each week's passage as average. Following each week's message, they tended to say their understanding of the Corinthian situation had improved to above or well-above average. It was also encouraging that 82 percent of committee members walked away from each meeting feeling as though they could explain the Corinthian struggle to someone else. Responders also indicated that the preacher attempted to apply the biblical text to the audience, and that the preacher's ability to apply the text seemed to grow as the project progressed. While a rating of "outstanding" application was not achieved until meeting 9, 3 of the last 6 messages were rated as "outstanding" in their application.

Also worthy of note is that committee members felt that only half of the problems discussed were seen as only "possibly" likely to occur at Lebanon Baptist. Five of the problems were deemed "unlikely" to occur, but two were marked as "probable" and will be given the most attention moving forward. Further evaluation of the project will be provided in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5  
EVALUATION OF THE EXPOSITORY  
PREACHING PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to utilize expository preaching through the book of 1 Corinthians as a means of formative church discipline at Lebanon Baptist Church in Talbott, Tennessee. Ten people from the congregation were selected to form the Help the Preacher (HTP) Committee and assisted the pastor in the implementation of the project. The project began in August of 2012 and concluded the last week of December in the same year. Throughout the course of the project, many lessons were learned and several issues surfaced that confirmed the creation and implementation of the project. There are several aspects of the project that should be evaluated, and first among them is the evaluation of the project's purpose.

**Evaluation of Purpose**

An evaluation of the project's purpose requires a definition of one of the terms stated therein—formative church discipline. While definitions of formative discipline abound, the project proposal set forth the proceeding definition: "Formative church discipline is the means through which preventive measures are taken to safeguard the church from falling into all manner of evil thinking, speaking, and acting." It is the preventive aspect of formative discipline that is especially germane to this project. The question must be asked, "Did this project assist the church in taking pro-active, preventive measures that would keep its members from the paths of sin?"

The answer to that question is yes. The expository preaching of the Word exposed God's people to God's truth. Once exposed to God's truth, the HTP Committee

was then charged with the responsibility of helping the church to apply those truths to the life of the church. The committee identified action steps that were taken and used to prevent any relapse of the Corinthian struggles. Sixty-four action steps were identified by the committee and the church has already acted on the ones that they deemed most effective in helping them to be further conform to the image of Christ.

While not officially mentioned in the project's purpose statement, an additional purpose of this project was to make the preacher a better applier of God's truth. The only way to assess the fulfillment of that purpose was to study the responses of the HTP Committee on their sermon evaluation forms. In every sermon, the responders stated that the pastor attempted to apply the biblical text to the lives of the listener and the local church. While application scores tended to be good throughout the project, it is worth noting that a grade of "outstanding" was not given to the preacher's application until sermon 9. Yet, of the six final sermons, half of them received a grade of "outstanding" in the area of application. This seems to indicate that the preacher became a better applier of biblical truth over the course of the project. Based on the aforementioned truths, it appears that the project's purpose was fulfilled.

### **Evaluation of Goals**

This project included four stated goals. Goal 1 was to increase the congregation's understanding of the problems that existed at Corinth during the first century. The bolstering of the congregation's knowledge was achieved almost entirely through the means of expository preaching, with additional insights being shared during committee meetings. Because this project included fourteen messages, there were ample opportunities for the committee to grow in their understanding of the Corinthian struggles.

A questionnaire was used to gauge the pre-sermon knowledge of each of the committee members. On a scale of 1 to 10, committee members were asked to rate their

familiarity with the problems that existed at Corinth. In all but two messages, committee members rated their familiarity with the biblical text at “average” or “above average.” This would indicate that I have the pleasure of preaching to a congregation that possesses a high level of biblical literacy. The high biblical literacy of the congregation probably has to do with the fact that they were pastored by one man, my predecessor, for 38 years. He was and is a lover of God’s Word, and encouraged the congregation to study God’s Word systematically, both at home and in the local church.

Though the committee gave themselves high marks when asked about the Corinthian passages, it was encouraging to find that they felt their understanding of those passages increased through the preaching of the Word. While most of the pre-sermon ratings fell in the 5 to 6 range on a 10-point scale, post-sermon understanding trended in the 7 to 8 point range. That means that the committee members felt comfortable saying their knowledge had consistently increased from “vaguely familiar” in some cases to above “average” or even “well above average.” On average, 82 percent of committee members walked away from each sermon feeling as though they could explain the Corinthian problems to someone else. Based on the numbers, it appears that goal 1 was achieved.

Goal 2 was to identify any particular areas of the church’s ministry that looked to be headed toward problems similar to those experienced at Corinth. A questionnaire was once again utilized to assess the achievement of this goal. After listening to each of the project’s sermons, committee members were asked if the church was currently slouching in a direction that could cause them to face the same problems identified at Corinth. While responses varied, the committee felt that half the problems were only “possibly” likely to occur at Lebanon Baptist Church. Five of the problems identified at Corinth were deemed “unlikely” to occur, and the remaining two problems were classified as “probable” to occur.

Sermon 6 and 9 highlighted the problems that the committee deemed

“probable” to occur. Sermon 6 touched on issues surrounding marriage, divorce, remarriage, and singleness. After reading the completed questionnaires, there was one overarching reason the committee felt this way—a good number of our church family has already experienced the tragedy of divorce. Others mentioned that some couples in the church were going through divorce or seem to be headed for divorce. Action steps were identified to remedy the prevailing problem and prayerfully much more work can be done to strengthen relationships among those in the church family.

Sermon 9 was unique in that it identified one overarching problem—lusting after evil things—that manifests itself in several different forms. Among those mentioned by Paul were idolatry, committing sexual immorality, testing Christ, and complaining. Responses were not always very clear about which particular problems committee members felt we were most likely to experience. Further examination of the problems identified in this sermon will almost certainly be necessary if preventive measures are to be taken. The overall goal of identifying potential problem areas in the church appears to have been a success. If nothing else, this particular goal forced the committee to ask and answer some hard questions about the livelihood of the church.

The third goal of the project was to determine and implement any action steps that may be needed to prevent any future problems. As previously mentioned, the committee identified 64 action steps that the church could take as a direct result of assessing the Corinthian struggle and the ministries of Lebanon Baptist Church. Because chapter 4 of this project went into detail explaining the actions steps the committee deemed to be most beneficial, it would be superfluous to restate those steps here. The actions steps highlighted by the committee were not just words placed on a piece of paper. The steps acted as directives that the church has taken seriously and acted on for the glory of God. To that end, goal 3 was achieved.

The fourth goal of the project was to increase the overall clarity and effectiveness of application within my expository preaching. This goal became very



important to the project after a conversation I had with Chuck Lawless, who acted as my faculty advisor when I began the project phase of my doctoral work. While the project's original purpose focused almost entirely on the formative discipline of the church, Lawless made it clear to me that a healthy portion of the project should focus on my improvement as an expository preacher. He instructed me to identify some particular aspect of my preaching that needed to be improved. I have always felt that application was the weakest part of my preaching, so that was the area I chose.

Notwithstanding the evaluation scores that I referenced in the "Evaluation of Purpose" section of this chapter, I honestly feel I have become a better applier of biblical truth as a result of this project. At times application forced me to ask questions of the congregation. Other times application forced me to call the congregation's attention back to some portion of God's Word they may have previously missed. Chapter 3 of this project was especially beneficial to me. I was forced to read about homiletics exercises such as an abstraction ladder and other concepts that I had not really considered in the past. Even studying the work of a man such as John Broadus, though it is by no means contemporary, forced me to deal with applicational methods that can be applied to listeners in the modern age. For these reasons, I believe the fourth goal of my project was achieved as the clarity and effectiveness of my application improved.

### **Evaluation of Methodology**

The methodology of this project was directly connected to the project's goals, for apart from a sound methodology there would be no way of achieving or assessing any of the aforementioned goals. In order to begin the project, I had to have a core group of committed church members that would comprise the HTP Committee. I had the option of selecting members out of the congregation, but I chose to take a different approach. I opted to ask members if they would be willing to serve in a general announcement from the pulpit. I gave the congregation a general idea about what sort of time commitment

would be involved, and based on that announcement 10 people attended the initial meeting. All 10 agreed to serve, and while there were some weeks when attendance was poor (for reasons of sickness, vacation, etc.), participation was always good. For that reason, I believe the committee formation process was good.

The main methodology of the project consisted of two things—expository preaching and evaluation. As I considered a project, I wanted to do something that would help the congregation learn from mistakes that had been made by others. I could not think of a congregation that made more mistakes than the church at Corinth. Clearly that is why I chose to preach through the book of 1 Corinthians. One of the tremendous challenges of the project was preaching through the book in a time frame that would be permitted by the office of doctoral studies. I determined that I would need to condense my preaching to only 14 messages, but that created some hardships. In some cases, an entire chapter or chapters would have to be covered in one message. Messages covering such massive amounts of text were the exception rather than the rule, but it still made the preaching task ominous at times. Yet, I would count this project's preaching methodology a success as it provided a format that gave the committee sufficient information to develop a church-altering series of action steps.

Evaluation was the second major part of this project's methodology. Committee members were given three forms at the beginning of each sermon. Two forms were questionnaires that helped to gauge the committee's pre and post-sermon understanding of the Corinthian situation. The questionnaires also helped the committee in the formulation of action steps. The third form was a general preaching evaluation that helped me to discern whether or not I was preaching God's Word in a clear and effective manner. The preaching evaluation was also especially helpful in showing me whether or not the applicatory elements of my messages were improving. While the questionnaires could have been more specific in some places, I believe they were good tools in assisting the committee and myself to accomplish the stated goals. Had the forms been much

longer, I think the committee could have grown weary in their service and could have even been tempted to provide only half-hearted responses in the interest of time.

### **Strengths of the Project**

One of the great strengths of this project was that it exposed God's people to God's truth. The Bible is very clear that "where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law" (Prov 29:18). It is exciting to know that committee members and the entire congregation were exposed to God's revelation through fourteen sermons that were delivered out of God's Word. The Word of God is powerful (Heb 4:12), and I believe that being confronted with the truth of 1 Corinthians has proven to be a tremendous blessing to our fellowship.

An additional strength of this project is that it forced a small group of members to identify action steps that were then acted on by the church. Apart from this project, I do not know that the church would have attempted some of the pro-active steps that have been taken. For instance, chapter 4 of this project mentions the formation of a Holy Matrimony Committee at Lebanon Baptist Church. That committee was born directly out of action steps that were identified by the HTP Committee following sermon 6. Already the Holy Matrimony Committee has revisited the church's wedding policy and changes to the bylaws were made during a special-called business session. It is these sorts of preventive measures that the project was created to produce.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

One overarching weakness of this project was that it attempted to do so much within a very limited amount of time. While the identification of action steps has proven to be healthy for the church, it would have been beneficial to have had more time to flesh out exactly what the implementation of those steps would look like. If the committee had more time to dialogue with one another, perhaps they could have given even more specific information to the church about ways the steps could be enacted. Time was an

ever-present issue for committee members as some of their spouses often waited for the completion of meetings so they could ride home with their loved one. Encouragement to ride to church in separate vehicles might have been something that could have helped to solve this problem.

The aforementioned weakness surfaced in other areas of the project as well. As previously mentioned, preaching through 1 Corinthians is an ominous task, but one that is made much more challenging when it has to be accomplished in fourteen sermons. While I believe the information provided to committee members and the church was adequate, this project could have easily been two or three times longer than it was. Of course, that would have created a hardship for committee members who sacrificed their time and energy for the sake of the project. Perhaps the selection of a shorter Bible book could have helped to solve this issue, but I do not think that another book would have exposed the people to the problems that needed to be confronted through the expository preaching of 1 Corinthians.

### **Theological Reflection**

The theological underpinnings of this project were identified in chapter 2. The five passages that I selected and exegeted (and were approved by the Office of Doctoral Studies) provide an adequate theological rationale for this project. Having completed the project, I am even more convinced that expository preaching is the chief means of formative church discipline within the local church. It is very clear to me now why Paul said, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Scripture underscores the vital importance of public proclamation.

### **Personal Reflection**

This project has been a tremendous blessing in a number of ways. First, the project was of great benefit to me personally. It forced me to develop a theology of preaching. It then forced me to consider elements of my preaching that needed to be

improved. After identifying the area in need of most improvement, the project also forced me to consider models and methods that I may have never considered otherwise. I sincerely believe I have become a better proclaimer and applier of biblical truth as a result of this work.

The project has also proven to be a wonderful blessing to the church. One need only to read chapter 4 of this project to see just some of the ways that the action steps required by this project have transformed the livelihood and operation of the church. Several people have asked me if I felt the doctorate degree and the project were worth my time. The answer to that question is an unequivocal “yes.” If I had it to do over again I certainly would. Why would anyone want to miss the blessings this project provided to the pastor, the committee, and the congregation?

### **Conclusion**

The thought recently occurred to me that this could be the last paragraph I will ever write as part of my formal educational endeavors. I am sure that volumes more will be written in ministerial endeavors and other venues, but this chapter will most likely close the book on my formal classroom training. From public school, to college, to seminary, and now to doctoral studies, God has guided me all along the way and for that I am eternally grateful. My prayer is that the remaining days of my ministry will be illuminated by my education and anointed by His Holy Spirit. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

## APPENDIX 1

### PRE- AND POST-WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE 1

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are to participate is designed to evaluate your current understanding of the problems that existed at the church in Corinth. This research is being conducted by Todd Stinnett for purposes of project research as he fulfills the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will provide information that will gauge both your pre- and post-sermon understanding of the Corinthian situation. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

#### **Pre-Worship Questions**

1. Using the scale provided below, please rate your level of familiarity with the text your pastor will be preaching this Sunday:  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10  
Unfamiliar      Vaguely Familiar      Average      Familiar      Very Familiar
2. What Corinthian problems does this week's biblical text address?

#### **Post-Worship Questions**

1. Having listened to this week's sermon, how would you now rate your understanding of the Corinthian situation as outlined in the biblical text? Please use the scale provided below to indicate your answer.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10  
Very Poor      Poor            Average      Above Average      Outstanding
2. What would you now identify as being the problem(s) at Corinth addressed within this week's biblical text?
3. Were someone outside the church to ask you to explain the Corinthian struggle mentioned in this week's sermon, do you feel that you could adequately explain it to him/her?

## APPENDIX 2

### POST-WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE 2

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are to participate is designed to evaluate your current understanding of the problems that existed at the church in Corinth. This research is being conducted by Todd Stinnett for purposes of project research as he fulfills the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will provide information that will gauge both your pre- and post-sermon understanding of the Corinthian situation. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

#### **Anticipating Future Problems**

1. After listening to this week's message, do you think that our church is currently slouching in a direction that could cause us to face the same problem(s) identified at Corinth?
2. If so, what areas of the church's ministry would you describe as heading towards the problem(s) identified in this week's message?
3. How likely do you think our church is to experience the same problem(s) identified in this week's sermon? Please use the scale provided below to indicate your answer.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
Very Unlikely      Unlikely      Possible      Probable      Highly Likely
4. Please list any action steps that you believe should be taken to prevent a repeat of the Corinthian problem(s) in our fellowship.

APPENDIX 3  
PREACHING EVALUATION FORM

**Sermon:**

**Scripture Text:**

**Date:**

**Rating Scale:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very Poor		Poor		Average		Above Average			Outstanding

**Please rate the preacher's message and content according to the scale provided above:**

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of Text \_\_\_\_\_

Use of Illustration \_\_\_\_\_

Relevance and Application \_\_\_\_\_

Exhortation \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion \_\_\_\_\_

Invitation \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, please answer some questions that deal specifically with the preacher's application of the sermon:**

1. Did the preacher attempt to apply the text to the audience? YES or NO
2. If yes, please indicate the ways he did so?

Provided specific ways text can be applied \_\_\_\_\_

Asked questions that forced me to think about my life \_\_\_\_\_

Asked questions that forced me to think about life of my church \_\_\_\_\_



Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please indicate here:\_\_\_\_\_)

\*\*\*Using the back of this evaluation form, please provide the pastor with feedback on how sermon application can be improved the next time he preaches this text.

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF WILLING PARTICIPANTS

By signing below, I am committing myself to participation in Rev. Todd Stinnett's doctoral project. I understand that participation in this study is totally voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I will alert Brother Todd if I am no longer able to participate.


## APPENDIX 5

### PROJECT ORIENTATION MEETING

1. Thanks so much for your willingness to participate in this project. Your willing participation will allow me to complete my Doctor of Ministry degree at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY.
2. What I'm Looking For: I need 7-10 people who would be willing to attend our regular services of worship plus 1-2 additional meetings each week following our preaching services. The meetings will not be long as they will focus solely on how my preaching can be improved and what can be done to help our church from experiencing the problems that were encountered at Corinth.
3. What Will Be Involved: Each participant will be asked to fill a few small forms each week.
  - a. A Pre- and Post-Worship Questionnaire that will gauge your understanding of the struggles experienced by the church at Corinth
  - b. A Preaching Evaluation Form to be completed during and after worship
  - c. A Post-Worship Questionnaire that will identify any action steps our church needs to take to prevent a repeat of any problems encountered at Corinth
4. How Long the Study Will Last: My doctoral project includes a series of 14 messages. Some weeks will include only one message, while other weeks will include two. All the messages will be preached during our evening services of worship (Sunday & Wednesday). This underscores the importance of your attendance on Sunday and Wednesday nights.
5. Payment for Participation:
  - a. The satisfaction of knowing you helped your preacher earn his doctorate degree

## APPENDIX 6

### SERMON OUTLINES

#### **Sermon 1: Avoiding Division within the Body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, 3:1-9**

##### Intro – The Problem at Corinth

- The church was not ready for “solid food” (3:2)
- Why? Because they were “still carnal” (3:3)
- Evidence of their carnality
  - 3:3 – “envy, strife, and divisions among you”
  - 3:4 – “I am of Paul...I am of Apollos” (cf. 1:11-16)
- Corinth is not the only church that has struggled with divisions in the body. One would probably be hard-pressed to find a church that doesn’t have some form of contention.
- Thankfully, the adhesive power of God’s Word can mend the divisions among us and prevent us from opening any fresh wounds.

##### 1. We can avoid division by sharing the same *speech*. (1:10, 17)

- “speak the same thing...the gospel”
- The Gospel galvanizes us for the glory of God.
- Ill – Ever been on a job site where the workers spoke 2 or more languages and none of them were fluent in any but their own? I have – trust me, it’s hard to get anything done.
- So it is with the Body of Christ! If we spend all our time fussing and feuding over trivial matters that we can’t agree on, there will always be division among us.
- But if we’ll have a laser-beam focus on celebrating and sharing the Gospel, our common speech will keep us from schism as God uses us to reach the world for Christ.
- App – As a church, what do we spend our time talking about? Remember, Jesus said “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34).

##### 2. We can avoid division by sharing the same *mind*. (1:10)

- “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”
- Ill – A recurring debate in the Stinnett household (2 adults and 6 kids) – Where are we going to eat?
  - Inevitably, one wants McDonald’s, one wants Japanese, etc. etc.
  - It’s always refreshing when everyone wants to go to the same place!
- App – I wonder, do we all want to go to the same place?
  - Love God
  - Love Our Neighbor

- Fulfill the Great Commission
  - It's amazing how God keeps us from division when we're all headed to the same destination.
3. We can avoid division by sharing the same *power*. (1:17, cf. 2:4-5)
- “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power...the power of God”
  - Ill – My Experience in the Whitt Home
    - A few years ago, one of my church members and her son were arrested for embezzling funds from a sister church.
    - When I entered the home to minister to them, I noticed their living room wall was lined with scores of electrical outlets – apparently where all their stolen and now confiscated goods used to be.
  - Perhaps that is a good picture of many churches – plenty of access to power, but very few plugged in.
  - App – Is that an accurate picture of our church? If so, it doesn't have to be. That can change, but we're the ones who must make the change.

Conclusion – One Gospel, One Mission, One Holy Spirit

## **Sermon 2: The Antidote for Arrogance, 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, 4:14-21**

Intro – Charlotte, NC “American Atheists” billboard

- The signs of pride are all about us, but they are not confined to the world. Too often roots of arrogance make their way into our churches. Thankfully, God’s Word provides us with an antidote for arrogance.

1. Admit that only God is wise. (3:18-20)

- Jude 25
- Hymn – *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*
- App – Would you be willing to admit that you don’t have all the answers? Such admissions are made when we seek God through prayer, Bible Study, and service.

2. Don’t place men on a pedestal. (3:21-23)

- “all are yours” – in other words, we’re all in the same boat – fallen sinners in the desperate need of God’s grace
- God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). His wisdom is available to all those that seek Him (James 1:5).
- App – Be careful to avoid the “Superstar Christian” culture that the church/Christian industry has created. We sidetrack ourselves when we elevate men rather than worshiping our Maker.

3. Become a disciple-maker. (4:14-17, 21)

- “instructors...fathers” – an instructor tells you how, a father will show you
- Time spent discipling others will keep us from the tendency to think more of ourselves than what we really are.
- App – Have you made the Father’s business your business?

4. Desire the power of God in every sphere of life. (4:18-20)

- “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power”
- Ill – Standard Oil Company float runs out of gas
- When we seek and rely on the power of God, we are declaring to Him and the world that we are nothing without Him.

Conclusion - The sad truth

- Lewis Drummond was once quoted as saying, “The Holy Spirit could leave some of our churches and it would take a generation for anyone to notice.”
- App – What about us? Are we the kind of church that has become consumed with pride, operating within our own strength? Or are we the kind of church lowering ourselves before the Lord, yearning for His intervention above all else?
- As the old hymn says, “Without Him I could do nothing.” This thought alone should keep us from the pitfall of pride.

### **Sermon 3: A Return to Church Discipline, 1 Corinthians 5**

Intro – The Disappearing Doctrine of the NT Church

- How many of you have ever heard a sermon on church discipline?
- How many sermons? How long ago was it?
- When was the last time you actually heard of a church practicing church discipline on one of its members?
- It's time for a return to discipline!

1. Why do we need church discipline? (1-3)

- Because there is unrepentant sin in the camp
- In Corinth: incest (1) and pride (2-3)
- App: What sins have we allowed to creep in among us?

2. Why do we do church discipline? (4-8)

- For the welfare of an erring member (4-5)
  - Destruction & Restoration (2 Cor. 2:4-8)
- For the welfare of the church (6-8)
  - A bride without spot, wrinkle, or blemish
- For the glory of God! (1 Cor. 10:31)
- App: We must ask ourselves, are we genuinely concerned with the welfare of the Body and its members?
  - Church discipline might seem cruel, but it is much like the well-placed scalpel that seeks to remove harmful cancer from the Body.

3. Where is church discipline carried out? (9-13)

- We are God's messengers to the world, but we are accountable to His church!
- App: The church's dirty laundry should be hung out for the entire world to see. If there is a matter requiring discipline, it **MUST** happen within the Body of Christ.

4. How is church discipline done?

- In our passage, the Apostle Paul tells us why church discipline must be done. We have to look to the words of Jesus to find out how it is to be practiced.
- Matt. 18:15-17
- App: Has this church consistently practiced church discipline? If so, can we honestly say that we've followed the biblical model?

Conclusion – The Charles Lohn/Shelbyville Mills Baptist Church Story

## **Sermon 4: Do God's People Belong in the People's Court? 1 Corinthians 6:1-11**

Intro – *The People's Court*, the 80's sensation that gave birth to our current generation of TV courtrooms (Divorce Court, Judge Judy, Judy Joe Brown, etc.)

1. When do God's people stay out of the people's court?
  - Any time there is a disagreement with a brother or sister in Christ (1) – “having a matter against another”
2. Why do God's people stay out of the people's court?
  - Because God said so (1)
  - Because going to P.C. forces the righteous to stand before the unrighteous (1)
  - Because God has committed judgment to the saints (2-4)
3. Why do God's people often end up in the people's court?
  - Because there's a lack of holiness among us (8)
  - Because there's a lack of wisdom among us (5-6)
  - Because we tend to be incredibly near-sighted (7, 9-11)

Conclusion – Have you been washed, sanctified, and justified?

- We will all appear in heaven's courtroom! (Heb. 9:27, 2 Cor. 5:10)
- When that time comes, how will you plea?
- Will you hear Him say, “Well done good and faithful servant?” or “Depart from Me, I never knew you.”?



## **Sermon 5: The Truth About Sexual Immorality, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

Intro – 1 in 4 Teen Girls has STI (CDC – 2008)

- Not just a problem among the young
- Not just a problem among the lost

1. What is sexual immorality?

- Greek – *porneia*
- Context determines meaning – in this context it appears to be a broad term including all extra-marital intercourse (see some examples in verse 9)
- Heb. 13:4 – “marriage bed undefiled”

2. Why is it forbidden?

- We have liberty to live, not license to sin (12-13a)
- God created us for His glory (13b)
- We are the bride of Christ (14-17)
- While sexual sin is not unforgiveable, it is irreversible (18)
- Our body belongs to God because He paid a high price to redeem it (19-20)

Conclusion – What we can do to avoid sexual immorality

- Put guardrails up in your life!
  - If married, constantly pursue a more passionate relationship with your spouse (date nights, going to bed together, spend quality time together, etc.)
  - Don't allow trash into your home, office, computer, etc. (internet filters, TV filters, etc.)
  - Don't be left alone with members of the opposite sex.
  - Don't place yourself in situations of temptation.

## **Sermon 6: Biblical Teaching About Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Singleness, 1 Corinthians 7**

Intro – Recent Studies (see “Divorce & Remarriage” file)

- A recent study released by the Family Research Council’s Marriage & Religion Research Institute indicates that only 46% of children in the US will reach the age of 17 having grown up in a home with biological parents who are married. That being the case, it is safe to say that multitudes of families are dealing with the issues that surround marriage, divorce, remarriage, and singleness.
- That being the case, you would expect folks to seek the counsel of clergy and others as they attempt to deal with these issues. Unfortunately, they’ll probably find more confusion than clarity. That’s because LifeWay Research tells us that 58% of Protestant pastors will perform weddings for couples they know are living together. Nearly a third (31%) won’t, and 10% aren’t sure.
- Further complicating the issue is that 61% will perform a ceremony for a divorced person “depending on the reason for the divorce. 31% will perform remarriage ceremonies “regardless of the reason for the divorce,” and 5% will not perform a marriage ceremony if the bride or groom has been divorced.
- Now more than ever, we need some clear instruction on what God thinks about marriage, divorce, remarriage, and singleness.

Exposition of 1 Corinthians 7

Summarizing the Biblical Teaching

- Marriage (cf. Matt. 19:4-6)
  - The Participants of Marriage – Genesis 1:27
    - “male and female”
  - The Particulars of Marriage – Genesis 2:24
    - “leave and cleave”
- Divorce
  - Not God’s plan
    - “A wife is not to depart from her husband...a husband is not to divorce his wife” (1 Cor. 7:10, 11; cf. Mal. 2:16).
    - Certificate of Divorce originally granted for the protection of Hebrew wives (Deut. 24).
    - Two Permissions for Divorce
      - Abandonment (1 Cor. 7:15)
      - Adultery (Matt. 5:31-32)
- Remarriage
  - Three Main Views Among Evangelicals
    - OK under any circumstances – doesn’t take seriously the biblical teaching
    - After cases of adultery and abandonment
      - e.g. John MacArthur, “If God permitted divorce rather than death as a merciful concession to man’s sinfulness, why would he not also permit remarriage?”
      - Might sound reasonable, but not biblical (Mac cites no passages)

- Remarriage permitted after divorce only when former spouse is deceased
  - 1 Cor. 7:11, 7:39 (cf. Rom. 7:2-3)
- Singleness
  - 1 Cor. 7:7 – “For I wish that all men were even as myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.”

Conclusion – Find and Fulfill God’s Plan for Your Life!

## **Sermon 7: Are You a Stumbling Block or a Stepping Stone? 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, 10:23-11:1**

### Intro – Consider This Scenario

- Let's say you and your family want to enjoy a nice meal together. So you load the van, head to town, and pull in at O'Charley's. The hostess seats you well away from the bar and lo & behold you see the preacher at a nearby table. He's also having dinner with his family. Upon closer examination you take a look at what the pastor is drinking. He's got a tall glass with a pink-tinted beverage in it. There's even a little umbrella perched at the top of his glass. As you continue to watch, he picks up the glass and draws in a large helping of his beverage.
- How would you feel? Would you be pleased? Would you be persuaded to order one of whatever he's having?
- What if I told you the preacher's having a virgin strawberry daiquiri? Would it make any difference?
- Let's think about it for a second. Is there anything wrong with ingesting strawberries? No. Anything wrong with non-alcoholic drinks? No. So what's the problem?
- The problem is that it looks like an alcoholic beverage, and that drinking such a beverage would place him at odds with the church covenant. Not to mention that others could be tempted to order alcoholic beverages, cause "if it's good enough for the preacher, it's good enough for me."
- Through his Word, God can help us determine if we're acting as stumbling blocks or stepping stones.

Context – The believers at Corinth needed to know, "Is it OK for us to eat meat that's been sacrificed to idols?"

### Exposition of Text

- Paul concludes there is nothing wrong with eating meat sacrificed to idols, for "food does not commend us to God" (8:8). It is not a sinful activity.
- Yet, there are some spiritually immature Christians who aren't aware of the fact that meat sacrificed to idols is OK. And of course, unbelievers would assume that a Christian would have nothing to do with anything offered to an idol.
- If eating meat would cause a weaker brother or an unbeliever to stumble, he says "I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble" (8:13).
- He encouraged the Corinthians to take the same attitude unto themselves (11:1).

### Application of Text

- There will be times that each of us will be faced with a choice about whether or not to do something that might be deemed "questionable" (introductory illustration).
- When those times come, we need to ask ourselves three questions:
  - Will doing this action cause my brother to stumble? (8:9, 13)
  - Will the action edify my brother? (10:23)
  - Will the action bring glory to God? (10:31)

## **Sermon 8: The Financial Support of Christian Leaders, 1 Corinthians 9:1-18**

### Intro – SBC Compensation Study Results (2010-2012)

- Released via Baptist Press on 9/27/12
- Compensation increases for full-time SBC pastors slightly ahead of the rate of inflation
- Is it right to compensate Christian leaders? If so, how should they be compensated? Receive periodic raises?
- “We’ll keep him poor, God will keep him humble.”
- Paul dealt with similar attitudes and questions.
- A personal note: If ever a message seemed self-serving, surely this would be it! (the beauty of expository preaching – I don’t choose the subject, God does)

### Exposition of Text

- 1-2: Paul saying, “Clearly my labor is for your benefit.”
- 3: Paul was being scrutinized for various reasons
  - 4 – Eating and drinking
  - 5 – For even considering the prospect of marriage and taking along a believing spouse
  - 6 – Taking a break
- 7-9: Paul begins to set forth his argument from:
  - Analogy (7)
    - Nations subsidize wars, not armies
    - Vinedresser enjoys the fruit of the vine
    - Shepherd enjoys the sheep’s milk
  - Scripture (8-9, 13)
    - Deut. 25:4, cf. 1 Timothy 5:17-18
    - Priests and Levites
- 10: Paul states his main argument
  - *The laborer is free to enjoy the fruit of his labors.*

### Application of Text

- 11-12, 15: Those who sow spiritual things should reap material blessings as a result of their labor.
  - While Paul and Barnabas were entitled to material/monetary blessings, he said they had refused to cash in so as not to “hinder the Gospel” or “make my boasting void.”
  - For this reason, Paul was a tentmaker. (Acts 18:3)
- 14: Paul and Barnabas’ decision notwithstanding, the principle still remains – “the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel.”
- It appears there are two primary applications – one for the pastor, and one for his parishioners.
  - The pastor’s motivation in preaching the Gospel must NEVER be a paycheck. If a man preaches “against his will” (simply for money), he has been “entrusted with a stewardship” and nothing more (17). He has his

reward in full. The glory of Christ, the edification of the church, and the salvation of the lost must ALWAYS remain the focus of the pastor's preaching. If salary or material wages ever divert a man from these primary foci, it would be better for him to reject payment.

- It's up to God's people to support God's men. Of course, this can be done through prayer, words of encouragement, etc., but the context of these verses make it clear that the church is to provide an adequate (though not extravagant) livelihood for its appointed leaders.

Conclusion – Ask yourselves, “Are we satisfying God with the way we are currently providing for our leader(s)?” If the answer is “no,” take action steps to make right the wrongs of the past.

## Sermon 9: Landmines of Lust We Must Avoid, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Intro – Tony Evans

- Awarded a purple heart after his leg was blown off after stepping on a landmine in Vietnam.
- Though he learned to excel in spite of his prosthetic limb, his life was never the same.

Share Context – verses 1-6, main point – *we should not lust after evil things*

We must avoid the landmine of:

### 1. idolatry. (7)

- Ex: Exodus 32:6
- Ill: Israel worshiped the golden calf
- Arg: People are still worshiping idols today.
  - Power, Prestige, Promotion, Possessions
  - Gold has become the god of many
  - Many continue to bow to the god of self
- App: We would do well to hear the same law that Israel refused – “You shall have no other gods...” (Ex. 20:3)

### 2. sexual immorality. (8)

- Ex: “let us not commit sexual immorality”
- Ill: Numbers 25 – Israel joins herself with the Midianites
- Arg: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
- App: If you’re headed down a path that leads to sexual immorality, turn around before you reach the dead end.
  - Take pro-active measures to insure that you don’t end up in the trap of sexual immorality.
  - Avoid time alone with members of opposite sex, remain accountable to your spouse, etc.

### 3. testing God. (9)

- Ex: “nor let us tempt Christ”
- Ill: Numbers 21:4-9
- Arg: None of us would go out and say, “I really want to tempt Christ today.” Though we may not say it with our mouths, our actions often tell a different story.
  - Each time we resist the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we are testing the patience of our Savior.
- App: Always remember
  - “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31)
  - “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29)
  - Simply remembering these truths would keep us from the tendency to test our merciful God.

### 4. ingratitude. (10)

- Ex: “nor complain as some of them...”
- Ill: A common theme for Israel throughout the Exodus

- Arg: Can anything be more disgusting in the sight of God than our ingratitude?
  - He's clothed us, fed us, sheltered us, provided for our every physical need
  - Not only that, He's forgiven us, promised us an abundant life on this earth and an eternal home in heaven
  - Then we have the audacity to cry out against the Lord and complain about what He's given us (or withheld from us)
- App: "In everything give thanks..." (1 Thess. 5:18)

Conclusion: A wonderful promise that assures us amid all the pitfalls of life (v. 13)



## Sermon 10: No One Can Drink From Two Cups, 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Intro – Kathy Griffin Emmy Acceptance Speech (September 2007)

- “Can you believe this s\*\*\*? I guess hell froze over...a lot of people come up here and thank Jesus from this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus....this award is my god now.”
- Idol worship is not just a thing of the past. It is still an ever-present temptation that we must stand on guard against if we are going to live a life that’s acceptable to God.

Exposition of Text

- v. 14 – Paul very plainly states the main idea of the passage – “flee from idolatry.” For Christians, idolatry means worshiping or following anyone other than Jesus Christ.
- v. 15-17 – The elements of the Lord’s Supper (bread and cup) represent the body and the blood of Christ.
  - Some have taught that the elements themselves somehow become “divine” (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, etc.).
  - While there is nothing special about the elements themselves, partaking of the bread and cup demonstrates that we are followers of Jesus Christ.
- v. 18 – Priests routinely ate several of the offerings that were cooked on the altar by fire. By doing so, they identified themselves as followers of Yahweh.
- vv. 19-20 – The main reason we should flee idolatry has much more to do with the object of our worship, rather than the elements of worship.
- vv. 21-22 – Fooling with idols forces us to forsake our first love. As Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters.”
  - Our God is a jealous God.

Application of Text

- Idols We Must Guard Against
  - Other gods/religions
  - Counterfeit Christianity
    - My church, my Sunday School class, my ministry, etc.
    - KJV-only
    - Saturday-only worship
  - The Stuff of Self – the Christian’s biggest challenge
    - What do I want to do?
    - Where do I want to go?
    - Where do I want to be 10 years from now?
    - How much money can I make?
  - Far too many Christians can be found kneeling at the altar of the mirror.
- How do we guard against idol worship?
  - Surrendering our lives to Christ through faith
  - Falling in love with God
  - Allowing Him to set our agenda *each day*

Conclusion - Hideyoshi, a Japanese warlord who ruled over Japan in the late 1500s, commissioned a colossal statue of Buddha for a shrine in Kyoto. It took 50,000 men five

years to build, but the work had scarcely been completed when the earthquake of 1596 brought the roof of the shrine crashing down and wrecked the statue. In a rage Hideyoshi shot an arrow at the fallen colossus. "I put you here at great expense," he shouted, "and you can't even look after your own temple." (Today in the Word, MBI, August, 1991, p. 23.)

\*\*The idol may not have been looking after his temple, but I can assure you that God is looking after His! "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you" (1 Cor. 6:19).

## **Sermon 11: Are You Acknowledging Your Appointed Authorities? 1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

Intro – Disrespect of QB for Coach in UT/Mizzou Game

- Truly sad, because the young man has all the tools to be a spectacular pro QB. But as long as he disregards and disrespects his coaches, he'll never reach his potential.
- Likewise, we will never reach our potential as followers of Christ if we fail to acknowledge that appointed authorities God has placed over us.

Exposition of Text

- V. 2 – some praise after 10 chapters of rebuke ☺
- V. 3 – Statement of Authority
  - God the Father – God the Son (& Holy Spirit) – Mankind
    - Man – Woman
- V. 4 – A Word for the Men
  - Explanation given in v.7
  - Perhaps this is also why men often remove their hats when they pray
- V. 5-6 – A Word for the Women
  - A “shaved” head was a symbol of uncleanness in Jewish culture
    - Lev. 14:8 – a reference to lepers
    - Numbers 6:9 – rules for Nazarites
    - Deut. 21:12 – rules for foreign wives
- Vv. 7-12
  - Statement of Authority - The head covering (whether hat, hair, etc.) is a symbol of authority
  - Statement of Equality – Woman came from man, man comes through woman, ALL come from God
- Vv. 13-15 – Argument from Nature
- Vv. 16 – Statement of Christian Liberty
- 2 Extremes Need to be Avoided
  - Legalism – we won't be measuring your hair ladies
  - Liberalism – stay away from the Brittany Spears look

Application of Text

- Why did God give us this Word? Because he wants us to acknowledge our appointed authorities through outward appearance and external submission
- So who are our authorities?
  - In General
    - God
    - Son & Spirit
    - Mankind (Man – Woman)
  - In the Home (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
    - Man
    - Woman
    - Children
  - In the Church (1 Tim. 2:11-15)
    - Gender (Man – Woman)

- Pastor
- Other Ministers (Acts 13)
- Deacons (servants, not decision-makers)
- In Culture
  - Governing Officials (Romans 13)
    - President & Cabinet
    - Elected Officials (Local, State, and Federal)
    - IRS, etc.
  - Law enforcement

Conclusion – Jesus, our model of submission (Matt. 26:39)

## **Sermon 12: Avoiding an Improper Observance of the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

Intro – Most of you have probably partaken the Lord's Supper many times. Have you ever wondered why we partake? Are you sure the way you have partaken has been biblical and pleasing to God?

1. The Problem Identified (17-22)
  - Corinth's sin was not found in the eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper, but in the selfishness, drunkenness, and neglect they attached to it.
  - Of course, this is not to mention the divisions and factions that surrounded their observance. (cf. 18-19)
2. The Purpose Highlighted (23-26)
  - The Matzah loaves (striped and pierced) – broken and eaten, in Christ they represent His body “broken for you”
  - The Cup of Redemption (the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup) – represented the blood of a spotless lamb (now representing the blood of the Lamb of God)
  - V. 26 – The observance of the Lord's Supper acts as a proclamation of the Lord's DEATH until He comes
    - Not “if” He comes, but when He comes!
3. The Protocol Explained (27-34)
  - Do not partake in an “unworthy manner.”
    - What does that mean? (see vv. 18, 19, and 21)
  - Let every person examine his/herself before partaking.
    - How does a person examine his/herself. (Ask yourself, “What am I doing here? Why am I partaking these elements?”)
    - Failure to do so results in judgment
      - The reality of judgment (29-30)
      - The reason for judgment (31-32)
  - Serve one another as you partake (33-34)

**Sermon 13: Spiritual Gifts and an Orderly Body  
of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12-14**

Intro – Am I Dead or Alive story

1. All spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit. (12:1-6)
2. Every Christian has a spiritual gift. (12:11)
3. All Christians don't possess the same gift. (12:7-10)
4. The spiritual gifts don't share the same value. (14:1-5)
5. Spiritual gifts are given for the welfare of the body. (12:7)
6. Every member of the body must take his/her place in order the whole to function properly. (12:12-31)
7. Tongues-speaking is a legitimate gift, but it is subordinate to the gift of prophecy. (14:18-19, 39) – seek not, forbid not
8. Tongues are for unbelievers, prophecy is for believers. (14:22)
9. The focus of our spirit-filled instruction should always be edification. (14:26)
10. To avoid confusion, all truth is to be communicated in an orderly fashion. (14:33, 40)

**Sermon 14: What if Jesus Lied About the Resurrection?**  
**1 Corinthians 15:12-28**

Intro – Paul identified yet another problem at Corinth: “some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead” (12).

- Shocking though it may seem, the problem is not contained to the pages of the New Testament. Still there are those who claim to follow Christ yet deny the resurrection.
- Eg. – Talpiot Tomb “Discovery” in 2007
- What if the naysayers are correct? What if Christ lied about the resurrection? Paul answers that question for us.

If Jesus lied about the resurrection:

1. He is not alive. (13, 16)
2. Christian preaching is empty. (14)
3. Faith in Christ is futile. (14, 17)
4. Christians are false witnesses. (15)
5. There is no cure for human sin. (17)
6. Deceased Christians will not rise again. (18)
7. Christians are to be pitied. (19)

If Jesus was right about the resurrection:

1. He is alive! (20)
2. He is the firstfruits. (20)
3. Those who have died in Christ will live again. (22-23)
4. He will establish the kingdom of God. (24)
5. He will crush all earthly powers. (25)
6. He will destroy death once for all. (26)
7. The Father will continue to be glorified forever. (28)

Application – Does it really matter what we believe about the resurrection?

- Absolutely! Denial of Christ’s bodily resurrection is evidence that “some do not have the knowledge of God.”

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## ABSTRACT

### EXPOSITORY PREACHING THROUGH THE BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS AS A MEANS OF FORMATIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE AT LEBANON BAPTIST CHURCH, TALBOTT, TENNESSEE

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013  
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The purpose of this project was to utilize expository preaching through the book of 1 Corinthians as a means of formative church discipline at Lebanon Baptist Church in Talbott, Tennessee. Chapter 1 introduces Lebanon Baptist Church and the surrounding community. Chapter 2 establishes a biblical and theological basis for the project. The five biblical passages cited in the chapter provide an argument for why expository preaching is foundational to formative church discipline. Chapter 3 addresses the subject of application in expository preaching. Various models and methods are considered in the hope that they will help the preacher become a better applier of biblical truth. Chapter 4 explains the process undertaken in implementing the project. Chapter 5 analyzes and evaluates the results of the project.

## VITA

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### EDUCATION

Diploma, Powell High School, Powell, Tennessee

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### MINISTERIAL

Minister of Youth, Brush Creek Baptist Church, Bear Creek, North Carolina,  
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