**The Purpose of the Pastor-Teacher Gift, No. 1 – BD07-01**

We are thinking about the purpose of the pastor-teacher gift this morning. A little girl came up to me this week, one of our primary children, and she said, “I have a teacher who said to me that God sits up in heaven and He marks down everything wrong that we do, and someday when we get to heaven He’s going to read it to us. That isn’t right, is it?” I said, “No, it isn’t. That’s as wrong as it can be.” I was just amazed that here this primary has sat around in Bible doctrine studies and church services and she realized that god has removed the wall of separation between herself and God, and if there’s one thing that God is never going to mention again it’s her sins. The only sin, she understood, that God would ever mention would be the sin of unbelief of not receiving Jesus Christ as savior.

I thought that’s very sad that her teacher, who is a church attender, would not know enough to know that God has removed all the problem of sin. But this is the deficiency that we have been currently talking about that we start with as Christians. And this is the deficiency that Jesus Christ has made a provision to be filled up within our being. It’s a marvelous thing to realize that the mind of a child can be brought into phase with the thinking of God from the earliest days, and what this can mean in that life. What a great thing doctrine is. I hope you know when we use the word doctrine we are not talking about something that is way out, something this is provincial and narrow minded, but it is the word in the Greek for teaching. It is simply what God has said to tell us His ways and His thinking.

Now we have learned that the satanic attack which for centuries was directed against the human line through which Jesus Christ would be born. Then when He was born it was directed against Jesus Christ himself. (It) has now, because He has ascended and is beyond the reach of this angelic attack—being in heaven, this attack is now centered against you as the individual Christian believer. The Bible warns you again and again that Satan is going about as a roaring lion to tear your life to shreds, to make a fool of you, to destroy you, and to make you ineffective as an ambassador for Jesus Christ. He can’t stop you from going to heaven but he can stop you from being of any use whatsoever to God in the days of your life as His ambassador.

So Jesus Christ was victorious on the cross. He has moved to heaven. He’s beyond Satan. During the ten days after Christ ascended and before the coming of the Holy Spirit, all of the strategy of hell was put to attack upon the individual believer.

Now the Christian has a spiritual deficiency and Jesus Christ has provided a solution for this. We’ve been looking in the book of Ephesians chapter 4, if you’ll turn there again. The book of Ephesians which has been telling us how God has made provision for this deficiency. We found in Ephesians 4:10 that Jesus Christ ascended up into heaven that he might fill all things. And then this filling of all things has to do with our spiritual deficiency in the way this word is used. And we found that in verse 11 there is a key factor in meeting this deficiency in spiritual things. We’re told that He gave some apostles and some prophets. These are two gifts that after the New Testament canon was completed that we no longer have apostles and we no longer have prophets. But we still have evangelists with a unique way of presenting the gospel, and we have pastor and teachers.

In the Greek language, this is lined up so that apostle is by itself, prophet is by itself, evangelist is by itself, but then the Greek combines pastor-teacher as a single gift. This is what preaching is. Preaching is teaching. If you want to know that preaching isn’t, just turn on to the religious radio stations here in Dallas and listen to the guff that goes on all the time under the guise of preaching. You’ll even enjoy coming back to Berean Memorial Church and listening for 45 minutes at a time.

The pastor-teacher is the agent who is the provider of the means to solve this spiritual deficiency. What he gives ends in a practice of building a spiritual maturity structure. The word “edification.” And this is all ahead. We’re going to get into the details on this, and in detail what it is to be a spiritually mature Christian so that you are oriented to God’s ways and to God’s conduct in reference to the plan for your life.

Now this spiritual maturity structure in your soul will either be erected, which is the only defense you have against Satan, or it will not be erected, depending on whether the pastor-teacher is functioning in the local church as he should, and whether you have the good sense to put yourself in a place where there is a functioning pastor-teacher so that you have the building materials to meet this spiritual deficiency.

**The Doctrine of the Pastorate (Pastor-Teacher)**

We begin this morning with a summary of the basic points that constitute the doctrine of the pastorate. What is he? What is he supposed to do? What is he not supposed to do?

First of all we begin with the use of this word “ministry.” The word “ministry” is used in the Bible in three ways. It is used, first of all, in a political sense. This is what a lot of our rebellious college students are forgetting, that God always works through a chain of authority. He works through a chain of political authority, and to rebel against that authority and no go through constituted legitimate processes of dealing with that governmental authority is sin, and it violates the Word of God. God is anti-revolution. He is a god of order.

So Romans 13:4 says, “For he is the minister of god (speaking of a government authority) to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain for he is the minister of God…” There you have the word used in the political sense. “… and avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. No governmental ruler stands, nobody is elected to office except almighty God says, “You’re in,” and then the people follow suit. Once that person is in, he is to be respected as an agent of God.

The word “minister” and the word “ministry” is used also in a general sense. 2 Corinthians 3:6 (shows) a general use of this word, “Who also hath made us able ministers (all we Christians of the New Testament) not of the letter but of the spirit. The letter killeth. The spirit giveth life.” In 2 Corinthians 4:1 says, “Therefore, seeing we have this ministry (all we Christians—this is the general Christian role of a minister), as we have received mercy, we faint not.” 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, “And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and have given to us (all Christians) the ministry of reconciliation.” And 2 Corinthians 6:3 says, “Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed.”

Throughout the New Testament you have this general use where all Christians are in the ministry. There is no division of clergy and laity. This is the universal ministry of all believers. But there is a specialized use of this word “ministry.” We have that in 1 Corinthians 3:5 which says, “Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believe, even as the Lord gave to every man.” In Ephesians 3:7 you have a specialized use of the word. “Of which I was made (Paul says) a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.” And so on. Colossians 1:23 and 1 Thessalonians 3:2 and 1 Timothy 1:12. All of these refer to a specialized work of the ministry and that has to do with the pastorate. So when we talk about the ministry, we are talking about political, general, and specifically in this summary of the pastor.

Now there are certain identifying words for the pastor that you should know. These identifying words tell you something about what a pastor is supposed to be. First of all is the term “elder.” In the Greek it’s “presbuteros.” Now this means “the old man.” It is not in the sense of age necessarily. He may be that. But he is “old man” in the sense that it connotes maturity. He may be somewhat young in years but he’s got some spiritual savvy and maturity, or he has no business being a pastor. It refers therefore to a certain quality which must precede his being able to communicate the Word of God.

A second term for the pastorate is “bishop” or “overseer.” The Greek word here is “episkopos.” This word stresses the nature of a pastor’s work. It means “overseer.” It means somebody in authority in reference to the work of the ministry. Someone who has authority to move among the congregation and make decisions and give direction and lead in the spiritual phase of that work.

Now this is confirmed by the fact that we have a third word. And that’s the word “pastor.” In the Greek it’s “poiman.” “Poiman” is “pastor” or “shepherd.” And there is attached to that another word which is “teacher.” And that’s “didaskalos.” These are combined so that they mean one thing. Here you have the idea of a shepherd and a teacher who has the idea of authority, and it refers to the function of his ministry. He is to shepherd the flock. He is to shepherd the flock as a pastor-teacher—not as a pastor-visitor, not as a pastor-socializer, not as a pastor-maintenance man, not as a pastor-any number of other things that he could be, which in the course of the ministry he may on occasion perform those functions. Just like any missionary on a foreign field. If a missionary has to get the kids to school, he’ll drive the ox cart if necessary. But his basic calling is to be a pastor-teacher, and that’s his business. And the elder and the bishop, all these terms, these identifying words, refer to the same person.

**Acts 20:28**

In Acts 20:17 and verse 28, one verse uses “elder” and another verse uses “bishop,” and they’re all talking about the same group of people. So it has in interchange. These people are told, these who hold this office in the local church of the pastor are told in Acts 20:28 exactly what their business is and what they’re supposed to be doing, and what it is the business of the local congregation as much as possible to make it possible for the pastor-teacher to do. Acts 20:28 says, “Take heed.”

Now I want you to understand the background of this particular passage. The apostle Paul is on his way back to Jerusalem. He has been told by Got that this is the end of the line for him. He is going into imprisonment. His ministry is going to be cut off. So he knows that in reference to the church at Ephesus, which was a delightful church in his experience, the church at Ephesus and the leadership at that church is a relationship which is going to cease. He knows that he is talking to these spiritual leaders of the Ephesians church for the last time. It is the kind of meeting that ends in tears. Everybody breaks up here before they’re through because they realize, Paul says, “I shall never see you again. When I get on this boat, and I get out of sight, the next time we see each other is going to be in heaven.”

So what’s this man going to say? What’s he going to leave behind for this church to whom such a strategic letter as Ephesians was written? What’s he going to say in this final moment to people he will never see again? Well it’s interesting that he tells these spiritual leaders, “Now fellows, I want to say it again what it is that God has called you to do.” “Take heed therefore unto yourself and to all the flock (that’s the local congregation) over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer, to feed the church of God (that’s the body of believers) which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

Now anything that you want a pastor to do has to be within verse 28 or you have no ground for it. Anything that a pastor is to … perform is in verse 28. And that’s all you got. The strategic thing is to feed the flock. Now there are a lot of pastors who think that means to run a lot of meals, run a lot of church suppers, or run a lot of programs. But the Word of God, when it says to feed the flock means to preach the word, to proclaim the Bible, to give people the materials by which they may build a spiritual maturity structure with which to meet Satan.

Now I want to show you something about this word “feed.” This word “feed,” a couple of grammatical points. It’s in what we call the aorist tense. That means that this is the totality of the pastor’s business. If there is anything else, you couldn’t use this tense. You’d have to use a different one. This is a point. This is a combining. This is a point action. And what does he do? He feeds the flock.

Number two: It is in what is called the active voice which means that he does it. It means he has to have a gift of teaching and he has to have information. You ought to listen to some of these Dallas religious radio stations and you’ll get a good example of what it is to talk to people without information. You’ve never heard such rot in all your life, and gobbledy gook and confused and backward thinking and travesty on the Word of God that you can hear on those radio stations. Because you have people opening their mouths who in the first place can’t teach anything, and in the second place they don’t have any words to convey.

Well you say, “Well that sounds like an awful lot of authority. That sounds like an awfully strategic position for one person to be in.” That’s right. And that’s why God says, “I’m going to hold that pastor fantastically responsible for what he did. Now here is one thing when it comes to the Judgment Seat of Christ that people are going to be on a very very hot seat, and that is the pastor-teacher because he is the key personality in all the progress that God’s people make.

This is why when the truth is declared and the truer the truth is, if that can be the case, you will notice that people do not attack the truth. They will not say, “Well here’s what’s wrong with what that person said. Here’s why the Word of God does not teach that.” They begin to attack the speaker. It is the pastor-teacher that they attack, that they have a resentment toward because they realize that he is the one who is conveying these ideas. He is the one who is actually the instrument of God and so they attack that person. Like God had to tell Samuel, “Samuel, when people call you all kinds of names, when people rise up in furor and indignation against you personally, when they say things about you directly, remember that they’re talking about God. They’re not talking about you, Samuel. If you’ve delivered the truth, you’ve been my spokesman.”

The last point on the grammar here of this word “feed” is that it’s imperative which in grammar means it’s a command. You’re told to do this. A pastor-teacher has no other alternative than to get up and keep cranking out divine truth.

There’s another point. That is (number four) the leadership and the authority of a pastor. 1 Thessalonians 5:12. This is also tremendously resented in some local churches. That the pastor is the top authority in the direction and in the leadership of the work. I remind you again that the congregation can remove the pastor, but while he is in authority, while he is in office, he is the authority within that congregation. 1 Thessalonians 5:12 says, “But we beseech you brethren to know them who labor among you (the pastor-teachers) and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.” They didn’t take this office for themselves. They are in this position because God says you do it.

Hebrews 13:7 says, “Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their manner of life.” Verse 17 of Hebrews 13 says, “Obey them that have the rule over you.” These are tremendously strong words: obey, rule. “Submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they that must give account that, they may do it with joy and not with grief for that is unprofitable to you.” Now do you know what he’s going to give an account (on)? God is not going to say, “How nice a person was Sam Jones in your church, pastor?” What God is going to want to know is, “How much was Sam Jones able to develop a spiritual maturity structure in his soul?”

Now maybe Sam Jones didn’t. Maybe he went negative in his response to God’s Word and so he got no place. But did you give him the material by which he could have built a spiritual maturity? I remind you again that you can think of the greatest person that in your estimate is the finest saint that ever lived, and remind you that you can be just like that person in your standing of spiritual achievements and accomplishments with God. This is no exclusive calling. It is the extent that you develop a spiritual maturity structure in your soul.

But you have to have something to do it with. It is tremendous to see this happening in a youngster. This is one thing we’re going to do in camp this week. We’re going to try to alert these kids to where the world is moving, and to where their country is moving; not because they’re going to change it; not because you’re going to change it; but because we have to understand when somebody rises up.

For example, if you want to get somebody’s ire up, just give them the doctrine of warfare series. I have had more gnashing of teeth and … remarks come feeding back on that because this touches the quick. This is the most sensitive point in the mind of a disoriented conscience because the humanism, the do-goodism, the human viewpoint, and the desire to do human good so possesses even Christians who have no spiritual maturity structure within their souls, that to think that God has these principals for a national entity’s defense, and that God is blessing those who obey this and will bring a nation down that disobeys it, just as this nation is going down, which I suppose it inevitably must for it cannot continue as the leader of the western world from prophetic viewpoint. People who can’t believe that God is going to act like that will rise up in furor. Over against what? Over against the fact that somebody is speaking with authority.

Do you realize that this is what they hated about Jesus Christ? And they made fun of him. They said, “Who do you think you are, you cocky arrogant character? You come along here and try to teach us and tell us you’re somebody with Abraham more than we are? They abused the person of Jesus Christ as being some know-it-all, some conceited character of arrogance. Why? Because He spoke the truth with authority. And He didn’t get up and be a mealy-mouthed preacher who apologizes and says, “I’m sorry that I have to tell you this, but this is what God says.” That’s no pastor-teacher who apologizes when almighty God has spoken. Instead, you should say, “This may hurt a little bit but I’m sure glad that we’ve got some right information so that we can get straight.”

Now there’s something else in the doctrine of the pastorate. There is a right pastor for a right church. Therefore the leading of the Lord is vital so as to avoid misery in the ministry. Misery for the congregation and misery for the pastor. Now God is always going to bless His Word. Let’s understand that, even if the wrong pastor is delivering it. You can have the wrong pastor and if the Word is delivered, God’s going to bless. So that’s not the final confirmation to say, “Well I’m the right pastor for this church because God blesses the Word here.”

The wrong pastor can’t do all the things that are necessary for the well-being of the congregation. He is not able to move in the flock and survive. When you have a wrong pastor in a wrong church you have a short pastorate. When you have churches that are forever switching pastors, you have a pretty good indication that if they’re switching pastors every two-and-a-half or three years, you have a pretty good indication they’re getting a series of wrong pastors for the wrong church. And you have a pretty good indication that there’s something deeply spiritually defective in the church itself that it keeps switching wrong pastors because God doesn’t go around making mistakes like that.

The reason this is this way is because nobody could survive in the local church, among the best of Christians. This is why the pastor has to know, when people walk out the door and say, “Oh that was a beautiful sermon,” he has to be careful not to believe it, or he’ll go home and start reading his press notices and begin to believe what he hears.

He has to be like the Lord. When they were going up and saying, “That was a beautiful sermon. Beautiful.” The Bible says the Lord knew what was in man. He didn’t need anybody to tell Him. He knew that the same people who were saying, “Beautiful sermon,” the minute He began touching upon things that struck home for them of which they were guilty and they needed change, then they no longer liked him. They may no longer like anything about him. That has happened to me, believe it or not, too, and I’m tremendously likeable. Don’t get carried away with your press notices when you’re going into the ministry.

Here’s another thing to remember. A pastor is totally the product of grace. Anybody here ever been invited to surrender to preach, like God was putting a gun against your head? There are services; when a pastor wants to really make a good impression he has a spiritual commitment service. He gets people really moved and he says, “Alright now I want all of you young people who are ready to put your lives on the line for Jesus Christ to come forward.” In camp you have a variation. You give everybody a stick and you build a big fire and then they all come up and they throw their stick on the fire to show they’re going to commit themselves to the Lord. All this gimmickry and gobbledy-gook to make some kind of weird move to show that you’re really for God.

But the only way people can be for God is to have bible doctrine, not because they make some kind of dramatic outward move. And a pastor is totally the product of the grace of God. 1 Timothy 1:12 says, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me in that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry…” That’s how Paul got into it. “…who was before a blasphemer.” Now Paul wasn’t a very nice personality before he got into the ministry—a persecutor and injurious. “... but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and live which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Nevertheless for this cause that I obtain mercy. That in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”

Paul says, “I was the chief of sinners, and if God would save me and use me in the ministry there are none of the rest of you who are that bad that He wouldn’t do the same for you.

Then you have Ephesians 3:7. All of these indicating there is no ground for thinking that God has rewarded you. There are some kids who grow up in a Christian home. They grow up in a Christian surround and then they’re called into ministry, and they think, “God has called me into the ministry because I’ve been such a spiritual pureblood all of these years that I was growing up.” Now the only way into the pastorate is by being oriented to who and what God is, and having no illusions about yourself. If God has called you into the ministry, the compliments of people may deceive you into thinking that there was something special about you that brought you into it, but you were nothing, and God was everything. In His grace and His sovereignty He put His finger on you and said, “You I want in the ministry.” He does the same for each of us even if we are not in the professional, so to speak, pastorate ministry.

That being true, you can’t get (tied) into knots about anything or anyone. If there’s anything a pastor has to have, it’s a relaxed mental attitude. There is no place for him to be all torn up about what people think and what people say about him. He has to understand what his calling is. Now this is something where God has placed him. There are things that offend him and he has prejudices, but these are not the things that he should be majoring on. The thing he majors on is the Word of God.

And finally, number seven: There are some general Scriptures about the pastorate. Colossians 1:23-29 says, “If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature that is under heaven of which I Paul am made a minister, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake (which is the church) of which I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill (the Word of God).” That’s why I was made a minister, Paul said, to fulfill the Word of God to you. “Even the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to His saints to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among Gentiles which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preached, warning every man; teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect (a spiritual maturity structure in the soul) in Christ Jesus. For this I also labor, striving according to the working which worketh in me mightily.”

You can add 1 Timothy 2:24-26, 2 Timothy 3:1-9, and Titus 1:6-9. All these are general scriptures on the functioning of the pastorate.

**Ephesians 4:12**

Now we come to the key that we’ve been moving toward in orienting our thinking to the place of a pastor-teacher, and that’s Ephesians 4:12. For there we have in this verse, and we’re going to just start it today. In Ephesians 4:12 you will notice that you have the word “for” three times in that verse. There’s a relationship between these that you must understand or you miss the whole point of this verse. Ephesians 4:12 says, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

In the Greek language, these are not all the same word. The first “for” is this Greek word “pros.” The second two are “eis.” The relationship that is indicated by this switch is this: That the pastor is called to perform number one. But number two and number three cannot take place in the life of a believer unless number one is performed. Number two and number three are dependent upon number one.

Now we’re going to spend a couple of weeks going into detail as to what’s involved in these “for.. for… for” here. We’re going to start with the first one. If a pastor-teacher fails in this first one which is preaching Bible doctrine, explaining the Word to people. If he fails here then the Christian cannot experience number two, he cannot experience number three, and Satan has him neutralized. This is why it is such a grave matter when a pastor is not functioning as an instructor in the Word. When he is too preoccupied and too burdened down with other things so that he cannot produce from the Word for the people.

“For the perfecting of the saints.” Let’s look at this word “perfecting” because that’s the first thing a pastor is supposed to do. “Perfecting.” What does that mean? Now right away you can do two things. You can say, “Well, let’s see, I’ve been around churches for a while. I know what seems to be good for Christians, what seems to be good for a local church, what seems to be bad, good things to do, things we shouldn’t do.” A pastor is supposed to teach people how a local church can go along and work smoothly. You can think of all kinds of ideas as to what you think constitute perfecting the saints.

Well we’ve got to go back again because we interpret grammatically, historically, on what the Word says in its original language and on the background of the time in which it was written. We have to look at what the word means. The word is “katartismos.” This is a very significant word because what it means is to equip for combat. If you are going to take a group of men and prepare them to fight in Vietnam against a Communist enemy, what you would be doing is taking these men and giving them “katartismos.” You would be equipping them for combat. You would be giving them equipment, weapons, gear of one kind or another; you’d be teaching them how to use it and how to take care of it in order that they might be transferred to a staging area and from the staging area into a field of combat.

That’s what this word interestingly enough means. What’s a pastor supposed to be doing? Well we’re not training you, first of all, for physical combat. We are training you for some kind of combat. We’re training you for combat with Satan in the performance of the Lord’s work. A pastor is supposed to be equipping the people for spiritual combat.

**Ephesians 6:10-18 – The Full Armor of God**

Now this word is explained in more detail in Ephesians 6:10-18, and I want to read it. Here’s the process of equipping: “Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Now right away you have to take up the doctrine of the filling of the Holy Spirit, to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. “Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” And you cannot put on the whole armor of God by going out and making some personal resolution that you’re going to be more faithful to the Lord, or making promises to God. The armor of God is the Word of God. So you’re right back again to somebody dispensing the truth of the Word.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but our combat is against principalities (these are angelic groups), against powers, against the rulers of darkness (evil angel groups) of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God.” Ahh, there’s the problem. It’s true that you can go to most any church and you can hear part of the Word. Many places you’ll certainly hear the gospel. But you have Christians who are walking around with pieces of armor on, and great big chunks of them fully exposed to mortal blows from the enemy.

“Take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil days and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having your loins girded about with truth.” Whose truth? That’s another word for divine viewpoint. That’s the only truth we have. And where do you get it? From reading inspirational books? From listening to inspirational sermons? No, you get it from somebody who gets up and treats you like you are an intelligent being whom God has made with capacities to learn what He thinks.

“And having on the breastplate of righteousness.” How do you get righteousness? By going positive toward what? Toward the Word. You’ll never be righteous until you have the Word and you can go positive toward it. “And your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” You can never be an ambassador until you know what the gospel is and you can tell it to people and you can tell them what they need to do with it.

“Above all taking the shield of faith.” That’s positive volition. “…with which ye will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God.”

I’ve mentioned to you before that one young woman wrote me and said that she reviewed her own life and her certain level of indifference toward the Word of God as she sat in this very circle of believers from time to time. Her indifference struck home to her when it finally came home to her what her negative responses had cost her. She said, “I am afraid my sword is not too sharp with which to withstand Satan.” She couldn’t have been more accurate in her evaluation because that’s exactly what the Word says. How many Christians really run around and they’ve got a sharp sword in their hand which is the Word of God.

Some Sunday nights, I have in the back of my mind, of having just a service where we do nothing else but we just put up a subject here, and we say, OK, “justification,” or “old sin nature,” just to see what the congregation can say, “on the old sin nature,” this is true. And how many things we could list from a group of believers that they know about the old sin nature. You’ll soon tell who’s got dull swords and who’s got sharp swords.

You can find it quickly enough when you come into spiritual combat. You take your little sword out and you make a swath and you miss Satan completely because your judgment is so far off, or he out-maneuvers you, and pretty soon you look at yourself and say, “I can’t believe this. Here I am in an act of sin and I can’t believe this. I thought better of myself. I was sure I was better than this. And you’ve got a dull sword. To the extent that you are ignorant of the Word, you’ve got a dull sword, and there is no hope.

“Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God.” Verse 18 says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all things.” We are not out of line. We as pastors are not out of line when we stress upon you that there is a legitimate place for you attend prayer. There is legitimate occasion for you to be engaged in personal as well as corporate prayer because God says, “This is how I work. And I move the work ahead as you pray, and I let it lag as you do not pray.” And I’m not talking about the numbers racket. I’m talking about spiritual maturity progression on the part of the people of God.

Now to whom is he to do this? The perfecting, the equipping for combat of the saints. And the word “saints” of course stands for those who are in Christ. That’s positional truth. The congregation is to be directed as a group of born-again people so that they have the Word of God on which to operate. You can translate it this way: And incidentally, because it uses this word “pros” here, this is a preposition which connotes face-to-face. So if I have anybody here who says, “Well I don’t have to come to church—I’ll listen to the tapes,” you’re out of line. God says that the instruction is in the context of the local church within a group that is gathered, face-to-face, pastor to congregation. And it is not one-on-one. That is, it is not my investigating what you think.

We couldn’t have privacy if you weren’t in a group here. Right now some of you have listened and you have said, “That’s good. I believe that. I accept that.” But some of you have said, “Well I don’t know. There’s that old line again. I’m not too happy with that.” And you can go negative. But God says, “You must be private in your response to me.”

When you have children, they are not private. They are your business. One lady said, “I heard you say that in church and I found some things. When I started acting that way I found some things that I needed to know about my kids that I didn’t know before. But now I have quit pretending that they have privacy because they were kids. I now realized that they had privacy. What they thought and what they were doing and what they were saying and where they were going was my business. And it was my business to find it out. If I had to be J. Edgar Hoover to do it, I had to find it out. It is the parents who have little insight and discernment who don’t play that role.

Face-to-face with training and equipping the saints for combat. And we’re going to pick it up and go from there on how we proceed to do that equipping and then how the two strategic points beyond this are tied to it. We’re going to go into detail on what it is to produce human good so that if you just get near it you’ll smell it without ever seeing it. You’ll know that it’s human good just by the odor of it. What it is to produce divine good. That’s what all this is leading to.

But if number one breaks, if that pastor breaks down on you for the equipping of the saints. You’re through right there.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971