

## ***"I'd Like You To Meet My Pastor. . ."***

Most people who use the above phrase are using the word "pastor" as synonymous with the words preacher, evangelist or minister. In other words, they intend to introduce you to the man who preaches in the pulpit where they go to church. Yet despite the word being overwhelmingly used in this way, the Bible teaches that a pastor and a typical preacher are not the same.

There are three principal words or concepts which the New Testament uses to describe the men called pastors and their work. Besides the word pastor (or shepherd), the words elder and bishop (or overseer) are also used. These terms refer respectively to the tending and feeding of the flock, the age and spiritual maturity of these men, and to the work of overseeing to which they are appointed. These concepts come together and show themselves to be referring to the same men in such scriptures as Acts 20:17,28 and Titus 1:5,7. Notice that in Acts 20:17, these men are called "elders of the church," and in verse 28 they are told to tend, shepherd, or be pastors of the church of God, the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers (or bishops). Likewise, in Titus 1:5, instructions about appointing elders begin, and in verse 7, a man doing the work is described as an "overseer." It is obvious that all of these descriptions are simply different slants on the same men or work.

But the differences between preachers and pastors are more than semantics or a nit-picking technicality. For one thing, the Scriptures always speak of a plurality of elders in every church. So if a church has only one pastor, it has at least one too few. Furthermore, specific qualifications and characteristics must be met before men can be appointed as pastors (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). At times, the work of preachers and pastors may overlap, but they are not the same. If we understand what we mean, we are on safe ground by calling Bible things by Bible names.

***-by Jim King***

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## ***The Disease of Naaman***

Most Bible students are familiar with Naaman. He was the man who, upon being told how to cleanse his leprosy, became "wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (2 Kings 5:11).

Many folks today are suffering with the disease of Naaman. No, not his leprosy, but rather his "behold, I thought" malady. It's like the "Christian Church Elder" I heard of who was conducting a funeral service on a Saturday morning and stating that the daughter of the deceased had asked that they observe the Lord's Supper. Before serving it, the man said, "my initial reaction was, I've never heard of that before - but then I thought, why not?" Why not?! How about the fact there's no Bible authority for such. In the Bible, the church assembled to "break bread (partake of the Lord's Supper) upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7).

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 5:8). Don't let the "behold, I thought" epidemic get you.

***- by David McPherson***

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## ***Stuck On Self***

Peruse the catalog of almost any religious publisher or walk down the aisle of the Christian Booksellers Association convention and you will quickly discover what's hot and what's not: what's hot is the counsel of psychologists about anxiety and addiction, depression and dependency, self-esteem and sexuality, parenting and personality disorders; what's not is the call of Jesus to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him in the way of servanthood. Our obsession with self has led us astray into the temple of idols.

***- by Donald McCullough***

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## ***Dancing***

Through the years, gospel preachers have warned against dancing. "Revelries and such like," which Paul condemned as works of the flesh (Galatians 5:21), have been commonly defined by lexicographers to include dancing. In the past, both Christians and non-Christians considered dancing worldly. Devout parents urged their children not to dance and many a teenager missed the Senior Prom because it involved a dance. In the last thirty years there has been less and less teaching against dancing, and more and more young people from good homes are participating.

We have already observed that the word revelries in Galatians 5:21 is often defined to include dancing. Perhaps even more to the point is the word lasciviousness (licentiousness, KJV), also found in the Galatians passage. The Greek word which it represents is found in nine other New Testament texts, always to be condemned. Paul says of both revelry and lasciviousness that "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." But what is lasciviousness?

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines lasciviousness as "wanton acts or manners as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." If the dances that are now popular are not "indecent bodily movements" it would be difficult to know what indecent bodily movements would be. Many dances, both old and new, also include unchaste handling of males and females.

Surely this is an area where Christians must be different than the world in which they live.

**- by Sewell Hall**

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## ***Distractions on the Road***

Surely you've seen them - those drivers who are so busy talking on their cellular phones that they sit through a green light or ignore some other important traffic situation. The 'topper' to this is when you see a driver talking on the cell phone AND eating a sandwich - all while driving a car.

Driving is a serious activity that demands our devoted attention. Things like cell phones and sandwiches tend to distract us, making driving even more dangerous. When two or more such distractions are added together watch out! The likelihood of an accident is significantly multiplied.

Now, make a spiritual application. Living life in this world is a very serious activity. It demands our undivided attention. The problem is that we too often allow ourselves to be distracted by the things of this world. When that happens, a spiritual accident is sure to follow.

And, we're not just talking about the sinful things that can distract us. Certainly, there are plenty of those. Wickedness abounds in our society and we are confronted with multiple temptations everyday. Constant vigilance is necessary. But, more than this, there is the danger that we will get so busy with our day-to-day affairs that we might forget what our main pursuit is supposed to be. Our jobs, our families, our recreation and a host of other things - not sinful in and of themselves - can crowd God out of our lives.

Add two or three such distractions together and you are simply a spiritual accident looking for a place to happen. Be careful! Stay focused. "Reach forth unto those things which are before" and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"(Phil. 3:13,14).

**- by Greg Gwin**