

Elder Training Series

Session 23 - Job Duty of 'Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively' - PART 1 (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: Again perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you need to work on or improve.

READ: "**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...**" (2 Timothy 3:16), and "**...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.**" (1 Timothy 4:13)

SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors have the duty before God to ensure that the Scriptures are prominently presented, explained, and applied in the messages of their church or ministry.

-- Job Duty: Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively

- - Churches and most ministries have a distinct purpose and basic function of disseminating information, specifically spiritual information that pertains to God.
- - That spiritual information comes in the forms of verbal, written, and visual messages of words, which are being communicated for the audience persons to take in, consider, and apply in their own life.

- - In addition to and conjunction with 'directing the affairs of the church', elders, overseers, and pastors intrinsically have the job duty of directing the dissemination of that spiritual information.

- - God has clearly identified that the 'Scriptures' are to be the core source of the words and spiritual information that His churches and ministries generate and disseminate, as cited in 2 Timothy 3:16, "**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...**".

- - "All Scripture" comes forth from God Himself, by means of Him in a manner "breathing [it] into" the minds of the various humans as they authored the books of the Scriptures, so that 'all Scripture' is crafted exactly the way that God wants it, and thereby it possesses authority and empowerment from God. (Strong's #2315 in 2 Timothy 3:16)

- - Because it has come forth from God Himself in this manner, "all Scripture" "**is useful for**" achieving what God wants accomplished in each person's life - essentially it is endowed by God with the power to dramatically transform the spiritual hearts of receptive persons.

- - So because "all Scripture" are the core source of the empowered words and spiritual information that "**are useful for**" achieving God's purposes, elders, overseers, and pastors are to ensure that the Scriptures are extensively used - being presented, quoted, explained, integrated, utilized, and applied appropriately within the information that is disseminated by and in their church or ministry. (from 1 Timothy 4:13 with 2 Timothy 3:16)

- - And the leadership needs to ensure that the Scriptures are used comprehensively - in all of the various information that is being disseminated by and in their church or ministry. (from 2 Timothy 4:2)

READ THE SCRIPTURES:

- - In 1 Timothy 4:13, elders, overseers, and pastors are assigned the job duty to "**...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching**".
- - Clearly from this verse, God wants His Scriptures distinctly and prominently featured in the words and spiritual information that His churches and ministries generate and disseminate for people to hear.
- - With the availability of many translations of the Bible in these modern times, a first challenge for leadership is to select a translation to use that is at least fairly accurate to the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew, and yet is simultaneously readily understandable by the audience.
- - A reality to remember here is that the audience people are not likely to read a translation on their own, by themselves, and try to understand the meaning of verses if they cannot readily understand the wording of that translation.
- - The objective here is to facilitate the people in reading and understanding the Scriptures, so that God's Word gets planted in their spiritual hearts, where it can sprout and start to produce spiritual growth.

- - From 1 Timothy 4:13, elders, overseers, and pastors have the responsibility before God to ensure that the Scriptures are being read audibly to the audience - implying that the Scriptures are to be quoted word-for-word and read in a featured honorary manner that extends to its prominence, importance, and supremacy, which will furthermore be reflected within the forthcoming message about it.
- A problem occurs, though, in merely reading the Scriptures:
 - - - - the read Scriptures pass by too quickly, providing insufficient time for the listeners to figure out and digest what is being stated in each of the verses;
 - - - - there is not enough time for them to extract the meaning but only to derive an inadequate general and fleeting impression;
 - - - - therein the reading merely impacts the listener by means of leaving a general, superficial, and fleeting impression.
- - Therefore, a good approach is to read and thus feature only the Scripture that has been selected for that message that is forthcoming in that meeting. This approach facilitates and allows time for the Holy Spirit to prepare the listeners to think about and to receive the forthcoming message about that particular (selected) Scripture.

FEATURE (a selected) SCRIPTURE in each message:

- - In verbal messages and written message documents, the (selected) Scripture should be prominently featured, perhaps by displaying it in quote marks with distinguishing bold print.
- - Naturally, then, the contents of the selected read (or written) Scripture are to be the distinct actual topic of the message; in other words, the verse contents determine the message topic and guide the creating of the message contents.
- - Therein, the message should be expounding on the various aspects of what the verse is saying.
- - What God is actually saying in the selected verse should be given maximum priority and prominence, and should not be usurped by what the speaker wants the verse to say so that it supports his/her message that he/she has predetermined and wants to deliver.

- - This usurping of what is actually being stated in a verse is a form of Scripture-twisting
- a preferred tactic that is frequently employed by false religions (cults) and by wayward denominations and churches.
- - Another common mistake to avoid in messages is when the speaker determines and writes the whole message based on his/her own thinking and words, and then afterwards incidentally inserts into the message a single brief mention of a verse that he/she self-convinces and inaccurately contends is featured in that message.
- - To be clear, referencing a supporting verse is acceptable in a message, but the active working of the power from God in a message is significantly reduced when the message contains only a brief mention of a supporting Scripture verse rather than a sufficient teaching of a featured verse.
- - A warranted conclusion, therefore, is that in order for a God-empowered effect to be produced in listeners, the reading of the Scriptures needs to be accompanied by a featuring - an adequate direct explanation of the meaning of that Scripture, as declared in 2 Timothy 3:16 - "All Scripture... **is useful for** teaching [*to inform*], rebuking [*to convict*], correcting [*to change*] and training [*to implement*] in righteousness...".

EXPOSE THE MEANING OF THE (selected) SCRIPTURE in the message:

- - By God's design, generally the Scriptures are difficult for the average believer by himself/herself to understand and to detect fullness of its meaning. (Psalm 1:2, 1 Corinthians 2:11-16)
- - Therefore, there is an important and urgent necessity to use an 'expository' approach in messages such as preaching or teaching, in order to dig out, identify, expose, and present the meaning of the Scripture verse in a degree of fullness that is suitable for that audience during the allotted time period of its meeting together. Note: Obviously, messages for audiences of persons younger than adulthood would necessitate presenting a corresponding lesser and simpler degree of fullness of the meaning of the verse.
- - The expository approach necessitates usually selecting only one verse to use; otherwise using more than one verse results in trying to exposition a larger volume of text, which generates a missing and a failing to utilize thorough exposition and instead merely hitting the highlights of the verses. Obviously though, selecting a narrative or story in the Scriptures involves using a section of verses in the message, but nevertheless the main emphasis and bulk of the content in that message should focus on exposition of an important action, or a statement, or a concept in the selected section of verses.
- - A key reality here is that for the writer, there has to be a figuring out and ascertaining or determining the meaning of the verse in order to be able to construct a message that exposes that meaning.
- - And the writer has to figure out and ascertain (determine) the meaning of the verse in fullness, in order to be able to construct a message that exposes and "declares" that meaning in fullness - "the whole counsel of God". (from the Strong's Greek words in Acts 20:27)
- - Furthermore, the writer needs to be in a current state of being fully-yielded to the control of the Spirit in order to ascertain the meaning of the verse in fullness and then to construct the structure of the message in a manner that the Spirit can use in fullness. (1 Corinthians 2:11-16; Note: For more information on "being fully-yielded to the control of the Spirit", see

the second section in the "Session 10" document of this 'Elder Training Series', on this web-site www.BelieverAssist.com .)

- - On a note from personal experience, it is quite common not to know the meaning of the verse in fullness until the writer is deeply immersed in actually writing or attempting to actually write the message.

- - But the extra time, effort, and struggling are worth exerting, because constructing a message that exposes the meaning of a Scripture verse in fullness facilitates God in unleashing His divinely-empowered efforts to transform the lives of the audience persons into fullness of spiritual maturity. (Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 3:16)

-- An effective approach to discover, expose, and determine the proper meaning of the selected Scripture is for the writer to:

- - - - look up and make a copy of the meanings of each word in the selected verse, in its original Greek (for the New Testament) or the Hebrew (for the Old Testament);

- - - - look up and make a copy of the theological definitions of important words that are in the selected verse, using theological dictionaries from reputable authors;

- - - - study the surrounding verses to achieve the important understanding of the context, and to look for words that are repeated and linked into the selected verse;

- - - - search for any useful or needed other verses (that are outside of the surrounding context verses), that possess content that relate to the topic(s) in the selected verse;

- - - - if necessary, consult commentaries from reputable authors on the selected verse;

- - - - while conducting all of this research, write down, compile, and organize information that is important, or seems relevant, or may be useful for the ascertaining of the meaning or the writing of the message;

- - - - stay aware that the objective is to properly expand on the words used in the selected Scripture text, in order to generate for the average listener in the audience an accurate, comprehensible, and effective explanation of what the words mean in the context of what their sentence means in the context of what their surrounding sentences mean.

[Note: This discussion about the 'Job Duty of 'Extensively Use The Scriptures Comprehensively' ' in this document continues onward in the next document, 'Session 24', in this 'Elder Training Series'.]

APPLICATIONS:

- - As an elder, overseer, or pastor, and as an implied part of your job duty of 'directing the affairs of the church', are you willing to take on the job duty of overseeing the dissemination of the spiritual information that is being generated and presented by your church or ministry?

- - If so, are you furthermore personally committing to do all that you can to ensure that the Scriptures are extensively used - being presented, quoted, explained, integrated, utilized, and applied appropriately within all the spiritual information that comes forth from and in your church or ministry?

- - Do you indeed intend to personally ensure that the 'Scriptures' are to be the core source of the words in that spiritual information?

- - Do you deep down inside genuinely hold that "all Scripture" "**is useful for**" achieving what God wants accomplished in each person's life, when they hear or read the spiritual information of your church or ministry?

- - Do you see the value and importance of "the public reading of Scripture"?

- - What translation of the Bible do you use when preaching or teaching?

- - Are you willing to switch to a different translation that is at least fairly accurate to the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew, and yet is simultaneously readily understandable by the audience?

- - Do you agree that a good approach is to read and thus feature the Scripture that has been selected for that message that is forthcoming in that meeting or gathering together?

- - What is your opinion on the assertion that the contents of the selected Scripture are to be the distinct actual topic of the message? Explain and defend your answer.

- - Do you see the danger, and the disrespect and dishonor to God of missing, twisting, or usurping in a message what is actually being stated in the selected Scripture verse?

- - Do you think it is important and urgent to distinctly expose the meaning of the selected Scripture in messages? Explain the reasoning of your reply.

- - Are you willing to exert more effort and time to ascertaining the meaning in fullness of selected verses, or in more fullness, when you are preparing a message?

- - Do you think you are interested and willing to always submit yourself to be in a current state of fully-yielded-ness to the control of the Spirit when you are preparing a message? If not, take a few moments to ponder and analyze within the quietness of your heart "Why not?". (PAUSE and allow some time for each person to process his negative response to this issue inquiry.)

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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