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THE BEREANS


ACTS 17:11

1 Timothy 5:22-25
Lesson #17
Wise Choices
08/13/2023

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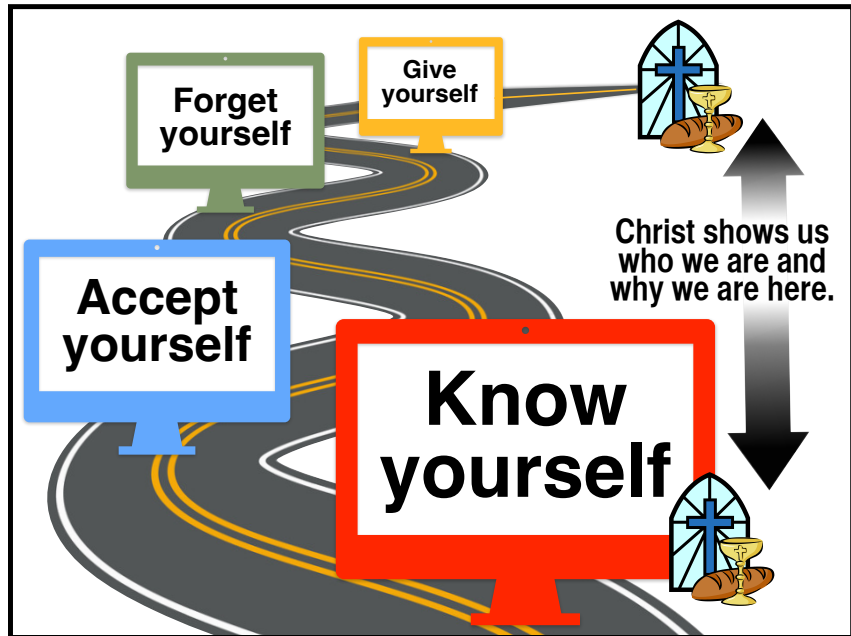
Marks of a good shepherd

- They have **followers**.
- They are **true** to themselves
 - symbolizing the *Image of God*.
 - spreading the *Word of the Cross*.
 - showing the *Way of the Cross*.



It starts and finishes with the Cross of Christ.

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Choosing QUALIFIED spiritual leaders is very important.

The context of this passage is set by vs.22, **choosing spiritual shepherds in the church.**

1 Timothy 5:22

“Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”



Don't **rush to judgment** in ordaining shepherds, as you will have to live with your choices, and be partially responsible for any consequences of their behavior.

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1 Timothy 5

“22 Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

? 23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. ?

24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. 25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.”

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Berean question #1 How does this fit the context?

? 23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. ?

- **Could it be that it is NOT about water or wine, but about making wise choices?**

1 Timothy 3:8

“Deacons likewise must not be...
addicted to much wine”

- **You may too quickly conclude that avoiding wine is a virtue, when in fact you could be unwise in avoiding it completely.**

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Berean question #2 What about healing prayer?

A sidebar question:

- Bereans may be **confused** as to what the Scripture teaches on this subject.
- Paul recognized that illness was common and **“faith healing” was real but not always the wise response.** (2 Tim.4:20, Gal.4:13)
- Faith healing is like **pumping air in a bad tire.**

***It is temporary and incomplete.
It is a sign, not a solution.***

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This physical body is passing away.

1 Corinthians 15

“⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a **perishable** body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in **dishonor**, it is raised in glory; it is sown in **weakness**, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a **natural** body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, **earthy**; the second man is from heaven. . . . ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

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Faith and healing?

1. PRINCIPLE
We need a theology of death and suffering as well as faith and healing.

2. PATIENCE
We need well placed hope, based on Scriptural promises.

3. PRIORITIES
We need to keep the main thing the main thing and tell the truth.

4. PEACE
We need to cultivate realistic expectations.

1 Timothy 5

“24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. 25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.”

- **Some individuals of shady character are easy to discern** - (proclaiming a false gospel, immoral life style, self serving agenda, etc.).
- **It is easy to make a positive impression, but if it is a “false impression” the truth will be exposed in time.**
- **A shady character is not always conspicuous, so be careful to ask lots of questions and look critically into past patterns of behavior.**

Matthew 25

“27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which **on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.** 28 Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

- **Looks can be deceiving.**

Proverbs 20:25

“It is a trap for a man to **say rashly, “It is holy!”** and after the vows to make inquiry.”

- **Don’t rush to judgment.**

Matthew 7:20

“So then, you will know them **by their fruit.**”

- **Fruitful ministry is a trustworthy sign.**

What constitutes good fruit in ministry?

NOT:
This world’s values, Charisma, Popularity, Numbers, Bibliolatry, Churchianity, etc.

BUT:
The WORD and WAY of the CROSS.

- **Jesus’ values and priorities.**
- **Faith** that is orthodox.
- **Hope** that is centered beyond “this world”.
- **Love** that is self sacrificing.
- **Community** that is like the Body of Christ.

Matthew 7

“¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. . . . ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*’”

Character is not a gift, but rather a sign.

The Gospel is both the Word & Way of the Cross
(the message & the model)

The best prediction of future behavior
is the pattern of past behavior.

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Choosing spiritual leaders (vital elements and priorities)

Gifts - Skills - Theology - Experience

Team worker - Peace maker

Character - Wisdom - Fruit



“Good leaders must communicate vision clearly, creatively, and continually. *However, the vision doesn’t come alive until the leader models it.*”

John C. Maxwell

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What should we learn from this passage?

- Be **wise in choosing** spiritual shepherds - take time, look for the right things, and listen well.
- Have **realistic expectations**. This world, its institutions, and people are broken and will not be perfect until Christ returns.
- Character (good or bad) **cannot be hidden** and in time it will become evident.
- Don’t **confuse charisma with character**.
- Ask not what your church can do for you, but **ask what can you do for Christ’s church**.
- **Build** a better church rather than look for one.

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Some reasons to consider changing congregations.

- You cannot, **in good conscience**, support the the church you are in.
- The church does not provide an **opportunity for you (your family) to grow** in your faith.
- The church does not provide an **opportunity for you to minister** to others.
- **Another church needs** your presence, gifts, and ministry more than this one.
- Your continued presence in this church is a **stumbling block for others**.

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