***Focusing on the Word of Life - PH54-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:17***

Please turn in your Bibles to Philippians 2:16 that we're going to take up today as we proceed in our study through this book. We'll have just a little brief review to tie us together. Paul, in verse 14, has been calling upon believers to have an attitude which is free of resentments, of bitterness, and of mental doubts toward God as they live their lives. The things that come upon us in life should not be things that cause us to have bitterness; or resentments; or even to doubt that God is sympathetic toward us; that He is concerned; or, that our Father is interested in our welfare. This is an easy thing for a Christian to be tempted to fall into. If you do that, you're in a lot of trouble because the root of bitterness is the seed and is the source of constant grief and constant turmoil in a person's life.

So verse 14 very specifically says, "Do all things without murmurings (which means bitterness or resentments), and without disputings (which means mental doubts against God as to what He brings into your life)." Philippians 2:16 then tells us to be free of justifiable censure as God's children. We are to be genuine, to be without guile; and to be free of any moral blemish. We have spent a few months studying the ten moral principles in order to fulfill this admonition of being free of moral blemish. These things are to characterize Christians in spite of the fact that we live in Satan's world where people are morally corrupt. We are not to pick up the patterns and the habits of the society which surrounds us.

The purpose of this kind of moral conduct is so that the Christian will be a light in Satan's world. That is our calling. That is our purpose. We are not to contribute to the darkness. We are to seek to dispel the darkness.

So divine viewpoint comes to our society through believers who have been illuminated by the Word of God. I want you to notice that because Paul is going to amplify that point now in verse 16. Our society gets this thinking straight through Christians who have been illuminated, and have thus received, through Bible doctrine, God's Divine Viewpoint. Philippians 2:16 gives the means for fulfilling the role of being a light in the world. Our procedure is to take the Word of God, and to establish the authority upon that which God the Holy Spirit wrote. In case some of you have not yet become alerted to the fact, God the Holy Spirit did not write the New Testament in English. He wrote it in the Greek language.

You may smile, but I have heard preachers say that they're not interested in all this fancy talk about languages, translations, and whatnot. They are satisfied with "the way Paul wrote the King James Bible." And they mean the King James Bible. So we're trying to overcome what is a widespread defect in the ministry today. And that is that authority for the Word of God lies within a pulpit personality rather than within the Word of God. You cannot establish authority in the Word of God unless you go back to the language of the Word of God in which God the Holy Spirit spoke. The book of Philippians was written in Greek. Therefore, we will seek to explain what this passage says from the Greek so that when you go home, you will not be quoting me. You can go home and say, "Here's what God has said. Here's what I know that God has said, and not that guy up there who is talking, because I have it from the words that the Holy Spirit used."

**The Word of Life**

So Philippians 2:16 begins with, "Holding forth the Word of Life. The word "holding forth" in the Greek language is "epecho." "Epecho" has three translations, and we will look at all three of those because we have to decide which one God the Holy Spirit meant here. When you have a variety of meanings, it will be dependent as per the context.

The first meaning, and a primary meaning, is "holding out the mind to," or "focusing your attention upon." Putting your mind to something is the idea of "epecho." We have this in a variety of places in the Bible. We will look at a few of those. For example, in Luke 14:7, this same word is used, and it gives us an example of what we're talking about: "And He put forth the parable to those who were bidden when he marked (and there's the Greek word 'epecho') how they chose out the chief places, saying onto them." What "He marked" means is that He noticed. That is, Jesus Christ centered His mind upon how these people were acting. He noticed how they were elbowing one another for places of prominence?

We have another example of this in Acts 3:5: "And he gave heed to them (there is the Greek word "epecho"–heed), expecting to receive something from them." Here is the man who was born with ankle's that wouldn't walk, and he is seated there at the gate Beautiful. Peter and John come along, and "he gave heed" means "he fixed his attention on." That's the meaning that we're dealing with here in the word "epecho," to get your mind onto something or to concentrate on something. So this man fixed his attention on Peter and John, expecting that they were going to give him some money. As you know, they instead healed him.

1 Timothy 4:16 gives us another example: "Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine." There you have it again–"epecho"–take heed. Here it means "to take pains" or "to look to." Take pains or to look to yourself and to the doctrine. Focus upon it and concentrate upon it. Continue in them. "For in doing this, you shall both save yourself and them that hear you."

So the word, first of all, that we're dealing with here means to focus your attention on something; to concentrate on it; and, to pay attention to it in a very detailed substantial way.

A second meaning is "to hold fast." We have this in Luke 4:42: "When it was day, He departed and went into a desert place and the people saw Him and came unto Him (speaking about Jesus) and would have restrained Him that He should not depart from them. Here, "would have restrained Him" meant that they physically wanted to grab Jesus Christ and to keep him from departing from them. It connotes retaining possession of something.

Then there was a third meaning, and that is "holding out to," in the sense of "to offer." "Epecho" was a word that the classical Greeks used, and they would use it, for example, to describe offering wine to a guest at a dinner table. To offer the wine, a person would say, "I 'epecho' this goblet of wine to you. I am offering it. So it also had that meaning of "holding something out to people."

By this context, where Paul is telling us how we can be lights in the world to illuminate the darkness that Satan has brought down upon the world, the best meaning is number one. That is the meaning that God the Holy Spirit, apparently, indicated that he intended to use of this word (this is the main way that the word is used) to focus the attention upon; to concentrate upon; or, to pay attention.

Of course, we could not eliminate really holding fast to the Word of God, because that's what we're talking about. We do that. Nor do we eliminate holding out the Word of God, offering it to people. We also do that. But in the overall context here, the main point is progress toward spiritual maturity–the development of the individual believer from a spiritual zero into something, a spiritual substance. This word grammatically is in the present tense, which means that this is to be the way of life for the Christian. A Christian is to focus his attention on something. This is to be my life. My life is to be constantly–morning, noon, and night–focusing my attention upon something that he's going to identify in a minute. Active means that I must take the trouble to do it. And participle means that a spiritual principle is stated.

Your life and your mind will not focus upon this thing without your active participation, and actively organizing your life to do so. What is it that we are to focus upon? What we focus upon He calls the Word of Life–focusing your attention upon the Word of Life. The Word of Life is made up, first of all, of the word "logos" in the Greek, and it means the expression of a thought. It's a symbol which conveys to us a thought that someone has. Here, it is applying to the mind of God expressed in the symbols of the words that make up the Bible. So the word "logos" here means the words that constitute the Bible.

Then life is "zoe," and "zoe" is the word for life which means life as a principle. This is what God has in His Holiness. We refer to this as the quality of eternal life. This eternal life is what the Bible tells us that we, as sinners, have been alienated from in God. Ephesians 4:18 says, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness." You know that that word is the Greek word "hardness" there. It is because of the hardness of their hearts, or because of the calluses upon their minds. There is an alienation from God's eternal life on the part of those who are hard toward God's viewpoint expressed in the Word of God.

Sinners become part of this eternal life of God through faith in Jesus Christ. So we read in John 3:15, "That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Sinners, when they believe in Christ as Savior, become part of that life. The Lord Jesus Christ, we're told, is the author of this eternal life which is delivered to us as sinners. In Acts 3:15, we read, "And killed the Prince of Life, whom God has raised from the dead, of whom we are witnesses." Jesus Christ is the prince, and the word there should be translated "author." He is the author to us of eternal Life.

As a matter of fact, in Colossians 3:4, we find that Jesus Christ himself is this eternal life, where Paul says, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory? Our life is Jesus Christ. Therefore, if you're here and you do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, then you do not have the life that Jesus Christ is the author of: which is the life of God; which is eternal life; and, which means to be in the presence of God for all eternity. If you do not have this life, you will experience eternal death, which is to be separated from God for all eternity in the lake of fire.

There are many people who are religious and they are active participating church people. But they do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. And I'm not talking about the nonsense of inviting Christ into your heart and that sort of thing, or into your life. I'm talking about what the Bible is talking about–that you simply believe what the Bible says Jesus Christ came to do–to die for your sins, and you are willing to accept that; to go into the presence of God on that basis; and, to stand before Him and claim the death of Christ in your behalf.

I remember one man many years ago who was a very adamant resister of a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. He was an engineer. Naturally, engineers are brainy people. They're smart. Therefore, they're above this sort of simplistic thing: "I'm a sinner, and God out there has made a provision for me." Every now and then, you have experiences with people that just tack themselves onto your mind. I remember one night when the instruction lent itself particularly to the gospel message, and to the stressing of the necessity to be related to the person of Jesus Christ, or there is no hope for you. At that time, Ron Blue had been our missionary to Spain, and he had returned now to be an instructor in the Missions Department of Dallas Seminary. Ron was with us recently. But on that night, he did a strange thing. Ron was a song leader. He usually didn't do this. I don't know if he had ever done it before or ever did it since. But he got up and said, "I feel led of the Lord tonight to add to what the pastor has said an additional stress to those of you who may be here without Christ to receive Him tonight by believing the gospel."

I was a little surprised, and Ron was little surprised. He said, "You know, I didn't even know why I did that. I just felt I should say that." At the end of the service, I was standing up on the platform, and this man walked out the door. I remember how he walked out the door; he stopped; he turned around; he looked back up at me for just a moment; and, then turned and walked off. I never saw him again until a week later as he lay in his casket. For all I know, that man now suffers in his soul in Hades, awaiting the judgment of the transfer of his body and soul into the lake of fire forever. That's all that's before him. Why? Because he refused to be related to the person of Jesus Christ. He refused to pay attention to what the book of life says: the Word of Life; and, the word of eternal life, which is centered in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is our life, and without Whom we have no life.

So if you've been playing games with God, I would suggest that you cut it out; that you forget all of your religion; forget all of your church membership; forget all of your ritual and ceremony; all of your prejudices; all of the things you've always believed; and, all of your intellectual superiority, and turn to the book of life that will tell you how to have God's life through the Son of God, who is the author of life. Believers in Jesus Christ are not only going to spend eternity with God, but believers in Jesus Christ have eternal life right now. They have the life of which this book speaks.

John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that hears My word and believes on Him that sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death unto life." You now have eternal life, or you do not have eternal life. One or the other. It is not a future hope. It is not a future possibility. It is something you either have or you don't have. Whether you do or not depends on whether you are related to the person of Jesus Christ and to nothing else.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, because he was a God man, also tells us something else about this eternal life. It tells us that someday this eternal life is going to be applied to your body as it was to His. For that reason, we know that someday our bodies will be raised. Those of us who go into eternity through death, our bodies will be raised, and we will live forever in those bodies which have been now made fit for a spiritual existence. We have this taught to us in 2 Corinthians 5:4, for example: "For we that are in this tabernacle (that is, our human clay bodies) do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in (notice) life." "Swallowed up in eternal life." Someday, God's eternal life is actually going to swallow up your very body.

2 Timothy 1:10 gives us another example of that: "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." So the gospel is the key to eternal life through establishing a relationship of trust in the person of Jesus Christ–that His death covers your sins.

The Word of Life is to be the main focus of your life and of your thinking as a believer. Nothing else should take priority over this Word of Life. Hebrews 4:12, interestingly enough, uses these same two words: "For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword." The word there is the same word "logos," and "living" is the same word "zao," which here is a verb meaning "to live." That is the living Word of God, and that equals the Bible.

So Hebrews 4:12 uses the same two words to demonstrate to us that the living Word of God is this written book that we have. That is what is alive. That is what is powerful. It is these words that Paul describes as the Word of Life. This is to be our focus. That's Paul's point in this verse–focusing your attention, and thus your whole life, on the Word of Life, the living eternal Word of God.

**False Objects of Worship**

There are some false objects of focus that I should caution you about, which are commonly substituted, and more and more so in our day.

**Emotions**

The first false object of focus from Satan is orgies of an emotional nature. These are emotional experiences in order to get us to feel close to God. Orgies are meant to drain our emotions through some human manipulation because it just feels so good. So it makes us feel close to God. The reason these practices in the Pentecostal movement (such as tongues and healings) are critical is because they are vital to emotional excitement. The body light technique, which is finding root in many biblical churches all around the country, lacks the tongues and healing technique, but it follows this same concept of emotional and exciting experiences, and it does this through sharing. People get up and they share their so-called experiences with God.

All of this is a substitute for focusing upon the Word of Life. I'll caution you that some of the best people and some of the best preachers have been trapped in emotional experiences as the approach to God. That's false. Emotional experiences are Satan's field. They are the area of the manipulation of the old sin nature that he can perform in a very great way. Satan and his demons work through this technique. If the focus of your life is an emotional experience, then you have exposed yourself to a lot of human good.

**Church Programs**

Another focus is church programs. That is, that churches have the idea that somehow we are responsible for filling the social void that is in the life of people. We are to run various social activities. You might say, "Well, no, I don't really think a church should have to provide for my social life. That's for me to do on my own with the people I want to do it with." Well, you're a very wise person if you feel like that.

But I'll tell you that there are many, many Christians who roam from church to church, and they attach themselves to a church on the basis that this church has a nice youth program. That means that this church provides a lot of fun and games for my kids. Somehow they equate this with something good in their life spiritually. That is not so. The YMCA provides all kinds of fun and games for kids in a very splendid way, better than most churches do, but it has very little Christian significance in it whatsoever. Church social activities are not the focus of our attention. Some people never seem to be able to learn this, because every time this is mentioned, there's a little click of resentment down underneath because somebody seems to think that we're saying that Christians shouldn't get together to have a banquet; to have a church covered-dish supper; or, something like that. That isn't what we're saying. But the point is that if this is what attaches you to a certain church group, then you're out of line.

**Religious Rituals**

Also, religious ritual ceremonies can be the focus of our attention–ceremonies to appease God and to gain access to Him. The gross expressions of this are in primitive societies. That's where they cut the necks of chickens and sprinkle the blood all over the worshipers; they go dancing around the jungle fires; they yell; they shout; they scream; and, sometimes they even cut themselves. That's the gross way. However, in the refined way, we come down; we wear robes; we swing incense pots; we sprinkle holy water; we serve holy mackerel; and, we do all kinds of things in order to dispense a religious ceremony so that we can make points with God: "Are you listening, God? Do you see how well we have done this? You really are going to pay attention, aren't you?" There are people whose whole lives are focused on going to church and going through the ceremony. As a matter of fact, they're like little children. If you should change the mumbo-jumbo of the order of service, they'll come up and complain about it. That's just like our children in first grade complain if the teacher tells them a story, and she changes the story from the last time she told it.

**Sharing Experiences**

Another one is sharing experiences to prove that God is real and working in the world. This is always a danger when we have our testimony meetings at the Lord's Supper. You might think that somehow sharing your experiences is to prove that God is working, or to prove that the Bible is true. Well, I want to tell you that the reality about God and His ways is in doctrine. The reality about God is in the Word of Life, this book. It has nothing to do with whether you have an experience that confirms it or doesn't. If you find that somehow the Word of God does not find expression in your life and is not being confirmed in your life, it's because of some problem in you. When you get straightened out, then the Word of God is going to function. But we don't need your experience in order to confirm to us that God is truthful and that God will do what He says He will do. Experiences are the playground of Satan. They are another area of the manipulation of the old sin nature. Most Christians know so little doctrine that they're too shallow to stand up and give much spiritual enlightenment.

Mind you that the body life type of movement centers on this sharing. People come to services specifically to share. Sharing experiences has a certain limited place. But if that's the focus of your attention, and if you think that ministering to the body of Christ is through sharing experiences, you're wrong. The Word of God says there is one way that the body is ministered to. That is through a pastor-teacher who does what God told Peter to do–"To get yourself out there and start feeding the flock." That's how the body is ministered to. Most Christians don't know enough about the Bible to be able to get up to share anything that's going to minister and advance anybody spiritually at all.

**Star Personalities**

Or maybe you're following a star personality. That's the center of your focus. Satan loves to trip you up on this one. Here's someone who's written a religious bestseller. I have discovered that once you print a book, you are the man. You have arrived. All you have to do is get something in print. Have you ever had your wife come up to you and tell you that something is absolutely so. You say, "How do you know that is real?" She replies, "Look at what McCall's magazine says. Look at what Women's Day has said here." It's because it's print. If it's in print, it's an authority. Some authority has said it. So if you want to establish any kooky idea, just find somebody who's got a printing press to put it down.

So this is the way to become a star personality. Get a book published, and immediately everything you say then carries great weight. It takes a very mature, discerning Christian to say, "Well, if you've written a book, what you have said in that book which is true and compatible to the Word of Life is useful and good, and we accept. But that's as far as we go." You may say many other things that are not compatible with God's thinking.

Someone who is a smooth pulpit personality can draw a crowd. I have seen pulpit personalities. I saw several of them when I was in Southern California recently, who are standing out there before large congregations, and they're dispensing milk. They're just passing out milk bottles as the crowd comes in, and every now and then they say, "OK, tiger," and they throw out a little piece of meat of the Word, and a few hungry souls go scrambling and fighting for that piece of meat. That's it. The rest of the time, it's back to the bottle, boys. He's up there holding his bottle and giving out milk of the Word.

I'll tell you that one way you can spot this is when a preacher gets up and says, "We're going to study six chapters of the Bible tonight." Now, he's going to talk for 45 minutes. It'll take him 15 or 20 minutes to read six chapters. So you only have a few minutes left to do a few running commentaries; a few jokes; a little bit of invitation; and, a little bit of challenge. It won't take you long to prepare a sermon like that. You'll be able to watch the television programs most of the week without any interruption at all. These are smooth pulpit personalities. If he's teaching you big gobs of Scripture, he's teaching you big gobs of nothing. You get smart enough to recognize that.

Also, don't try pitting one teacher against another in order to champion your team and champion your viewpoint. We're always having that done to us. God's sovereign decision has been to place upon some of us the pastor-teacher gift as our lot in life. We're being pitted one against another, and matched one against another. That is out of line. That is following a star personality.

**Public Relations Techniques**

Another favorite one is chasing the latest new public relations technique in order to promote the Lord's work. Perhaps you'll remember our missionary from Iceland who was here a few weeks ago. The mission board that he used to be under would require him every week to make a report as to what techniques had been particularly fruitful that week. What technique had been really spectacular that particular week? That is public relations baloney.

That is like the man I heard of who was a missionary sitting at a campfire in a jungle area talking to a native, and explaining the gospel to him. All of a sudden another native came up. He stood by the fire listening to him for a while. Suddenly this other man who had been listening in stormed into his hut and came out with his hands full of his idols, and threw them on the fire. He said, "I believe in Jesus Christ." The missionary looked up. He hadn't even been talking to him. The first thing that came to the missionary's mind was, "What did I say to this man?" He got his pencil out and started writing, "Let's see. The first thing I said was this." He was setting up a system, and he came up with four spiritual laws on approaching people with the gospel–or five; or six; or, something. He wondered, "Here's the technique that he could send to the home office. This is what I said, and the man through his gods into the fire."

Public relations is a satanic thing that burdens Christian education today. Christian education is apostate to the degree that it has centered itself upon methodology to accomplish God's work. Methods are not the thing that accomplish the Spirit's conviction upon our minds. So the hottest latest method that's going around glamorizing Christianity so that the high and mighty people of the world will accept us is simply appealing to the old sin nature lusts. It makes no difference to me whether some star personality in the entertainment world is willing to accept what we teach concerning the Word of God or not. That doesn't change the truth. I don't intend for one moment to look around for some nice public relations technique in order to get the people who are influential, the leaders of our society, to come and give us a hearing. That is because that means to accommodate ourselves to the old sin nature lusts, and to set up some kind of mutual admiration society.

Well, all of these are false objects upon which we may focus, instead of the object that Paul said, "Focus your mind upon the Word of God and upon Bible doctrine. Let that be your life." All of this kind of false focus is because we may fail to attend a church that is explaining the Word of God by the HICEE technique–by the Hermeneutics; by the Isagogics; by the Categories; by the Exegesis; and by the Etymology. These include the meaning of words, the background of Scriptures, the principles of interpretation, and working from the original languages. If you don't attend a church like that, it will not be long, in all likelihood, before you have focused upon one of these false objects. It's almost inevitable that you will do so.

**Unconfessed Sins**

Or it may be because you're living in a status of carnality. You have unconfessed sins, so you've been building calluses upon your soul. So your spiritual vision has become distorted, and you focus yourself upon one of these false objects.

**Distractions**

Or it's because of distractions from Satan: moral distractions; human distractions; chemical distractions in the form of drugs; some material distraction that has led you away into one of these false areas of attention; or, maybe lack of self-discipline.

**Time**

Some of us don't seem to be able to organize our lives so that we have time for the Word of God: "I don't have time to sit down and listen to a tape; to get something out of it; to learn something new; or, to refresh my insights and my reservoir of doctrine."

**Attitude**

Or you may have a rebellious attitude toward the Bible and toward what it teaches. This is often reflected in a rebellious attitude toward the pastor-teacher.

**Poor Health**

Or it may be that you're in poor health. Because you're in poor health, you don't have the capacity to be able to use your mind in the right way. One of the best ways to get your mind out of proper functioning is to have a sick body. If that's your problem, then correct your health.

**Doctrine**

This same principle of focusing upon the Word of God is found in 1 Timothy 4:16, where the apostle Paul says, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." "Take heed" is our same word "epecho" that we began with in this session. "Epecho" means "focus the attention upon." And focus the attention upon what? He says upon doctrine. Doctrine is the "didaskalia," "Didaskalia" means "teaching." This is where we get the expression "Bible doctrine" or "Bible teaching" or "Bible principles of living" or "Bible propositions of truth." You can call it a variety of things. The whole point here is the same thing that Paul has said elsewhere. Paul says this in 1 Timothy 4:16. It's the same as he said in Philippians 2:16. "Focus your attention. Concentrate your life upon Bible doctrine." This case is present–our constant way of life. It is active, by your choice. Organize your life so that you can focus on doctrine. And it is imperative. It is God's command. So if you neglect focusing your life on Bible doctrine, you're out of line of the will of God. Therefore, Satan will enable you to focus on many other things. Paul tells Timothy that this kind of attention is the thing which brings spiritual blessing and prospering to himself and to others.

So getting back to Philippians 2:16: "Concentrating your attention (or focusing your mind) that." The word "that" is the Greek word "eis." Here it means "with the result that." It's a little word to introduce the result. Why does Paul want us as believers to focus upon the Word? He says, "That I may rejoice." Now this looks like a verb in English, but it's just a noun. It's the Greek noun "kauchema". "Kauchema" means a ground for glorying. So we may translate this: "That I may have a ground for glorying." The apostle Paul wants to have a basis for rejoicing.

Now, if Paul had enabled the Philippian Christians to set their minds upon doctrine, then there was a basis for him to expect to rejoice as a communicator of doctrine. If he has done this and people have responded, he's got a ground for rejoicing. For a pastor-teacher, remember that there is nothing in life that he may take satisfaction in and rejoice in except this thing–that those whom he teaches in the Word respond positively to the Word. It doesn't matter what success a pastor-teacher may achieve; what fame he gains; what prestige he carries; what material prosperity he enjoys; what influences he bears; or what awe he produces with his speaking. If he does not deliver the Word of Life in usable form to people, he has no ground for glorying; no ground for blessing; and, no ground for happiness. The truth of the matter is, I'm sad to say, that a large number of (if not most) preachers are merely donkeys dressed up in peacock feathers, strutting around like they were something when they are nothing. That is because they are not functioning in the gift of the pastor-teacher. There is nothing that is such a shock, and will be such a shock in eternity, to discover that the peacocks were donkeys underneath.

**Teaching**

This is the reason for the biblical requirement of a pastor-teacher elder bishop. He must possess the spiritual gift of teaching. I want to clear up something for you, because sooner or later, I know you're going to hear this. 1 Timothy 3 gives us the requirements for a pastor-teacher elder bishop. All are the same thing: an elder; a bishop; and a pastor-teacher. It just looks at it from various angles of his work. This is the key to the church age: a teacher communicator in the Word. You will notice that in 1 Timothy 3:2, one of the things that is required of a pastor-teacher is that he is to be apt to teach. This is the Greek word "didaktikos."

Let's study this Greek by looking at some lexicons. A Greek lexicon is a Greek dictionary that tells us the meaning of the Greek language. Remember that God the Holy Spirit used the Greek language because, in the process of leading Alexander the Great in his conquest to bring together the various Greek tribes, the Greek language was crystallized and frozen, so that we know today exactly what they knew concerning the meaning of words. We don't know that about all languages, but we do know this about Greek.

Two the most outstanding authorities on the meaning of Greek words are lexicons by Arndt and Gingrich, and by Kittel. Arndt and Gingrich says that "didaktikos" means "skillful in teaching." Kittel says "able to teach." You may look this up for yourself. This is all that you will find. I have a point to make. This is listed as a requirement for a pastor-teacher officer heading up a local church. Please notice that this is not a quality of the pastor-teacher's life. It is not the quality of a spiritually mature man. It is a God-given ability to do a spiritual work in a congregation. A pastor-teacher could not do his job if he did not have the ability to teach. He has to be "didaktikos" in order to do it.

Now, not every believer in the local congregation is able to teach in this gifted sense. Though some believers may be very mature spiritually, they still do not have the gift of teaching, though they may be good witnesses, and can talk about the Bible. But they do not have this specialized gift of teaching. There is a seminary professor in the Christian Education Department who is a devotee of the new body life fad of Christians gathering together; hearing a little bit of the word taught; and, then sharing experiences. He has written a book describing what constitutes a mature Christian man. He has taken as that study, this passage in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He rejects this passage as applying to a pastor-teacher as an executive head of the local church. He seems to think that it applies to any number of people who are in the congregation. As a matter of fact, he makes this a list of general maturity–that everybody can come to general maturity by following this list.

The problem with this is that Christian maturity is equally the province of our women as well as of our men. If you read through this list, you will see that this is obviously designed for the male believer, not for the female believer. So this could not be a general list concerning spiritual maturity, or what a mature man or mature woman should be. Furthermore, you have the problem that "apt to teach" is not a quality. Spiritual maturity is a quality. It's a series of characteristics. But this is not a quality. But would you believe that this Christian Education professor from this seminary claims that what this passage is describing is a quality of life, and thus he says that this should be translated as "teachable,"–not "apt to teach," or "able to teach," but it should be translated as "teachable?" Yet if you look in the lexicons, you'll never find that translation given.

But I found something interesting in the lexicons because there is another Greek word "didaktos." You will notice that it is has only two letters that are different from "didaktikos"–the "i" and the "k." And what do we have? We have a word indeed in the Greek language, frozen to our day, and whose meaning we know, and which is used in the New Testament, and Arndt and Gingrich says it means "instructed" such as in John 6:45. It means "imparted" or "taught" in 1 Corinthians 2:13. Kittel gives the ultimate and the final definition. It is "taught" or "learned" as in John 6:45 and 1 Corinthians 2:13. And there's the zinger–"teachable." This word "didaktos" means "teachable," and it is used as such in the Word of God. It is a quality, but it is not the word which is used here in 1 Corinthians 3 to describe what a passive teacher should be.

Now, can you believe that kind of distortion; that kind of twisting; and, that kind of an attempt to get away from the fact that there is an authority within the local church in the form of a pastor-teacher, and to seek to give the impression that sharing our experiences with one another, because we are all equal in the local body, is the way to focus our attention and to seek to advance in our spiritual lives? That is not true. Notice the difference. "Didaktikos" means "able to teach," and that's what a pastor-teacher has to have. "Didaktos" means "teachable," and that's what all of us are supposed to be.

**Women Pastors**

Furthermore, this passage in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 could not apply to women because this has to do with people who are communicators of the Word, and women are not communicators of the Word. Let's settle that. Anytime you hear a woman preacher, that woman preacher is not serving God but is serving Satan's cause. That woman preacher is not in the will of God, but that woman preacher is in the will of Satan. Let's get it straight. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. If they learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." That's a good translation, and there's not much that needs to be said about it. It makes it very clear that no woman is authorized to get up and teach the Word of God in a local congregation.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 finish it off, in case there is any doubt: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." This passage in 1 Timothy 3 gives guidelines not for a woman preacher, obviously, because she could not be in that category. She could not be a pastor-teacher. It is a specialized guideline to that which is the key to the focus of the believer upon the Word of God. If you don't have a pastor-teacher who is doing his job by the HICEE technique, and focusing your attention upon the Word of God in its original languages, you don't have anything. That's why he has to be there, and has to have the ability to teach. That is the teaching authority that God has placed within the local church. On that the people of God can advance fantastically–absolutely with no limit. You will build a cup of spiritual maturity in your soul, and the grace of God will pour into it. Then your cup will overflow. That's where it's all at for you and me as believers.

Well, we haven't completed this verse. We'll do it next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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