***The Grace System of Perception
RO152-01***

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Please turn once more in your Bibles to Romans 12:1-2. Our subject is "The Basis for Christian Service," and this is segment number three.

**Priesthood**

During the church age in which we live, which began on the day of Pentecost, and will continue until the day of the rapture when the church is removed from this earth, every believer is his own priest before God. There is no such thing today as a special group of people who form the priesthood through which one approaches God. Any system of priesthood that you see, and any religious leader wearing his collar around backwards that you see, and thereby claiming to be a special group of humanity relative to God is a false testimony. There are no special clergy to give you access to God. All believers are on equal footing. They are their own priests before God.

**Sacrifices**

The sacrifices which are performed by the Christian priests are performed for himself alone. There are spiritual in nature, rather than animals, as in the Old Testament. The basic spiritual sacrifice to be made by each Christian priest is the presenting of his physical body to God's service. So, in Romans 12:1, Paul has appealed to us as believers, on the basis of the mercies of God which has provided for us eternal life, that we actually deliver over our physical bodies as something which is a living sacrifice for God's service. But we are to deliver this sacrifice is one which is holy, and is acceptable to God. And he says, "That this is a rational, reasonable thing for the believer to do, because God's work is done through the bodies of believers. God's work is done through your hands. God's work is done through your feet. God's work is done through your brain. God's work is done through all those physical capacities that you have.

The sacrifice of your body is a logical thing to do, because through the use of your body by God, you also store those treasures in heaven by the divine good works which you've produced. The Christian is to live his life for God. He is not to live his life for this passing evil age. And that's the point that the apostle Paul is making. Make your life count for something by investing it in God's service. There is a plan for you. Your body is part of that plan, and God will execute it for you.

This is the principle of living your life for the purpose of eternity that we have in Luke 9:23. "And He said to them all, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" "His cross" here means his particular mission, God's particular plan for him: "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it." Whoever is going to use his life for personal objectives, apart from the plan, will waste his life here on this earth: "But whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same will save it. For what it is a man (a Christian man or woman) profited if he gained the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of time of the holy angels." This does not mean that you will not be saved and go to heaven. But it does mean that if your body is not in God's service, and if you are ashamed to be found as a person who is a Christian, who is living like a Christian (and that's part of investing your life in God's service), and you're saying that, Jesus says that when He returns, He will be ashamed of you, and His humiliation will be expressed in loss of rewards for you at the Judgment Seat of Christ. However, as the Bible says, "A lot of you are going to get into heaven by the skin of your teeth." You will have salvation, and that's all you'll have. And it will be a very poverty-struck eternity compared to what others will have.

**Give your Body to God**

So, that's the principle that Paul is laying out here. Romans 12 begins the section on how to apply Christianity to your life. This is the practical use of doctrine. The first point is to give your body to God. The Christians body, furthermore, is to be used, therefore, in a godly lifestyle. We've already had this emphasized to us, and I repeat it, because there are so many Christians going around living like the devil, that it bears repeating. Romans 6:12-13 say, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." Don't let the sin nature dominate your physical body: "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto the sin nature.: Don't use your hands, your feet, your eyes, your brain, and your ears for sinful purposes: "But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead (having come to life spiritually), and your members (your physical body) as instruments of righteousness unto God." Now, that's the smart way to play the game.

Notice verses 17-18: "But God be thanked, that whereas you were of the slaves of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness."

Verse 22: "But now, being made free from sin (the sin nature), and become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." This is a totally different lifestyle.

**Don't be Patterned after the ways of Satan's World**

So, the Christian's conduct, Paul as pointed out in Romans 12:1, is, on the one hand, not to be patterned externally after the ways of Satan's world. The goals of this evil age are unrestrained, sensual indulgence; power over people; wealth; and, fame. And that's what most people chase after in life. The world in which we live pursues sensual indulgence without any restraint. It wants power over other people's lives; it wants material wealth; and, it lusts for fame. That summarizes the life of most people that you're acquainted with.

**The Christian is a Citizen of Heaven**

The Christian, however, the Bible is very clear to let us know, is a citizen of heaven. So, it should be clear that he does not share the world's ways. He does not share the goals of the world. He does not share the values of the world.

In Philippians 3:20, we read, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." So, the Christian is to walk that straight path of biblical morality, which befits one who has given his body over to the living God.

**False Teachers**

The false religious teachers, in our day, actually seek in a variety of ways, to make crooked God's straight path for our daily lives. This is pointed out to us in Acts 13:10. And Paul speaking said, "Oh, full of deceit and mischief, you child of the devil (speaking to the Jew by Jesus), you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert (to make crooked) the right ways of the Lord." There are many religious leaders who seek to make crooked the right ways of the living God. They seek to lead Christians into compromising their personal integrity, because they are full of deceit and fraud. The false teachers or children of the devil. They are enemies of righteousness.

**"Straights"**

It is interesting that those are the people who call the godly Christian a "straight." Have you ever noticed that? There is a division in our society that identifies certain people as "straights." They're part of the "straight" society. 1 Peter 4:4 refers to that when it says, "In which they think it strange that you run not with to the same profligacy, speaking evil of you." And so it is an insult to be called a "straight" in our society. What does that mean? It means that you devote yourself to biblical morality, and that you follow the path of godliness. So, you're called a "straight," and you're supposed to be intimidated by that, instead of standing up and saying, "Thank you for saying such a nice thing about me. That's me, I hope – a good old straight arrow." They are called "straight Christians," because they follow God's wisdom in their conduct, and not Satan's crooked human viewpoint wisdom.

**Be Transformed by the Renewing of your Mind**

So, the Christian, Paul says, is to be inwardly transformed by the renewing of his mind from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint so that he can indeed make his body a living sacrifice unto God. To appeal to us as believers, and to deliver our bodies over to God's service is not going to work. We might be inspired in a moment in a church service. And there are church services that are designed to see how much can be brought out of the congregation in terms of public action: How many people will raise a hand? How many people will come forward? How many people will do something publicly? You can get caught up in the enthusiasm and frenzy of the moment, and make some public commitments, but you won't stay by them. You can make some very good commitments as to what you will do with your body, but you won't stick with it.

So, Paul says, "Not only do we not want you to be conforming your outward pattern of life to the world, but we want you to transform yourself on the inside, so that you will be able to control your pattern outwardly. That transformation," he says, "is the renewing of the mind of the soul from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint. So, the entire outlook of the Christian's mind has to be changed from the sin nature standards and values.

**A Complete Renovation**

Romans 12:2: "Be not conform to this world." Don't pattern your life outwardly to its style: "But be transformed (renovated completely internally) by the renewing of your mind." The word "renewing" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "anakainosis." This word in the Greek language refers to a complete change of some kind for the better. This is what you do when you get fed up with the way your house looks inside, and the way your living room looks, and the tattered rug, and the grimy walls, and the dingy windows, and the whole bad scene. And you come in and you "anakainosis" the thing. You just rip it out, and you start all over again. You clean it up, and you have a complete renovation. This is a significant word because it connotes making something fresh and new. It's like removing the dead skin that you have someplace on your body. And underneath is the renovated, pure skin. It's a complete alteration of something in the Christian.

**Your Decision-Making**

What is it that needs a complete renovation? He says, "It's your money." The Greek word is the word "nous." And the "nous" is what refers to the perceptive capacity of your mind. . . . It is important that you understand this. So, when he says, "Something has to be changed," the Bible says that it "gnosis." That means "knowledge." It's just plain information. Now, you've got some information in your mind. You pick it up from school; you pick it up at work; you pick it up off the billboards; you pick it up off the television ads; you pick it up in talking to people; and, you pick it up in the media and a variety of ways – information coming into your mind. That information has to be processed in a certain way so that it will not be injurious to you. So, it's talking about this perceptive mind, which has a depository of information, which is the basis upon which you make your decisions. You decide things on the basis of the information that you have. This refers to the viewpoint which governs the decision of a Christian.

You're all acquainted with Proverbs 23:7, which lays out the principle of what we're talking about. And we want you to realize that we're not going to invent some little tricky system here. Sometimes we are accused of being speculative when we explain to you how you psychologically function. But that's not true. These are things that the Bible tells us. For example, Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." As a person thinks, that's the kind of person he is. What is he talking about? He's talking about this information that's in your mind.

Now, the change that is called for here by the apostle Paul is the change from the human viewpoint, that we are all born with, into God's way of looking at things. And we call that divine viewpoint. This is what was expressed by the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 55:8-9, when he said, quoting God (God is speaking here): "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts?'" God says that there is no comparison between the way I think and the way you, by nature, think under the guidance of your sin nature." Therefore, there's a big difference between what is human viewpoint and that which is divine viewpoint.

What the apostle Paul says that we Christians need is a complete mental metamorphosis from our unsaved outlook, which we pick up from Satan and from unsaved people around us. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the apostle Paul describes it in this way. All the objective, he says, "Is casting down imaginations." The word "imaginations" there means reasoning – casting down the way you think: your human viewpoint outlook: "And every high thing (every arrogant thing) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." There you have the information (the thinking of God): "And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Now, if you are a young person, some of you have a characteristic of independence. Others of you are more sheep-like. Some of you can stand out in the crowd, and you can go it alone, and you are not swayed by the evil that surrounds you. Others of you are very intimidated. You want to be painted with the same brush as everyone else. That is why you must understand that your peers are acting from a certain mental outlook, and they're out promoting certain things to you, because they think certain things are right or OK. This is how they believe, and you have to decide whether you are going to confidently follow their outlook, or whether you are going to be prepared to come and apply what God thinks about what they are suggesting to you, and see whether that's all right to do. Unless you have this in your mind before you get hit, you're going to crumble.

**Joseph**

The only reason young Joseph, who had a great opportunity to have a lot of fun with Potiphar's wife, did not accept her propositions and her invitation to immorality, was because he had been prepared up in his mind with information from his home and his parents about God. Therefore, he had the divine viewpoint to bring to bear to that situation, and he said, "I'd be a fool to do this. It would not only be wrong, but it would be self-destructive. Goodbye. I want no part of it. It wasn't because he was a powerful, wonderful, strong person. He comes out like that because he had divine viewpoint, so he knew how to make the decision. He had the capacity,

What the unsaved world around us have done, you should understand, is erect a philosophy which is out of touch with reality as God has created the world, and has created us. It seems like it's all right to do certain things. And Proverbs also tells us: "There's a way that seems right unto man, but the ends are the ways of death." And unless you understand how God has put us together, the philosophy of the world will lead you down a blind alley of self-destruction. The apostle Paul warns Christians, therefore, not to take seriously the confused, non-scriptural thinking of the world's intellectuals. And if you've been attending faithfully on our Sunday evening series on Dr. Francis Schaeffer's "How Should We then Live?" series of films, you know what we're talking about. I don't have to explain this verse to you. Colossians 2:8 says, "Beware lest any many spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Beware that you don't fall for the sucker bait of the misconceptions of the intellectuals. And we have been showing you, and explaining those to you now for several Sunday evenings.

All of mankind is brainwashed by the philosophical outlook of Satan, who is a master liar about the real world. John 8:44 and 2 Corinthians 4:4 make it clear to us that Satan is a liar. And the viewpoint he inspires is not true. The mass media around us feed people a constant stream of anti-biblical philosophy, which is produced by the opinion makers of Satan's world. People are then left in their human viewpoint darkness and ugliness, if that's all the information they have. Unless you come to a church like Berean Memorial church, you get no countering to all the human viewpoint that you have been hit with all during the week.

Now, once your mind is willing to accept the world's philosophy on life, then you will also discover that very soon you will accept the world's philosophy on morality. The people who violate the moral code of God, and thus take themselves out of the real world, and put themselves on a course of self-destruction, are the people who have accepted the world's philosophy toward life. There are no absolutes. There's nothing certain. Everything changes. There is no future. There is no God out there. We have no information – that whole bit. Once you've accepted that, you'll do terrible things with your body. And if somebody says, "Hey, that's a bad habit, and that can hurt you," they'll say to you, "I'm ready to take the consequences." They don't care. You would think that somebody would say, "Hey, that's a terrible thing, and you can get a deadly disease if you do this," they say, "I don't care. I'm ready to take the consequences." Once they've accepted the world's philosophy, they will accept abandonment to the world's morality.

**The Grace System of Perception**

So, the Christian with a mind renewed by the divine viewpoint of Bible doctrine reacts with contempt for the shallowness and the crudeness of the philosophies of this world. The transformation of the Christian's mind is brought about in a very definite way. Paul tells us we should do it. The Bible also tells us how to do it. The transformation is brought about very simply by taking God's viewpoint into your mind. It is the knowledge of Bible doctrine which produces divine viewpoint in the mentality of the soul. We have a system for doing this. We call it the grace system of perception. We call it a grace system because it enables you to understand God's doctrinal viewpoint, even if you're not very smart in other things. It is not dependent on your human IQ. It is only dependent on your being willing to listen; to be taught; to have someone to teach you; and, then to accept the truth of the Word of God.

The result of acquiring this information, the Bible tells us, is that you will have the very mind of Jesus Christ sitting up inside your head. John 14:26 tells us that. John 16:12-15 tell us that. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 and Romans 8:29 tell us that. All those Scriptures tell us that, when you learn Bible principles of truth, you end up with the mind of Jesus Christ. So, the believer's mind is renewed in this way. He learns that he is no longer enslaved to human viewpoint thinking, and to all the lusts of the old sin nature.

**Full Knowledge**

The goal of what we're after is to go from this "gnosis" (plain old knowledge) to "epignosis." And I'm giving you the words that are in the Greek Bible because this means "full knowledge." There is information, and there is working knowledge. There is information that lies there potentially. There is full knowledge that is in action, and produces results.

Here in Romans 12:2, Paul says that he wants us to go from knowledge to full knowledge in the mentality of the soul, and thus to review our mind, so that for this purpose we may prove something. The Greek word is "dokimazo." And this means "to test something in order to approve it." You have a very valuable gold ring. We know that it's a high quality gold ring. It is 99% pure. You can take it, and you can have it tested. For what purpose? To find out that it's pure gold? You already know that. You test it to show that this is really good stuff. And what he is saying is that we are to have our minds renewed so that we may demonstrate in our experience something we already know as the result of our thinking. And that is that God's will is going to prove to be the best in action. It is God's purpose for the Christian to have his mind renewed with the Word of God so that he can resist being a sucker for the world's viewpoint.

**The Road to Blessing**

So, what will be the result? He will discover that God has a plan which is good ("agathos"). This is the word for good. It refers to something that is good within itself. IT is like gold is just good. It has an intrinsic value. And God's will, therefore, is the road to temporal and eternal blessings. It'll do you good. You're going to find, when your mind is transformed, and you're operating on that mind, that God has a will that proves to be good, and God has a will which proves to be acceptable. The Greek word is "euarestos." This means well-pleasing. This means that God is pleased to see His will functioning in the believer. And when God is pleased, he opens the door to blessing. When God is not pleased, he slams the door on you.

So, when you operate on this kind of renewed mind, everything comes up roses. Everything is good in your life. Everything isn't perfect. Everything isn't without crises. Everything isn't without tears. But it's all good. Furthermore, God is pleased with you. Now, that's nice. It's nice to have people who are pleased with us. But when God is pleased, that's really super good. And to top it all off, you're going to find that that will of God is perfect. The Greek word is "teleios," which means it's mature. It's complete. There is nothing left out God will leave nothing out of your life for your maximum temporal and eternal happiness. That's pretty good stuff to know. There is nothing left out. Ah, but you said, "That fellow – I just love him. He so excites me, but he won't look at me." Well, the guy probably is a slob. He doesn't recognize a gem when sees one. Are you sure that without him your life is ruined? God says, "No, if you operate on My thinking, and you act that way in your dealing with this person, then you're going to end up with a 'teleios' situation – perfect, with nothing left out.

You may not see that now, but, boy, when you sit up in heaven, and you look back at that stream of your life, you going to say, "It was amazing. Everything in it was good. Everything in it pleased God, and that opened doors for me. Everything in it was complete. Nothing was left out that really should have been there. I did a lot of grousing. I did a lot of mouthing. But I was stupid. I had it all." And many Christians foul up and louse up a good life, where they really have it all, because they do not have divine viewpoint perspective to realize what God's will has done for them. This all is all because you have your mind renewed.

So, that brings us to the crucial thing. What has God provided to enable us to have our minds renewed from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint, so that we can find ourselves living, so that we can look back and say, "Our lives were good. They were well-pleasing. They were perfect and complete and mature in every respect. We have a grace system of perception. The grace system of perception has provided certain things, first of all, and we'll mention those.

**A Bible**

For this system to work, first of all, you have to have a Bible. God has given us a completed Bible. We got that because the Holy Spirit selected certain holy men to record, without error, information which He revealed to them. The copies of Bible manuscripts were then preserved over the centuries from people who wanted to destroy them, and they became the basis for translations into the languages of the world. We have virtually intact the exact manuscript that the original writers of the Bible produced. God has given us, therefore, an inerrant Bible as the true source of divine viewpoint. We do have absolute facts. We have true truths. The Bible contains propositions of spiritual truth, and it is unnecessary for us to analyze, and to decide what is true or not true. It's all true. And it is there for the reconstructing of our mind. In no other way can you renew your mind from human viewpoint except through the Bible.

**A Local Church**

Secondly, God has also given us a local church organization. This is distinctly unique to this age of grace. It is a super wonderful thing that God has given us. This did not exist before the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the universal body of Christ came into being. At the same time, there was a local organization, the body of Christ: universally, it's an organism, a living body; and, there is an organizational structure as well. It is the divinely provided agency for teaching the doctrines of the Scriptures which are necessary for you to renew your mind. The Bible-teaching ministry of the local church enables the believer to secure also what it calls the Belt of Truth on which to hang your life.

The reason for Christians, to gather in local church services, is explicitly for them to be fed on the doctrines of Scripture. That's why you gather. This is a great battleground today. I've had some very unkind things said to me over the years by people who did not like this idea. They are the enemies, I consider, of the Word of God. They are the enemies of the Lord's work, and they are very dangerous, because they have other objectives and other ideas as to what a local church meeting should be all about.

However, I want to point out a few Scriptures to you. When I say that the reason you are here in this church service is to be instructed in God's doctrinal viewpoint, we are not simply inventing that. On the occasion when the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead, and He was meeting with the disciples, He asked Peter, in John 21:15, "'Simon Peter, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than the rest of these (other disciples).' He said unto Him, 'Yea, Lord, you know that I love You.' And He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" He asked him this three times in variant ways, and each time, the Lord ended up saying, "Peter, feed My lambs." What was the Lord talking about? He was talking about the children of God (the believers) who were to come, and He was saying, "Feed My Lambs." Obviously, he was not talking about some social agency to help people who are hungry physically. He was talking about their spiritual needs.

In Acts 2:42, this was reinforced in what the early New Testament local church services contained. This verse tells us: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." That is point number one. When they walked into the temple compound, or wherever they met, the first thing they met for was to be taught doctrine. And they had other things. They had fellowship with one another as Christians. They also broke bread, which meant both meals and the Lord's Supper. And they prayed together. Those are the basic elements that constituted a local church program.

Furthermore, notice Acts 20:26-28. Here is the apostle Paul giving some advice, and reviewing what he had done as a pastor leader: "Wherefore, I testify unto you this day that I'm pure from the blood of all men." There is no one who is going to be able to point a finger at me: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God." What's he talking about? He's talking about doctrinal instruction: "I gave you the whole ball of wax. I told it all to you. I taught you the basics of all the great doctrines, including prophetic Scriptures:" "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves." And he's talking to a bunch of pastor-teachers gathered there, as he's about ready at the dock to depart for Jerusalem: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (have made you the executive directors – the pastor-teachers); to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with his own blood." To feed them what? Only a politicians would look at something like that, and distort that into some saying, and say, "Well, that's a command to feed poor people in their physical needs." Poor people need to have food, and hungry people need to be fed. But this is talking about spiritual food.

Acts 20:32 adds to that. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace." What is he talking about? Doctrinal truth: "And to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified." What is the Word of God able to do? It is able to give you eternal life. What is the Word of God able to do? It is able to give you an inheritance of rewards as your mind is transformed from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint. This is an astounding provision.

Then 1 Peter 5:2 indicates to us that Peter remembered that meeting with the Lord, and three times the Lord leaned over and said, "Peter feed My sheep. Don't let them down when I'm gone. I'm not going to be here to instruct them anymore." In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter is talking to a group of elders. He says, "I'm an elder. I'm a pastor-teacher. And you are a leader as an elder – a pastor-teacher. So, here is your job."

Verse 2 says, "Feed to flock of God which is among you (taking the oversight of it), not by constraint, but willingly – not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Be ready to spend the time to learn what to teach from the Word of God. Do it because you've been called by the Holy Spirit to do it. Don't do it because somebody is forcing you to do it, or because you'd rather do something else. Accept the responsibility. And don't do it if you get paid for it adequately (the filthy lucre). Don't do it because you can make money. What a verse for some of the TV evangelists we've been hearing about, and their motivation.

There is one more you should look at in 2 Timothy 4:2-4: "Preach the Word. Be diligent in season and out of season." Do you know what that means? It means: "Keep telling people the truth, even when they're real nice to you, and they thank you for it, and they were glad to hear it, and when they sit there and bristle and vibrate in their seats, and say ugly things to you. That's in season; and, that's out of season: "Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears."

The time will come when they'll shove off. They won't come to hear you anymore. They will not support the ministry that you are in anymore. They'll cut out, and they'll find somebody who says the things that really make the ear feel good. Have you ever had an itch? Do you have an itch right now? Do you hate to reach in and scratch because it doesn't look good? But you can hardly stand it? And if you did, it would be so soothing. That's what he's talking about. These ears are itching, and they want something poured in there so that they can say, "Oh, that feels so good. Do that." Have you ever had somebody say, "Scratch my back? Oh that's so good." And they just get euphoric over it. That's what he's talking about: "You're going to tell me that which is human viewpoint, and I'll love it." "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." And will they ever pay a price for that?

So, I think the Bible is very clear that, when Christians gather in a local church meeting, from earliest New Testament days, right up front was learning doctrine. That's what they gathered for.

So, number one, for this system of transmitting divine viewpoint into the mentality of the soul, God has given us a Bible. We've got a full Old and New Testament, with nothing more to be added to it. When the Mormons come along and say, "God has given us something more," they're lying around. They're mistaken. When the Roman Catholic Church comes along and says, "The pope has received new doctrine (new information), and the college of cardinals have something more to declare, they're lying. They're wrong. They're mistaken. We have a Bible. It is completed from one end to the other. It is perfect, and it is inerrant. And we need nothing more.

Secondly, that it's giving us a local church organization. And if it has a congregation that does its job, and understands what it should expect of its pastor, that congregation will be fed the Word of God, and they will grow, and they'll find the darkness in their mind being shoved aside, and they'll find their minds being illuminated with divine viewpoint, and life will be transformed in their daily experience. You'd be surprised how many dirty spots there are in your mind, and how many dark places are still there because of what we get hit with from all sources, and how we have to keep pushing it out with the Word of God.

**The Pastor-Teacher**

The third thing that's very important that God has given us to make the system work is the pastor-teacher gift. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul is saying, "When Jesus Christ left, we had to have somebody else to communicate God's viewpoint. So, He gave us apostles to do that. And he gave us prophets to do that. The apostles and the prophets were used to produce the Bible of the New Testament Scriptures. We don't have any more apostles today, and we don't have any more prophets today. But He also gave us evangelists, and we do have those. And He also gave us pastors and teachers and we do have those. The pastor-teacher gift is a combined gift. Therefore, we have here this pastor-teacher gift to take up where the evangelist leaves off. The evangelist goes out to the untouched territory, and he pronounces the gospel. He wins people to the Lord; brings them in; and, hands them over to the pastor-teacher to start feeding that newborn baby, and develop him into a mature Christian. It's a perfect, marvelous system.

In 1 Timothy 3:2, this same thing is reinforced, with the statement: "A bishop (which is another word for a pastor-bishop-elder – that's all the same thing) then must be blameless, the husband of one wife." That statement alone eliminates all the women preachers in the charismatic movement. You have to be the husband of one wife. And you have to be: "Temperate; sober-minded; of good behavior; given hospitality." Then the last phrase there – if you're a pastor-teacher, you must have one inevitable capacity. You must be able: "to teach." You have to have the capacity to be able to explain not reading, writing and arithmetic. There are plenty of people who can do this. But the pastor-teacher must be able to take spiritual phenomena, and so convey them into the minds of people such that they say, "Yeah, I understand that. I see how that works. I can pull that together. I've got that." That is something else. Not everybody can do that. It takes a special spiritual gift. It's no honor to the person who has it. It's just something that was slapped upon him at the point that he came into the Christian life.

**The HICEE Technique**

However, the point is that the local church requires a man with a spiritual gift of pastor-teacher, which is provided by the Holy Spirit to each local church (one to a church – one elder to every local congregation), and he is their teacher. Now, the pastor-teacher should teach according to what we here at Berean Church describe as the HICEE technique. I'm going to just mention it briefly, because we don't want to get bogged down on it.

**Hermeneutics**

The "H" in HICEE stands for Hermeneutics, which means principles of interpretation. The pastor-teacher has to get his information out of the Bible. The apostles and the prophets got it directly from God. The pastor-teacher has to study. But he has to follow certain rules of interpretation. He cannot be applying what belongs in the Old Testament to the New Testament. He has to take all that into account.

**Isagogics**

Secondly, he has to consider what we call "Isagogics." Isagogics is the historical background of the passage. There's a great deal of Scripture we wouldn't understand if we didn't know the background of the times.

**Categories**

Then there is "C" for Categories, which means summaries of the doctrine as a frame of reference. These are categories of doctrine. The doctrine of the blood of Christ; the doctrine of the atonement; the doctrine of the "kenosis;" and, so on.

**Etymology**

Then the first "E" stands for "Etymology," which means the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words. You cannot learn doctrine from English words. You must know what is really behind those English words.

**Exegesis**

Then the second "E" stands for "exegesis," which is the analysis of how all the grammar fits together, so that you know how one word is related to another, and then you can interpret it.

Now, what the pastor-teacher does, after he has followed his HICEE technique of training (of preparation) is that he is able to explain Bible doctrine to the group of people in the setting. And the reason we do this in a group is so that all of you can sit there, and maintain your personal privacy of your priesthood, because some of you are sitting there saying, "Yes, that's good." But some of you are saying, "I don't like that," and you don't want to believe it. But that's between you and the Lord. That's none of my business. It's not any business of the person next to you whether you believe it or not. And as a Christian, you are certainly free not to believe it. It is between you and God. So, we do it in this setting here. We don't ask you to raise your hand, to give us a report as to what your response is. The Christian does not learn the deep things of the Scriptures in small discussion groups. That's the point we're trying to make. You don't sit around with a group of people, and open the Bible, and have a little guesswork discussion.

That's where people have really lowered the guns against our congregation, and have departed. They want to sit here and talk. And if there's anything that leads to very shallow Christianity, it's where Christians open the Bible; they read a passage; and, they say, "What do you think that means?" And they talk about it, and they just discuss it with one another, and they come up with some very stupid and wild things.

This is like the lady that I told you about before, who got her information by closing her eyes and pointing to the Scripture, and looking at it, and saying, "Here's God's message to me today." She did that one morning, and it was on the passage of Judas, and said, "Judas went out and hanged himself." She said, "Oh, something is wrong. That can't be God's message to me today." So, she closed the Bible; opened it again; pointed to another place; and, it said, "Go thou and do likewise." So, she finally had to give up that system of coming to divine viewpoint. That's a nonsensical system. It's asinine, and it's dumb, but people use it all the time.

I don't want you to be intimidated because somebody says, "Hey, you don't stand around and talk about the Bible with one another." When they say that, you should say, "Yes, we do. Once a month, on Sunday nights, people can get up, and they can exposit all they want, and they can tell us what's on their mind. They can explain the Scripture. They can straighten us out. They can exhort us. They can compliment us. They can say nice things about the preacher. They can't say bad things, but they can say nice things. You can talk. That's what we do. And when people have thought through, and they've had a relationship with God, and some experience, and they apply doctrine, we have some super testimonies. Sometimes it's not so good, because they're just flying off the top of their head, and they're not really getting it together with Scripture. But generally, it's a profitable time.

Now, this is being taught, not by sharing your mutual ignorance, but by coming from something that comes from the text of the Word of God. Then you can do what you want with it, but at least, you know.

So, the pastor-teacher gift in action is a crucial key to growth in spiritual maturity and in Christian service. In Ephesians 4:12, I remind you of something that most of you know. There, we have the reason why the pastor-teacher must do this in the local church organization, because it says that three things are going to happen. And each of those is identified in your English translation by the word "for." If the pastor-teacher (these communicators) do their job, God has given them to us so that they will achieve certain things. These three "fors" in the Bible are connected by three Greek words – prepositions in a chain reaction. The first is the word "pros." The word means face-to-face. They are to perfect (to bring to maturity) the saints. So, when they teach doctrine face-to-face (that's why this word is used), those people are going to move up into Christian maturity. And when they move up in Christian maturity, that ties to another link.

The next "for" is another preposition, but it's "eis," which indicates with a result that something will happen. When the first "for" happens, he's instructed face-to-face, something is going to follow to positive people. The second thing that will follow is "for the work of the ministry;" that is, for equipping the Christians, first of all ("pros" is equipping them) for spiritual combat; then, the second one is "for the work of the ministry" – that is, to enable them to serve God – to produce divine good works. If he doesn't do this first "for," they're not going to produce anything, and they're not going to get rewards in heaven. And if he does that, there's a third "for," and this is another "eis," and it's the third link in this chain. And what this says is: "edifying of the body of Christ," which means bringing to spiritual material the individual believer. When a Christian is taught the Word of God, he is able to go out there and serve God with divine good production. He himself grows and matures day-by-day, and the whole church is brought to maturity.

In the Greek Bible, with these three prepositions, it just stands out on the page, one link to another, and there it dangles. Now, can you see what happens if the preacher misses this number one thing? Nothing. There's no way that these other two can come. The Christian cannot go to Christian maturity. The Christian cannot produce divine good things. It all falls to the ground.

Now, where do you think the devil comes in and tries to hit this grace system of perception? It's right there at that first "for." If he can keep the preacher from doing his job, he's got nothing to worry about. Now, do you see what the problem is in local churches that go in with liturgy; religious rituals; little stories; encouraging talk; and, people talking to one another? And I've had, many times, pastors who have listened to our tapes in the basic series, where there is a section on the pastor-teacher, and, for the first time in their lives, their eyes were opened. I have rapport with that. I was there once myself. And I came to that point where, suddenly, I put two and two together, and I was at Berean Memorial church for a little while, before the thing clicked as to what I was really supposed to do, and how I was supposed to be doing it. And it is interesting – the problem that arises. Many times, I've had them call me, and they said. "I'm really convict before God. I really know what I should do now. I haven't been doing this. And I started teaching them, and my church wants to kick me out. The church wants me to stop that."

I said, "I know. When I started doing that, I had a flock of people who shoved off, who had been old-timers, and went elsewhere because they said, 'That isn't the kind of a church we joined.'" One man said to me: "You get up there, and the kind of stuff you're doing, explaining, and putting that overhead projector up there, and putting those words up, and telling the people what that is. That's seminary classroom stuff." So, what was he telling me? "People are dumb. You're dopes. You should not be treated with respect and the honor of being the children of God."

The people who don't like this have also said to me, "The sheep are dumb. That's why you don't have the congregation making decisions." One man really was infuriated. He said, "That's the trouble with your church. The congregation takes votes and decides what to do. And they're dumb sheep." And I said, "No, they're not. They're people who are filled with the Holy Spirit. They're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And those who are instructed in the Word of God, and are filled with the Holy Spirit, are not dumb sheep. Animals are dumb. But these people are not. They have the responsibility and the capability of making the decisions concerning the work of the Lord."

This is a bigger thing that I think some of you might realize what we're talking about today. This is the core of where it's all at in the battle in churches today, and what is the overwhelming destruction that Satan has brought into the local church ministry, so that churches with thousands of members, and huge amounts of money, have nothing to do with the Word of God. And the people there are going to stand up before the Lord someday, and they're practically going to curse their preacher when they stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and they realize the loss to themselves because he did not do his job.

We close, and I thought we would finish it all, but we have not. But we will close with this summary of what the pastor-teacher's faithful ministry will produce. Ephesians 4:13-16. Right after verse 12, which gives you the three links in the chain, if he does that, here's the result: "Til we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (there it is again – that full knowledge) of the Son of God, unto a perfect (a mature Christian) man (and woman), unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (into the very image of Jesus Christ – having the very mind of Christ): that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love." Yes, we don't beat people's brains out. We are firm, and we stand up to them, but we recognize that the consequences of their negative volition is very bad, and we pity them rather than clubbing the: "We speak the truth in love. We may grow up to him in all things, Who is the head, even Christ: for whom the whole body of believers fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

So, every person in the local church is a member. He's a part of the body – that local body. And he is functioning, and he is doing a job. And if somebody is a hand, and you don't do a job, you're hurting us. If you're a foot, and you don't do the job, you hurt us. If you're a brain, and you don't do the job, you've hurt us. If you're an administrator, and you don't do the job, you've hurt us. If you're a teacher, and you don't do the job, you've hurt us. It is the body working together.

Now, how are you going to get that? Because the pastor does his job, so people have a chance to say, "Yes, I'll grow up as a Christian." That's all Paul is saying. People grow up.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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