



Apostolic Advice

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Apostolic Standard

One of the functions of apostolic ministry is to set and maintain standards for the rest of the Church to follow. This is affirmed by the ministry of Apostle Jesus Christ who is and was the Chief Cornerstone by which all of Christianity is measured and must properly align itself. Apostle Paul was clear on this important aspect of apostolic ministry when speaking to the “family” in Thessalonica, and specifying the following in 1 Thess.2:10-12.

“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how HOLILY and JUSTLY and UNBLAMEABLY we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we EXHORTED and COMFORTED and CHARGED every one of you, as a father doth his children. That you would WALK WORTHY of God, who hath called you unto the KINGDOM and GLORY”.

There is a natural outline in Paul’s admonition for the homiletically trained eye to discover.

1. The EXAMPLE of Ministry – vs.10
 - A. Holily
 - B. Justly
 - C. Unblameably
2. The FUNCTION of Ministry – vs.11
 - A. Exhorted
 - B. Comforted
 - C. Charged
3. The RESULT of Ministry – vs.12
 - A. Worthy Walk
 - B. In the Kingdom
 - C. In the Glory

I would like to point out that Paul put the premium on the Example of Ministry, listing it as the reason for the rest of his thought. In today’s thinking, the Function of Ministry outweighs the Example. If we are anointed, can preach, pray and prophecy something good to people, our example doesn’t matter too much. It seems that the Apostolic Standard for ministry has been lowered drastically and is having its effect on the church at large, resulting in carnal living that is not getting the job done in everyday life where it really matters. It seems that the Corinthians had the same mindset and could accept a low standard of holiness as long as the “gifts were in operation” and miracles were still happening. It took an “apostolic anointing” to restore the standard acceptable to God, and resulting in “mere men” becoming “mature men” when Paul told them that “these things ought not to be so”. The effect of leadership example in our society was clearly witnessed as a tidal wave of sexual perversion erupted among young people after Former President Clinton redefined sex to our generation by his illicit activities in the Oval Office. Our “high profile” ministries

in America have helped “lower the bar” of behavior in the Church by not maintaining the apostolic standard for ministry we find in the New Testament. I believe a major contributor to our “silence” on many issues in question is due to a misunderstanding on the “source of New Testament authority”. Does not the Bible teach that the “office of ministry” is the source of authority, and not the “gift of ministry”. Those who stood in the “offices” of ministry as Deacons and Elders were held to a high standard not measured by their gifting as apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers. I believe we need a restoration of the real “offices” of ministry that have qualifications with them that must be met. A person who is highly gifted and anointed might not qualify to be an “official” or be ordained as an “elder” in the Church. In fact, this is another problem that needs to be addressed in my opinion, and that is the problem of “ordination”. Today we “ordain preachers”, in the New Testament they ordained “elders”. Many who are “ordained preachers” today wouldn’t qualify to be an “ordained elder” in the New Testament if their lives were examined under the light of 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:7-9. I personally believe that the idea of “gifts and offices” has been confused and the result of that confusion is found in a low standard of Christian living and inability to be “salt and light” in everyday life.

Is it possible that we need to reexamine this subject and establish the offices of ministry back in the House of the Lord as they were in the New Testament. Reading 1st Peter 5:1-5 leads me to believe that there is something that needs adjusted in our understanding of the “gifts and offices” of ministry. When Peter was addressing the Elders at Rome, he didn’t appeal to them as “Apostle Peter” (suggesting that “apostle” is higher than “elder”), but as “an Elder himself”. This seems to suggest that Peter understood his authority to come from his “office” as an Elder, and not from his “gift” as apostle. When we circumvent these offices and “authorize” people to lead in ministry based on “gifts and calling”, we have circumvented the “process of discipleship” that produces mature leaders for the flock of God. Mature leaders are those who can Motivate, Model and Mentor the upcoming generation of believers by the above example as defined by Paul to the Thessalonians. What happens when nationally known Christian personalities end their marriage in divorce based on “irreconcilable differences”, but continue on in high profile, or even build a new ministry identity based upon their “failed marriage”. Do these individuals really qualify as “examples to the flock of God”, who should continue to be followed and supported because they are “anointed” and can “really preach”. Have we lost the focus of ministry as Paul pointed out, “that we would *walk worthy* who are called to the kingdom and glory”. Does the Apostolic Standard need to be lifted a bit higher by the “apostolic movement”?