

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 5:21- 23** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Maintaining Comprehensive Purity In How Leaders Conduct Ministry

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READ: 1 Timothy 5:21-23, with vv.17-20 for context

INTRO:

- - Currently in our study of 1 Timothy, the subtopic in verses 5:17-20 has been how to treat elders, pastors, and ministry leaders.
- - Now in verses 5:21-23, the topic shifts back to the general topic of the Book of 1 Timothy, which is how leaders are to conduct ministry.

v.21 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is Paul saying here about how ministry is to be conducted by elders, pastors, and ministry leaders?]

SECTION POINT: The elders, pastors, and ministry leaders are to follow exactly the instructions as written in Scriptures about how to do ministry, without deviating or proceeding according to one's own uneducated ministry philosophy or perspective.

- - At this point in Paul's authoritative instructing (v.1:1) of Timothy on how Timothy is to fulfill his duties of being a pastor, Paul goes beyond his previous "urging" (v.1:3) of Timothy to now in effect ordering Timothy.
- - By "attesting" "in the presence of" "God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels", Paul is herein adding special emphasis that these instructions are considered extremely important and thereby are to be taken seriously by Timothy in the fulfilling of his duties as a pastor. (Strong's #1263, #1799)
- - These instructions are not to be considered as options; they are mandates that are to be implemented as written, stated, and directed in the Scriptures, specifically here in the entire Book of 1 Timothy.
- - By inference, God would not approve of Timothy or any pastor, elder, or ministry leader deviating from these instructions about how to perform their ministry duties.
- - Timothy and all pastors, elders, and ministry leaders are to "guard" these instructions, "obeying" them and "preserving" their existence, consistency, integrity, authority, and ongoing uninterrupted implementation. (Strong's #5442)
- - These instructions in the Book of 1 Timothy are to be kept or fulfilled without "prejudgment", meaning without acting from "judgment formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts", or judgment formed from "preconception" of notions, "thoughts, opinions, or feelings". (Strong's #4299, with AHD - 'prejudice', 'prepossession')
- - Furthermore, in fulfilling their duties as a pastor, elder, or ministry leader, nothing is to be done out of "partiality", meaning nothing is to be done from one's own "natural propensity, inclination, or predisposition". (Strong's #4346, with AHD - 'proclivity')
- - In other words, pastors, elders, and ministry leaders are not to fulfill their ministry duties from a ministry philosophy that is based on their own prejudgments or

preconceptions of how ministry is to be conducted. Instead, they are to fulfill their ministry duties from a ministry philosophy that is formulated from and based on exactly all of what God says in the Scriptures of how ministry is to be conducted.

- - Therefore, pastors, elders, and ministry leaders will need to extensively study and personally formulate into a biblically-based ministry philosophy all the principles, directives, and mandates that are contained in Scriptures about how ministry is to be conducted.

- - So, engaging in being a pastor, elder, or ministry leader must be preceded by and dominated by the ascertaining of what Scriptures direct for how ministry is to be conducted, and not by how a person presumes or naturally does ministry without prior advanced study and training from the Scriptures about how to do ministry.

- - An appropriate conclusion then, is that pastors, elders, and ministry leaders who hold closely and tightly to obeying these instructions will be regarded by God as being "good ministers of Christ Jesus". (v.4:6)

- - And conversely, those leaders who fail to hold closely and tightly to obeying these instructions will be regarded by God as having "wandered away" from these and correspondingly have "turned to" doing ministry that is "meaningless" and useless to God and His purposes pertaining to those ways in which these instructions have been deviated from. (v.1:6)

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## v.22 - READ

[Lesson Question: How does each of these directives in verse 22 correspond to the overall topic in this section of verses of how ministry is to be conducted?]

SECTION POINT: Each elder, pastor, and ministry leader is individually responsible before God to maintain purity in every distinct aspect of how they conduct ministry.

### **"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands,"**

- - In the context here in the Book of 1 Timothy of how elders, pastors, and ministry leaders are to conduct doing ministry, the "laying on of hands" is an action of church leaders to designate a person to fulfill a specific leadership role in ministry.

- - The instruction here from God is for church leaders not to "hastily" authorize other people to be leaders in ministry.

- - In other words, church leaders are not to hastily give out commissions or ordinations or job positions to other people to do ministry without first doing extensive background research and perhaps testing of each candidate to ensure qualification according to biblical standards.

Some specific examples from Scriptures of who should not be commissioned, ordained, or authorized to be a leader in ministry:

-- persons who hold some errant or false doctrine; (vv.6:3-4)

-- persons who have impure motives for doing ministry; (1 Peter 5:2)

-- persons who do not meet all of the qualifications that God has given for that ministry functioning; (for example, 1 Timothy 3:1-13)

- persons who do not sufficiently model the godly life they are teaching; (vv.4:12,16)
- persons who are not sufficiently academically trained in the Scriptures and in doing ministry; (vv.1:6-7)
- persons who do not have the abilities or spiritual gifting to do the type of ministry work they are wanting to be authorized to do; (for example, v.3:5)
- persons who primarily teach, preach, and promote content that is significantly or essentially devoid of biblical content, such as socialism, or psychology, or political activism; (v.4:13)
- persons who use a significant anti-biblical aspect in their approach to doing ministry, such as "lording it over those entrusted" to their care (1 Peter 5:3), or "harshly rebuking" or verbally mistreating attenders and ministry personnel (1 Timothy 5:1-2);
- persons who are not "a good minister", being unwilling for whatever reason(s) to submit to God in what He wants them to do in their ministry functioning. (v.4:6)

- - Church leaders should be very selective and distinctly follow biblical guidelines in who gets commissioned or ordained or hired to ministry.
- - Church leaders should also be very selective and distinctly follow biblical guidelines in who gets hired or recruited to fulfill leadership roles in ministry.
- - By implication then, to avoid being "hasty" in authorizing a person to be a leader in ministry, every candidate should minimally have a proven track record and history of previously having done ministry appropriately and well.

**"and do not share in the sins of others."**

- - In their directing the affairs of the church well, elders, pastors, and ministry leaders are to adamantly follow, hold to, and obey what God instructs in Scriptures.
- - This staunch adherence to what is instructed in Scriptures certainly is to apply to situations wherein someone or some group or some people in the church or ministry are trying to instigate acceptance of a procedure or dynamic or belief or policy that is sinful.
- - An actual example of this is some of the leaders in a seriously-declining over-mortgaged church wanted to sell part of their church building complex to a false-religion church, and then finance the sale for them!
- - Church leaders are to be uncompromising in their adherence to what is instructed in Scriptures about how to conduct ministry, and they should not "share in" or participate in the sinful actions of other people within their church or ministry.

**"Keep yourself pure."**

- - The reality, though, is that churches are a primary target of the Kingdom of Darkness, so there is always a possibility of a threat arising in the church that seeks to wander from what God instructs in Scriptures. (vv.5:14-15)
  - - Consequently, every elder, pastor, and ministry leader must diligently "keep", "maintain, and guard" how they are conducting ministry so that it is purely the way that God instructs in Scriptures. (Strong's #5083)
  - - God expects and individually holds accountable each of them to maintain comprehensive purity, blamelessness, and innocence in how they conduct ministry. (from Strong's #0053)
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## v.23 - READ

[Lesson Question: How does the frequent illness of an elder, pastor, or ministry leader correspond to the overall topic in this section of verses of how ministry is to be conducted?]

SECTION POINT: Strength derived from physical well-being is important for elders, pastors, and ministry leaders in order to keep themselves pure in the conducting of their ministry functions.

- - Included in keeping themselves pure in how they conduct ministry, elders, pastors, and ministry leaders are also to keep themselves physically healthy.
  - - The workload, busyness, and challenges of directing the affairs of the church and conducting ministry can readily hinder elders, pastors, and ministry leaders from taking care of their physical health.
  - - The instruction here for church leaders is to not get so busy doing ministry that there is a detrimental failure or neglect in taking care of their own physical well-being.
  - - And an unstated but credible danger is that frequent or prolonged physical illness and corresponding "weakness" can deplete one's strength, energy, fortitude, and determination, thereby significantly reducing the ability to maintain purity in how one is conducting ministry (Strong's #0769). An example of this is Jesus in the desert without food for 40 days being tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11).
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BIG IDEA: God instructs and thereupon holds accountable each elder, pastor, and ministry leader to maintain comprehensive purity in every distinct aspect of how they conduct ministry.

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### APPLICATIONS:

- - For those of you who are an elder, pastor, or ministry leader, how do you regard your doing ministry work? Do you regard it seriously? Or casually? Or apathetically? Or with obligatory drudgery?
- - How do you regard the various distinct actions that you take in your ministry functioning? Do you regard each ministry action that you take as being equally important to do in a God-pleasing way? Or do you essentially select some ministry actions as being important to do in a God-pleasing way and other ministry actions you take as not being important to do in a God-pleasing way?
- - From what have you acquired the guidelines that you follow pertaining to how you conduct ministry? Solely from sound interpretation of Scriptures? Or from your own understanding? Or from your own natural tendencies? Or from some persons or authors that have little or no academic biblical training?
- - During the time you have been doing ministry up until now, have you been successful in always conducting ministry in a pure manner? Or have you compromised godly values in your ministry functioning? Or deviated from what God instructs for ministry

functioning? Or outright sinned in your ministry functioning? Or sinned to the extreme extent that you have disqualified yourself before God from being a leader in ministry?

- - For those of you who want to be or are preparing to be a ministry leader, from this study of how God expects and instructs that ministry is to be done, do you have a healthy respect for what God requires of ministry leaders, and a healthy respect for what God will hold you personally accountable for when you lead a ministry?

- - This inquiry is not intended as a dissuasion, but rather as an exhortation for you to proceed wisely in your journey to become a ministry leader, cautiously and carefully developing your ministry philosophy based solely on sound interpretation of Scriptures, particularly the Scriptures sections that directly pertain to how to do ministry.

- - As a leader in a ministry, you are doing God's work, so you need to do it precisely His way if you want Him to be pleased with your ministry work and to bless your ministry work.

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[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Without disclosing identity information, describe any situation you have personally witnessed in which one or more leaders, in their ministry functioning, "shared in the sins of others" (v.22). Follow-up by theorizing what it would have cost that ministry leader to do what is right before God instead of participating in the sins of others.]

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