

Lesson 7: The ethical emphasis: “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling you have received.” “Know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for Himself” (Psa. 4:3).

What is the Christian’s calling? It is to live with the holy God, forever in heaven. See # 2 below. The disciple must learn discernment because he has been distinguished.

(a) **Col. 1:9-12** For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

- 10 so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects,** bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously
- 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

(b) **Eph. 4:1-2** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,**

- 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

(c) **Phil. 1:27** Only **conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,** so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

(d) **1 Thess. 2:10-12** You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

- 11 just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children,
- 12 so that you would **walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

(e) **2 Thess. 1:5, 11** therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

- 5 *This is* a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.... To this end also we pray for you always, that our **God will count you worthy of your calling,** and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,

Said in a more contemporary manner: “The Walk must match the Talk.”

Titus 1:1 “The Truth which accords with Godliness.” Truth and godliness are related. There is a correspondence, a congruence and sympathy, between them. Compare with Titus 2:16. (And Malachi 2:17; 3:15, 18.)

Make a chart with three columns for the Scriptures above:

Verb.... Object.... As Shown by....

Ask, “How many of you have served on a Pastoral Search Committee?” I can think of one place where the term ‘fit’ is applied liberally - when it is used by the Search Committee, seeking for a new pastor. “Is he a good fit?” But this criteria could be grossly inadequate. Well, obviously the people are trying to match a comparison between the composition and desires of a congregation with the temperament, gifts and style of the minister. That could be good or bad! (It is necessary to value graces above gifts. Every pastor is an interim pastor.)

1. Edwards’ sermon from Micah 2:11 - “If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine, and of strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people.” “Such preaching would fall in with their corruptions and flatter them in their sinful inclinations, that instead of prophesying of God’s judgments for their sins, should foretell sinful pleasures and prophesy of the gratification of their lusts, this would be the prophet that would suit them.” Are they looking for godliness or for ‘winsomeness?’

2. “It has been well observed, that ‘we may judge, by our regard for the Sabbath, whether eternity will *be forced upon us.*’ The application of this rule, as it respects Mr. Martyn, will discover a singular meetness in him for the inheritance of the saints in light. His Sabbaths were Sabbaths indeed; the antepast (foretaste) often, of that rest which is everlasting.”... “On the road I experienced a sweet sense of the Divine presence, and happy meditation on God and His truths. I was thinking of the love of Christ, and of His unparalleled humility, and that to Him belonged all the glory, as having truly merited it.” (The Life and Letters of Henry Martyn, by John Sargent, page 58)

3. The number of topics taught in the Scriptures is a relatively small number. Remember the weeks we spent in 2 Peter last Spring? There are generally a large number of passages that teach about these subjects using differing word pictures and by several authors. How many Biblical authors address the topic of the believer’s sanctification? Peter, Paul, John, Haggai, David, Moses... Remember the “analogy of Scripture” rule of interpretation? Think, for instance, of the return of Christ Jesus, the LORD. How many authors proclaim this truth? In how many varied prophecies is this fundamental truth announced with certainty?

4. The Bible instructs us about the vital, necessary distinction between a believer’s gifts and his graces, emphasizing the essential priority of the latter!

Heb. 11:38 - “of whom the world was not worthy.”

I will “call upon the LORD Who is worthy to be praised.” (Psa. 18:3; 2 Sam. 22:4)

Lesson 8 What is fitting and appropriate in the corporate worship of God's Church?

Deciding what is fitting or appropriate or "worthy" is truly

a matter of utmost importance in the Christian Life.

Begin with Luke 2:41-52. "Did you not know that I must (*dei* by obligation of morality) be about My Father's business?" (Literally, the "things of My Father") Here the word "business is used." A house or place of merchandising, a house of trad for profit. Hence the church, a house for trading in religion? **Use that as a lead-in to John 2:16.**

How shall we judge what is worthy to do in the worship of the Triune God?

"There are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world - either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is **not worthy of it**, or by setting forth another object, even God as **more worthy** of its attachment..." Thomas Chalmers, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."

What if I asked on a Sunday afternoon, "Well, how was church today?" and heard the answer, "I think we took care of business."

"When we reject God, we don't stop doing what He made us to do; we simply do it wrong."

(Tennant, It's Good to be a Man)

**"O, worship the LORD, in the beauty of holiness."
(1 Chron. 16:29; 2 Chron. 20:21; Psa 29:2; 96:9)**

I will "call upon the LORD Who is worthy to be praised." (Psa. 18:3; 2 Sam. 22:4)

(1) "I have to say to you tonight that as long as I have been in the ministry, as long as I have been a Christian, the year 1994 has been the year of the most difficult stress and struggle that I have ever witnessed. I honestly believe that there has been no time since the 16th century when evangelicalism was in worse shape than today. I am watching reformed Christianity in America come apart at the seams. I am watching evangelicalism about to disappear. And I am sensing the intrusion of a new dark age." (R. C. Sproul, a "Christmas Message," 1994)

(2) What happened to the churches during the period known as the "Dark Ages" of the 10th Century, "has had an echo in modern church life: the church sought to convey an impressive message by building massive and expensive cathedrals; its worship was characterized by observation rather than participation; its communication of its message to the people took place through mystery plays rather than through biblical exposition in the local churches. It was led by superstars rather than ministers, individual leaders with their followers, some of whom desired more than anything else to be in the shoes of their leaders and to taste the same adulation... Ordinary people were spectators of ritual and audiences for music that might appeal to their aesthetic senses..." "Today the 'quality of worship' is measured by a grid appropriate to performance rather than faith..." "Such 'success' is in fact a massive burden that crushes the genuinely sensitive and faithful heart." (Sinclair Ferguson, In the Year of Our Lord, page 107-109)

(3) From Church history: **1662 Book of Common Prayer**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

Answer: We lift them up unto the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answer: It is *meet* and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and salutary (ie. our bounden duty), that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. *Amen.*

Speak of the account of the Knox, Fox, and Cox in Frankfurt... during the Marian exile (see the wikipedia summary).

A. For the Pastor... (See 1 Tim. 3:14, 15; Titus 2:2-8; 1 Tim. 3:2)

What does “gravitas” look like in the one who leads worship? Is such an attitude “suitable” to the occasion? And yet gravitas cannot be merely “put on.”

Grave, sober... Best - “weighty” in the understanding of O T *kabod*. It speaks of things that are heavy. Heavy things leave an impression. They imprint an image. Such should be the effect of the Christian who is made (and remade) in the image of God. Col. 3:10: “Put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”

A man of gravitas possesses a “gravitational pull.” People are attracted to him (or repelled). He possesses the power to pull things into proper order, into the placement where things “fit” together in their respective places. (Could reference Adm. James Stockdale, POW for 7 1/2 years in Hanoi Hilton)

The elder “equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17) does not know only the Scripture academically, he knows how to apply a particular Scripture to address a particular, pastoral, practical need in time of temptation (Heb. 5:14).

Should he wear a uniform as in a robe, or a bunny suit? What of the dress of the OT Priests? We spent an entire morning with R. C. being schooled about how a minister should dress.

Are jokes appropriate in a sermon?

Should he speak of himself (or his family) in the illustrations? Preaching is “Truth Coming through Personality.” He knows who God is; he knows who he is.

B. For the Music/Musicians *You can tell a lot about the vitality of the church by the way the congregation sings.*

“Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant and praise is becoming (beautiful, comely, seemly, fitting).” (Psa. 146:1;)

(4) “Experience testifies that, after the Word of God, MUSIC alone deserves to be celebrated as mistress and queen of the emotions of the human heart... If you want to revive the sad, encourage the despairing, humble the conceited, pacify the raving, mollify the hate-filled, what can you find that is more efficacious than music?” (Martin Luther) Luther is famous as a reformer who introduced congregational singing into the worship service.

(5) “The thing I look for above all else in church music is the sense of transcendence. Music in worship should not familiarize God to me; rather, it should stimulate the soul to a posture of adoration.” (R. C. Sproul)

(6) “‘ Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’ (Eph. 5:19). Our song on earth is speech. It is the sung *Word*. Why do Christians sing when they are together? The reason is , quite simply, because in singing together it is possible for them to speak and pray the same Word at the same time; in other words, because there they can unite in the Word. All devotion, all attention should be concentrated upon the Word in the hymn.” (Bonhoeffer, Life Together, page 59)

“The purity of unison singing, unaffected by alien motives of musical techniques, the clarity, unspoiled by the attempt to give musical art an autonomy of its own apart from the words, the simplicity and frugality, the humaneness and warmth of this way of singing is the essence of all congregational singing. This, it is true, discloses itself to our cultivated ears only gradually and by patient practice. It becomes a question of a congregation’s power of spiritual discernment whether it adopts proper unison singing. This is singing from the heart, singing to the Lord, singing the Word; this is singing in unity.” (Bonhoeffer, page 60)

Speak of **three elements in music**: 1. melody, 2. harmony, and 3. rhythm.

For music in worship the most God-pleasing activity, I am persuaded, is heart-felt, mind-engaged, congregational singing of Biblically sound lyrics that are well matched between words and tune. The notes of the melody are the wings that cause the message to soar and carry the message to the heart and to heaven.

Do the words match, ‘fit’ the theme of the service and sermon?

Do the lyrics and the tune ‘match’ (You don’t want to sing the words of a lamentation using the tune of a Sousa march or a football fight song.) For instance, a melody in a minor key is appropriate for a hymn of repentance.

(I just discovered a new hymn, #34 in the Trinity, “The God of Abraham Praise.” I have sung it many times, but have been so entranced with the melody that I did not concentrate on the theme of the lyrics. They are really wonderful!)

Is the melody easy to sing?

Is the key chosen for the range of most voices?

Is the tempo conducive to the message of the words?

Are the words understandable?

If the congregation is not trained to sing, singing will not bring the joy of expression that it is designed to give.

Should a hymnal be used?

Should there be a choir? If there are soloist(s), are they singing *for* or *to* the people?

Should there be instruments, an organ?

Should the congregation sing Psalms only?

What is the role of the praise/song leaders?

When does performance displace or detract from congregational participation?

It is to encourage congregational response in singing well and with understanding, not to draw attention to themselves, but to draw attention to the God Who is worshipped. How best should we accomplish that?

Emphasize that congregational singing is corporate prayer. "He who sings prays twice." Word alone are not adequate to carry and discharge the burden of the human heart.

C. What of the architecture/furnishings of the building?

"Every form is an art form, and every art form communicates something." (Sproul's Law)

How should the furniture be arranged?

What kind of art is appropriate? What art forms are permissible to represent the Godhead? Are pictures of Jesus allowable?

What is necessary? What is available? What characteristics honor the God Who is to be adored? ("Given in honor of Sally King Self")

An excursive concerning “things indifferent”. *

The Bible teaches us that some practices may be ‘*adiaphorus*’, things indifferent. The negation of diaphora, to corrupt or destroy. “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not *helpful* (sumphero). All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power (mastered by) of any” (1 Cor. 6:12). The Apostle Paul gives much care to teach this truth in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8.

“Historically from Webster’s 1828 Dictionary: Adiaphorists: Moderate Lutherans; a name given in the sixteenth century, to certain men that followed Melancthon, who was more pacific than Luther. The *adiaphorists* held some opinions and ceremonies to be indifferent, which Luther condemned as sinful or heretical.” In other words, some actions condemned by Luther could be judged as morally neutral.

sumphērō; to bear together (contribute), i.e. to collect, or to conduce; to be advantageous:—be better for, bring together, be expedient, be good, profitable for, hence “helpful”. We might add to be “fitting.” The definition of things neutral may be broader than some want to admit. “He who condemns what God allows may eventually allow what God condemns.” It is possible to “go too far” in our attempts for obedience (2 John 9, NASB).

There are in life, things indifferent. “In essentials, unity; in non-essential, liberty; in all things, charity.” (Augustine) In the end, I would suggest, that the only “essential” is how to differentiate the essential from the non-essential.

In the early days of the Westminster Seminary there arose a dispute about three issues, (1) total abstinence, (2) amillennial eschatology, and (3) presuppositional apologetics. It caused a disruption of fellowship and brought about the emergence of Biblical Seminary and the Bible Presbyterian Church. (Young Francis Schaeffer chose Biblical Seminary as his source of ministerial training instead of the newly established Westminster Seminary. See [The Mark of the Christian](#))

With regard to something that is “grotesque” Edwards, page 432: “For us to make that great which the Scripture makes little, and that little which the Scripture makes great, tends to give us a **monstrous idea** of religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourselves, and to establish delusion and hypocrisy.”

Does it matter if I chew my dinner with the left side or the right side of my mouth?

Does it matter if I drink wine with my supper? But what if...?

What is the proper mode of baptism? Who is the proper recipient of baptism?

Does it matter if I, as a true Christian, am post-millennial or amillennial in the doctrine of last things?

Does it matter if I, as a true Christian, am Calvinistic or Arminian in soteriology?

Does it matter if I, as a professing Christian, deny the so-called third us of the Law of God?

Can I be a true Christian if I deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, His resurrection?

* Reference: The Bible Doctrine of the Separated Life, A Study of Basic Principles, Johannes G. Vos, pub. The Committee on Christian Education, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

A thought about sanctification: OC, 8 Dec. "God is justified in saving bad men only as He makes them good men." (shown or proven to be right"