

XXVI. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON TWENTY-SIX

...ABOUT THE OVERSIGHT (BISHOP) MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

Question: Is a born again child of God competent to oversee Himself, that is, always make correct moral judgments?

Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Galatians 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

Romans 14:23, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin."

Man was created with a spirit, a soul, and a body. His spirit is to be the overseer of his soul - as God took Adam and placed him in the garden to "dress (cultivate) it and to keep (tend) it (Genesis 2:15), so, the spirit of man, which is God conscious, was created to oversee, cultivate and keep, the soul, which is the garden of man.

Genesis 3:1-6 is an example of what happens when one relies on soulish judgments where moral issues are concerned. I have no doubt that Eve felt she was competent to judge situations for her- self, so that, when she found herself in this confrontation with the serpent it never entered her mind to seek out Adam for advise and direction.

Judges 21:25 sums up very simply this question of the need for oversight outside of ourselves,

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in HIS OWN EYES."

Our Father God in His wisdom has established the "Oversight Ministry" through His Son Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:25 - Jesus the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls). A ministry which He carries out personally by means of the Word (John 17:17) and through His body, the Church. It is His desire to "to finish His (the Father's) work. Philipians 1:6 says,

"...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it (literally, will bring it to completion) until the day of Jesus Christ."

The purpose of this lesson is to remind us to thank our Lord for His love in providing us with oversight in the Body of Christ and to submit ourselves to that oversight.

THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Our Father God has established an order of authority in the Church.

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."

According to the above Scripture, What is the ministry of those in authority?

Specifically, over what are they overseeing?

According to the following Scriptures who, in the local Body of Christ, has been given the ministry of oversight?

Titus 1:5-9

Acts 14:23

1 Peter 5:1-3

Acts 20:17; 20:28

Note: The designation as Elder refers to the maturity of their spiritual experience. While the designation as Bishop (overseer) refers to their work as an Elder.

From Acts 20:28, who makes them overseers?

The "oversight ministry" is a ministry where our conduct is under the judgment of what?

John 12:48

James 1:21

It is ministering the _____ for the saving of the _____ of those under that ministry.

According to the following Scriptures, what then is the goal or purpose of the "oversight ministry"?

Ephesians 4:11-16

Colossians 1:28

2 Timothy 2:21

Conclusions: The "oversight ministry" in the local body of Christ is the ministry of Jesus finishing the work His Father sent Him to do. A ministry He wants to work in the heart of each and every believer, so that, He can work through them the works of Father God. The works of the Father which He desires to work through each believer are the same works that He, Himself, did during His earthly ministry. This "oversight ministry" is invested in the Elders of the Church.

RESPONSE TO THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY

The response of the members of the local Body of Christ to the Elders and to their ministry in the body is to be what according to the following Scriptures?

1 Thessalonians 5:12

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Hebrews 13:7

Hebrews 13:17

Hebrews 13:24

1 Timothy 5:17-18

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the response of the members of the Church to the Elders and their ministry is :

- 1. to having a close personal relationship with them,**
- 2. to honor them for the sake of their ministry,**
- 3. to receive them and their ministry,**
- 4. to obey and submit to their counsel, and**
- 5. to support them in their ministry.**

Note: This response to the "oversight ministry" in the Church will bring the "peace of God into your life" and victory to your walk as a child of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

James 4:6-7

YOUR RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

Our Father God has established the "oversight ministry" because He loves us and because He desires to bless us, His children. Deuteronomy 28:1,2 says that if we:

"...hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord...observe and to do all his commandments all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God."

What then is to be your personal response to the "oversight ministry" of the church?

Are you in that place?

Yes ___ No ___

If your answer is no, do you desire to be?

Yes____No____

If you desire this, know that your Father God will work it in you. If you are not sure if you desire it or not, God will work that desire in you if you will allow Him to do so. Philippians 2:13. Amen