

January 30, 2008

Dear Brother

Angela faxed me your letter and the questions concerning the ministry. And here are the answers as I feel the Lord would have me to give to you:

1. If a minister backslides, should he continue preaching after a “quick repentance”?

My answer: Absolutely not. He ought to be so ashamed of himself and his failure to live up to godliness and righteousness that he would not even want to be a minister for he has not walked worthy of the heavenly calling. He should want to be saved and forgiven of his sin but let go of any thought of preaching and centralize his purposes of being a real Christian and man of God.

2. If a minister backslides, does he lose his gift of ministry?

My answer: He surely does lose his gift of ministry, as his falling into sin and transgression against the holy law of God makes him unfit and unworthy of being a minister of the gospel of Christ.

3. Is there a proving time before preaching again?

My answer: Yes, there surely is a need for proving and qualifying one’s self and life if ever he will fill the place of a minister with God’s blessings and the people’s confidence. On the part of the individual there should be no haste or anxious desire to preach publicly again. I will say again, “he ought to be so ashamed of himself that he would not even want to minister because he had not walked worthy of heavenly calling.” I would not say that he could never preach again, but I do not believe that he should think that he could just start preaching again as if nothing had ever happened.

4. Does the Lord have to call that person to preach again for him to resume preaching?

My answer: Yes, definitely he would have to have a call from the Lord to be a minister as much and ever more than before.

5. Is baptism a necessary step in a case like this when it becomes known to a number in the congregation?

My answer: If he was guilty of embezzling money from his employer, I would call that a sin unto spiritual death, and he would have to do his first works again (Rev. 2:5) to be justified and born from above and be baptized and make a public confession to the congregation of his lost condition and need of forgiveness and mercy.

6. Should this person be permitted to continue as a trustee in the congregation?

My answer: He needs to be told that he is no longer worthy of being a trustee and will have to prove himself if he ever is asked to be a trustee again. He should not want to be a trustee or ask to be made a trustee, but live a blameless life at home and before the world ere he ever fills that place again.

7. Do you believe that having a television in the home disqualifies a man for the ministry?

My answer: I surely believe that it disqualifies a man from the holy ministry of the Church of God because he is not setting a proper example as a true minister should. In 1959 a large group of saint ministers signed a statement concerning the use and evil influence of the television, and one of the things it said was that if a man allows a television to be in his home over which he is supposed to have control he has disqualified himself from the ministry.

Let us consider some of Paul's teachings about the qualifications of a bishop or minister of the gospel. 1 Timothy 3:2-7 says

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;
For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?
Not a novice (one newly come to the faith), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Titus 1:6-9 says

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.
For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre (not greedy of ill-gotten gain);
But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;
Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

May the Lord help you concerning this great burden and give you the courage to counsel with this individual according to what I have brought out along with the scripture text we brought forth from the apostle Paul. Paul also said in Galatians 6:1,

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Assure him that there is forgiveness and mercy for him to be restored to favor with God and with the saints, to be a saved man and a part of the Church, but to relinquish all plans and desires to be a minister again. Be willing to be less than the least of all saints and be saved now and in that great judgement day, to follow Peter's counsel in 2 Peter 1:4-11 where he said "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust... giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity... Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

A little more from the apostle Paul: 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;
Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

Also 1 Corinthians 9:27

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Lovingly and fervently yours,
Bro. Leslie Busbee