

LESSON 10 A Balanced Ministry

You have considered scriptural qualifications and tools for ministry and the spiritual qualities that enable effective leadership. If you will apply these principles consistently, you can preach sermons and teach lessons with skill and confidence.

Have you ever watched as a pack animal had its load shift to one side as it climbed up a steep and dangerous trail. Maybe you have seen a boat capsize when too many people were on one side. These real-life situations suggest the importance of balance. In ministering to people there is also a need for balance. We will discuss balance in this lesson.

Preaching and teaching are two means God has chosen to communicate divine truth to needy people. While you may learn to do both with great skill and competence, you must never forget that the source of your effectiveness is God. I pray you will become more dependent on Him day by day and more like Him as you learn to wait in His presence. Then your success in His service is assured.

lesson outline

A Plea for Balance

“I Beseech You . . .”

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Discuss the significance of balance in a person’s ministry of preaching and teaching.
2. State the characteristics of successful spiritual ministry.

learning activity

Carefully review Unit 3 then complete the unit student report for Unit 3 and send it to your GU instructor.

key words

fanaticism

formalism

lesson development

A PLEA FOR BALANCE

Objective 1 . *Discuss the significance of balance in a person's teaching and preaching ministry.*

If you are to serve effectively in your preaching and teaching ministry, you must have balance. Imbalance is a constant danger. It is possible for you to become imbalanced in your message, your method, or both.

Consider the following family situation. A mother has a three-year-old son and a son of thirteen years. The younger son has a fairly good appetite, but he likes soft foods primarily. The older son likes all food; and he likes meat, some of which is more difficult to eat. Since she loves both sons, this mother tries to include those things in the daily menu, where possible, that will appeal to and nourish both of them. For both of these sons need to grow and develop.

As one who ministers, you will have similar situations in a spiritual sense. As some people mature, others will be born again and begin their spiritual life. You must minister truths that are palatable for new babes in Christ (1 Peter 2:2) and at the same time share truths and spiritual principles that will nourish the more mature believers (Hebrews 5:11–14). This may appear to be a difficult task, but as you seek the Lord for appropriate material, He will give you what is necessary to meet the needs of all His people.

Application

1 Suppose you visited a church of about three hundred people on a Sunday morning. The pastor preaches an excellent evangelistic sermon and souls are saved. Again on Wednesday evening at “Bible Study” you hear another evangelistic message and appeal. You learn this is a standard pattern for all services. Still impressed, you comment to a church member about the

number of people who make decisions for Christ. He responds, “Yes, we have many, many souls saved, but people don’t seem to stay on here. They go to other churches and settle down.” What do you feel may be a problem area in this church’s ministry? Write in your notebook your answer to this question.

When people are not fed spiritually, they show signs of spiritual starvation. At this point they may either move to a different group or just gradually drop out of services, becoming needless spiritual casualties. This pastor could have varied both his message (evangelism) and his method (preaching) by including some good doctrinal teaching and expository preaching that would undoubtedly have met with success.

As you minister, strike a balance between preaching and teaching. Paul instructed Timothy to do both: “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). One method of communication that strikes an excellent balance between preaching and teaching is expository preaching. Expository sermon is based on a portion of Scripture that is interpreted in relation to its theme or big idea. The major part of the material for this kind of sermon is taken directly from Scripture. The goal is to unfold the meaning of the Scripture passage and to show how scriptural truth is related to the present situation of the hearers. Such an approach gives us the benefit of a systematic teaching element that can be used to evangelize and a preaching style that aims to instruct and educate for Christian growth. Expository preaching is used with great success by many prominent people.

You will find your treatment of message content, whether preaching or teaching, will be affected by your audience. For example, if you visit an elementary school class, say a second grade, you will find that the youngsters have a short attention span. If the teacher wishes to maintain their attention, she must use vivid language, abundant visual aids, and not spend too long on any one subject area. These babes, in a manner of speaking, are just infant scholars. By way of contrast, during your

observation of a college class, you watch as the students give attention while the teacher lectures for an hour and a half.

You will find these two kinds of responses to communication repeated in your services. For example, you may notice that the babes in Christ appear restless, uneasy, and uninvolved as you present doctrinal material in an extended session. These responses probably indicate that the material is too heavy for them at their present stage of development. It may also indicate that your approach needs to be modified. You may need to employ a method that utilizes more of their sense modalities in the learning experience. Again, you may find during a series of evangelistic messages that more mature people are hungering for stronger spiritual meat. You should respond to their need and endeavor to bring your total ministry into balance.

In ministering, seek to strike a balance between preaching and teaching. As you minister out of the abundant riches of God's Word, you will bring out of this treasure things that will bless your people as they grow in spiritual stature and please them as they savor the rich goodness of the things of God.

Application

- 2** Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
- a)** We can deduce from the foregoing facts and our last lesson that all learners, but especially beginning learners, do better when the concepts we present are less difficult to understand, the illustrations are abundant, and visual aids enhance the learning experience.
- b)** The spiritual part of a person is like a biological organism in that it must be fed on a diet equal to its level of maturity. That is, spiritual babes require milk, whereas spiritual adults need strong meat.
- c)** It really does not matter how you go about feeding your people or what you feed them so long as you do something for them.



Preaching and teaching, as we have seen, are two means of communicating truth. Some people make a distinction between these means. They believe that preaching appeals to the emotions and teaching appeals to the intellect. However, this distinction is subjective, for each has some element of the other at any given point. Both are important as truth ought to be understood fully and felt deeply. Paul related both to the experience of the Romans “Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted” (Romans 6:17). Truth affects every part of a person. It comes initially to the intellect, stimulates the emotions, and ultimately moves the will. Truth that affects the total person has better likelihood of producing fruit.

Application

- 3** Truth that produces positive spiritual change in a person
- a)** must be primarily an intellectual matter; only in a minor way are the emotions affected as the will is changed.
 - b)** is primarily an emotional matter, since reason (or the intellectual faculty) is outside the scope of spiritual matters.
 - c)** moves through the intellect, affects the emotions, and moves the will to change.




A balance in preaching and teaching will bring a balance in evangelism and training. Some only see the need to evangelize; others only train disciples. Both are necessary; neither should be neglected. Sometimes a person will insist that he has only an evangelistic ministry and therefore cannot teach. On other occasions, someone will insist that since his ministry is training for discipleship, he cannot win the lost. It is possible and necessary for us to do both. The Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) is balanced by His commission to make disciples of all people (Matthew 28:19–20). What we do must be determined by what the Lord expects, not just what is convenient.

Balance in preaching and teaching will produce balance in worship. Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria about the worship the Father seeks: “God is a spirit; his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The Word preached and taught without the anointing of the Spirit leads to formalism. Where the subjective experience in the Spirit is emphasized apart from the Word, we have fanaticism. True worship is a perfect balance of the Word and the Spirit.

Application

- 4** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.
- a)** The Great Commission is primarily a call to evangelism.
 - b)** We can deduce from the commands given by our Lord that ministry to people is to be total. It must bring about the new birth, a new lifestyle, new values, new behavior, and progressive growth.
 - c)** True worship to God represents a balanced human response to the Word and to the Spirit.



In Acts 2:42–47, the element of evangelism was evident in the Christian community as scores of people were affected by the witness and testimony of the believers in Jesus. Secondly, we note that those won were devoted to the teaching of the apostles, and the process of making disciples was thus begun. A third element in this unique setting was also important: the relationship of the believers to one another. They ate together, prayed together, praised God together, and shared their earthly possessions. This created unity. If these three elements are in balance in your group, you will see positive results.

Some bodies of believers have a tendency to focus on only one of these elements. But observe what results. A group that emphasizes Bible teaching and neglects evangelism and fellowship becomes cold and intellectual. A group that emphasizes fellowship and neglects evangelism and Bible teaching becomes shallow and emotional. And the group that

emphasizes evangelism but neglects fellowship and Bible teaching is filled with lonely, starved believers.

Other groups of believers focus their attention on two of these elements. The group, for example, that stresses Bible teaching and fellowship but ignores evangelism experiences a loss of life and vitality. It is characterized by self-satisfaction, complacency, and lifelessness. The group that emphasizes fellowship and evangelism but disregards Bible teaching is frequently troubled by false doctrine and small splinter groups. And the group that emphasizes Bible teaching and evangelism but fails to promote fellowship develops Christians who know the Word and are able to share it, but they never develop meaningful relationships with other believers.

Evangelism, teaching for discipleship, and meaningful relationships are necessary for spiritual maturity. Given these elements in proper balance, we can expect to see healthy congregations develop. Therefore, give constant and careful attention to maintaining a balanced ministry.

Application

- 5** From our consideration of Acts 2:42–47 the best conclusion a person could draw is that
- a)** there was wholeness and completeness in the early church program, which provided for the spiritual growth of believers, effective witness to nonbelievers, and the cultivation of significant fellowship.
 - b)** the program that developed arose out of the need for a well-rounded lifestyle, which aimed to solve as many spiritual problems as possible.
 - c)** what occurred was primarily a result of local circumstances and the program that emerged did not represent a normative pattern of behavior for a healthy group of Christians.
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Luke records that “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). This is an example

of balanced growth. In practical terms this means that He grew intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially. Through a balanced preaching and teaching ministry and the simultaneous development of deep relationships, our people will develop spiritual stature, a powerful witness, meaningful fellowship, and we will feel a sense of fulfillment in our own ministries.

The Bible is your greatest help as you seek to develop a balanced ministry. Study it systematically. Follow it diligently. Measure your message and your methods by it. It is good to glance through the table of contents of a theology book three or four times each year to assure you are not neglecting some major Bible doctrine.

Keep a record of what subjects and Bible passages you preach and teach. Check your record at least once each year. Be certain you are studying and ministering from the whole of Bible truth. Beware of favorite subjects and pet themes! Just as you like variety in the food you eat, so the people to whom you minister need variety in the messages you preach and teach.

Ask the Lord to help as you strive to declare the whole message of the Word. He will help you maintain a well-balanced ministry of preaching and teaching.

Application

6 Discuss the significance of balance in a person's teaching and preaching ministry. Use your notebook for this response.

"I BESEECH YOU . . ."

Objective 2. *State the characteristics of successful spiritual ministry.*

Phillips Brooks, whose definition of preaching is quoted earlier in this study guide, was a learned and capable preacher. Thousands were brought to Christ as a result of his ministry. Some people wondered about the reason for his success. A friend of his discovered the secret on an ocean voyage the two were

sharing. The man missed the great preacher for several hours. After looking for him in different places, he returned to their room and opened the door. There, on his knees, with his hands lifted heavenward, he found Phillips Brooks praying repeatedly, “Oh, God, give me power!” He closed the door on the sacred scene, knowing the source of his power with God and men.

Application

7 Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions.

- a)** Mark 1:35–38 reveals that before Jesus began His day of ministering to people’s needs, He
- b)** Luke 5:16 and 9:18 indicate that Jesus withdrew from the crowds and went to lonely places so that He could
- c)** Luke 9:28–36 shows that Jesus was transfigured while He was
- d)** Luke 6:12–16 indicates that before He chose the Twelve, Jesus
- e)** Mark 9:29 demonstrates that some spiritual battles require before victory can be achieved.
- f)** Acts 6:4 reveals that the apostles placed high priority on and
- g)** Ephesians 6:18 admonishes believers to



When you minister, neither talent nor training can substitute for spiritual power in your life. Without it, preaching is a sermon and teaching is a lecture. Such preaching and teaching, without the life-giving power of the Spirit, is dead (2 Corinthians 3:6). Therefore, do not be content to preach sermons and deliver lectures. Wait on God in prayer until the Word is like fire shut

up in your bones; wait until you can speak as an oracle of God. Follow Paul's pattern when you minister:

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2:1–5)

When you declare the Word of God in the power of the Spirit, you follow the New Testament pattern of ministry. Wait before the Lord until the power of the Holy Spirit comes on you as it came upon New Testament believers (Acts 2:1–4). The anointing to minister comes only from God. There are no shortcuts to this spiritual enablement. People will never be moved by less than the anointed message. God seeks people to proclaim His message who rely fully on Him, and those He anoints are admonished to be fervent in spirit as they serve the Lord (Romans 12:11).

Application

8 Enablement for ministry that produces significant spiritual results

- a)** is based on one's personal, spiritual experience and therefore neither talents, abilities, nor training are necessary for ministry.
- b)** comes from the total dedication of one's abilities, skills, and learning experiences to the Lord to be used as He directs.
- c)** is dependent on the material one gives to God; thus, the more one has to offer God initially the more God can do with this person.



Along with the power of the Spirit, you need a burning heart to preach and teach the gospel. Jesus' ministry to two disciples going to Emmaus suggests how to have inspired enthusiasm (Luke 24:13–35). Jesus joined them, unrecognized, and listened to their story of the crucifixion and empty tomb. He explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scripture from Moses through the prophets. Later, as He blessed and broke the bread, they recognized Him, but He disappeared from their sight. Then they said to each other (v. 32), “‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’” Your heart will burn within you as He talks to you and reveals the Word unto you. Seek this! When you pray, wait for Him to speak to you. His words will kindle a fire in your spirit. When you stand to minister, none will doubt the source of your power. Your people will sense that you have been with Jesus, and they will respond to the message your Master has given you for them.

Some years ago a minister of the gospel began to depend less on God and more on his own talents, ability, and training. As he spent less and less time on his knees, his ministry lost its warmth and vigor. Sensing the need for a change in direction, some concerned elders placed a note on the pulpit where the minister would be sure to see it. It stated the problem clearly: “‘Sir, . . . we would like to see Jesus’” (John 12:21). When the pastor read the note he broke down in humble contrition. Going to a private place he resolved to pray until he regained the power of God in his life. When he emerged from his closet of prayer, he was wiser. Never again would he dare go to the pulpit depending on his own abilities. As might be expected, he recovered the fire, the passion, the vision he had once had. His grateful people now placed another note on the pulpit. This time it read, “The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20).

My prayer for you is that you will preach and teach with both passion and power. I pray also that you will always perceive your task of ministering as a gift from God and that you will never lose the freshness, the vigor, and the challenge that you had when you first responded to the call of the Savior.

Application

- 9** Circle the letter of each statement that is TRUE of the characteristics of successful spiritual ministry.
- a)** The one who is truly seeking to serve the Lord and His people will progressively withdraw from contact with people.
 - b)** The more a person becomes involved with people the more he will become involved in prayer and intercession to God for them.
 - c)** The hallmarks of the spiritual person are weakness and timidity.
 - d)** While one must not rely on his own natural abilities for spiritual ministry, when he knows he speaks for God and bears His anointing he will minister with boldness, power, and authority that will arrest the attention of people.
 - e)** Since people are so different, it is not necessary that the one who ministers be emotionally involved, that is, excited, fervent in spirit, and highly motivated to do God's work. For God's work will get done whether or not we have a vision for it.
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self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write T in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write F if the statement is FALSE.

- ... **1** The need for balance in a person's preaching and teaching ministry has only been discovered recently and does not represent either a scriptural command or an early church practice.
- ... **2** Preaching and teaching are simply two modes of communicating truth; therefore, one is not more important than the other.
- ... **3** It is generally accepted that preaching is used to appeal to the emotions; whereas, teaching appeals to the intellect.
- ... **4** Whichever medium of communication is used, the objective is to affect the total person: intellect, emotions, and will.
- ... **5** Some see preaching as a means of evangelism and teaching as the means of making disciples.
- ... **6** The Great Commission is specifically directed to evangelism. The provision for making those won through evangelism into disciples is found elsewhere in the Bible.
- ... **7** It is more important to place emphasis on the Spirit in worship than to try to emphasize the complementary nature of the Word and the Spirit in worship.
- ... **8** A person should measure his methods and his message by the results of his ministry rather than by any absolute standard.
- ... **9** One who ministers should seek some variety in the spiritual diet he gives to those whom he serves.
- ... **10** The secret of success in the preaching and teaching ministry is a combination of applied methods and skills, charming personality, and above average intelligence.

- ... **11** Great teachers and preachers of all times are alike in that they have recognized their source of power and continually exercised themselves in prayer to maintain this contact, without which they are unfit for spiritual ministry.
- ... **12** One of the primary characteristics of those who preach and teach in the Spirit's power is inspired enthusiasm.
- ... **13** The Holy Spirit must direct the one who ministers in the choice and preparation of lessons and sermons, anoint as he ministers, and touch the hearts of the hearers if spiritual benefits are to be realized.
- ... **14** According to scriptural practice, the one who preaches should not teach, for these ministerial talents are so distinct. Therefore, each of these ministries requires a different person.
- ... **15** While teaching and preaching are two different modes of communication, the difference is not so great that one person cannot both preach evangelistic messages to see the lost won and teach lessons to train disciples.

Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 3 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

answers to study questions

- 5 a)** there was wholesomeness and completeness in the early church.
- 1** Your answer. It is obvious that the message is geared to evangelism needs rather than striking a balance between it and Christian growth and maturity.
- 6** Your answer. Balance in your ministry is vital, for it helps you minister to evangelism and church growth as well as discipleship and Christian maturity needs. These different needs will affect your message, your method, and your emphasis. In addition, balance will keep you from spiritual deadness and fanaticism as you give appropriate place to the Word and the Spirit in worship. Balance, in short, helps us bring one to Christ, provide for his spiritual nourishment and relationships, and the total spiritual development which leads to spiritual maturity.
- 2 a)** True
b) True
c) False (As shepherds, we are responsible to feed the lambs and the sheep. And we are to do all that is possible to feed the flock for its spiritual well-being.)
- 7 a)** prayed
b) regularly, frequently, or customarily; pray.
c) praying.
d) prayed all night.
e) prayer or prayer and fasting.
f) prayer, the work of preaching.
g) pray in the Spirit constantly for the many needs of the ministry and the body of Christ.
- 3 c)** moves through the intellect, affects the emotions, and moves the will to change.
- 8 b)** comes from the total dedication of one's abilities

- 4 a)** False
b) True
c) True
- 9 a)** False
b) True
c) False (See Paul's advice to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7.)
d) True
e) False (One cannot read the record of Jesus' ministry without being moved by the under which He labored—see John 9:4 and Matthew 9:36–38. Our ministry is vital, since the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations before the coming of the Lord—Matthew 24:14.)

