

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 1--Ecclesiology
Week 10 - 2 Keys to an Enduring Ministry

Introduction

Ministering under law vs. Ministering under grace

“Under law”

“Under grace”

The Bible draws this contrast in several areas:

Justification:

Sanctification:

Contrasts between ministering under law & ministering under grace

1. When you minister under law, your *primary focus is on what you must do* in ministry (“I must build the church”).

SYMPTOMS:

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When you minister under grace, your *primary focus is on God’s power and promises to play his role* (“You will build your church”).

2. When you minister under law, you *base your self-worth on your ministry results*.

SYMPTOMS:

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When you minister under grace, *your self-worth is based on your identity/position in Christ.*

3. When you minister under law, you have a *horizontal focus.*

SYMPTOMS:

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With honesty, consider these questions:

Do you have the habit of looking around at others with callings close to yours?

Do you feel called into question by their achievements?

Do you feel that their success is more than they deserve and yours somehow less?

Are you disappointed, even angry, at the gap between your desires and your accomplishments?

(Os Guinness, The Call, p133)

When you minister under grace, you have a *vertical focus.*

When Jesus calls, he calls us one by one. Comparisons are idle, speculations about others a waste of time, and envy as silly as it is evil. We are each called individually, accountable to God alone, to please him alone, and eventually to be approved by him alone. If ever we are tempted to look around, compare notes, and use the progress of others to judge the success of our own calling, we will hear what Peter heard: : “what is that to you? Follow me!” (Os Guinness, The Call, p 132, 133)

Consider the mighty ways in which God used a dead stick of wood. “God so used a stick of wood” can be a banner cry for each of us. Though we are limited and weak in talent, physical energy and psychological strength, we are not less than a stick of wood. But as the rod of Moses had to become the rod of God, so that which *I me* must become the *me* of God. Then, I can become useful in God’s hands. The Scripture emphasizes that much can come from little if the little is truly consecrated to God. There are no little people and no big people in the true spiritual sense, but only consecrated and unconsecrated people. The

problem for each of us is applying this truth to ourselves: Is Francis Schaeffer the Francis Schaeffer of God? (Francis Schaeffer, No Little People, p17)

4. When you minister under law, you often have a *perfectionistic standard*.

SYMPTOMS:

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When you minister under grace, you remember that God is more interested in your availability than your ability.

5. When you minister under law, there will be relatively *less dependence on prayer* related to your ministry attempts.

SYMPTOMS:

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When you minister under grace, *prayer becomes more and more central to your ministry*.

6. When you minister under law, you become *motivated mainly by duty and obligation* (“I have to do all of this”).

SYMPTOMS:

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When you minister under grace, you are *motivated by the privilege of getting to work with God* (“I get to be a part of what God is doing”).

Does any of this sound familiar to you?

Getting back to ministering under grace

1. Ask God to give you fresh and deeper illumination of his grace in ministry.
2. Share your struggle and confusion with other relatively mature Christian workers who know you well.
3. Prayerfully meditate on biblical passages that emphasize God’s grace and faithfulness in ministry.

Matthew 11:28-30, 28:18-20; John 15:4,5; 2 Timothy 2:1; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 3:5,6; 12:9,10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20-21; Psalm 127:1,2; John 21:15-17; John 13:3

4. Prayerfully read and reflect on quality Christian books that emphasize ministering under grace. (e.g., Watchman Nee’s *Sit, Walk, Stand*, Howard Taylor’s *Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret*, Francis Schaeffer’s *No Little People*, Dwight Edward’s, *Revolution Within*, and Bill Lawrence’s *Effective Pastoring*)

Zeal

What is it? Biblical zeal is earnest, enthusiastic commitment to God and his purpose.

J. I. PACKER " . . . positively and passionately devoted to his person, his cause, and his honor."

Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 32:16

John 2:17

J. C. RYLE: "Zeal . . . is a burning desire to please God, to do his will, and to advance his glory in the world . . . It is a desire which no man feels by nature--which the Spirit puts in the heart of every believer when he is converted--but which some believers feel so strongly that they alone deserve to be called 'zealous' men . . . He burns for one thing; and that is to please God and to advance God's glory . . . He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if he is consumed in the very burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a man will always find a sphere for his work . . ."

Zeal is essential for Christian workers

SPURGEON: "In many instances ministerial success is traceable almost entirely to intense zeal, a consuming passion for souls, and an eager enthusiasm in the things of God, and we believe that in every case, other things being equal, men prosper in the divine service in proportion as their hearts are blazing in holy love."

Two complementary insights (2 Tim. 1:6,7)

1.

2.

Checklist for cultivating and maintaining zeal

Do you expose yourself regularly to zealous people?

2 Cor. 9:2

SPURGEON: "We shall often find ourselves in danger of deteriorating our zeal by the cold Christian people with whom we come in contact. What terrible wet blankets some (Christians) are! . . . If these frost-bitten men should happen to be the officers of the church, from whom you naturally expect the warmest sympathy, the result is chilling to the last degree, and all the more if you are young and inexperienced . . ."

Do you pray for zeal regularly?

SPURGEON: "Fan (the flame of zeal) with much supplication . . ."

Lk. 11:9-13

Do you fuel it with God's Word?

Lk. 24:32

STOTT: "so possess the truth that the truth possesses you."

How do you get this? As you study scripture, prayerfully ask yourself these questions:

When did I first learn this truth? How did my life suffer because I was ignorant of it?
How did learning it and applying it change my life at that time? How has it done
the same thing since? How was my life hurt because I have refused to respond to
this truth? How does this truth apply to me now?

How is this person suffering because he is ignorant of this truth? What could happen
to him if he learns it and applies it?

Are you responsive to the Holy Spirit's personal guidance in moral & ministry matters?

Denying the flesh is essential to maintaining and increasing zeal.

Complaining is especially zeal-destroying.

Do you put your heart into your work?

Col. 1:29

Do you expose yourself to the needs of lost people?

Acts 17:16ff.

SPURGEON: "Take care . . . to be on most familiar terms with those whose souls are committed to your care . . . Get into close quarters with those who are in an anxious state . . . It will help to make you (zealous) when you see their eagerness to find peace . . . As a doctor walks the hospitals, so you ought to traverse the lanes and courts to behold the mischief which sin has wrought. It is enough to make you weep tears of blood to gaze upon the desolation which sin has made in the earth . . . See the masses living in their sins . . . dying sodden and hardened, or terrified and despairing; surely this will rekindle expiring zeal if anything can do it. The world is full of grinding poverty, and crushing sorrow; shame and death are the portion of (millions), and it needs a great gospel to meet the dire necessities of men's souls . . . Go and see for yourselves. Thus you will learn to preach a great salvation . . . not with your mouth only, but also with your heart . . . "

Do you stay focused on ministry related to your spiritual gifts & burdens?

2 Tim. 1:6,7

FOR FURTHER READING:

Waylon Moore, *Multiplying Disciples*, pp. 95,96.

Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Worker*, "Diligence," pp. 9-20

J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pp. 151-158

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, pp. 134-136

Charles H. Spurgeon, *Encounter with Spurgeon*, pp. 81-87

John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, "Earnestness," pp. 273-280

Assignment Due Next Week

Study for Exam – In classroom on June 10th

Memory Verses - None

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Be able to explain three of the six contrasts between ministering under law vs. ministering under grace.
2. Be able to explain four of the seven ways you can cultivate and maintain zeal.