

# **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

BY

**Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship**

## **Lesson 2**

### **Requirements of Ministry**

By

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Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa

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## Servant Leadership – Lesson 2 Requirements of Ministry by Chuck Smith

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Father, we look to You to give us ears to hear what the Spirit would say to the church. Lord, we thank You for the many opportunities that You give us to know You better and to serve You. And Lord, we want to serve You in whatever capacity You have ordained. So we pray that You will guide us and You will teach us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Previously we dealt with the subject of the minister. Now we would like to deal with the subject of the ministry. A couple of things that we did not mention when talking about the minister, is that Jesus said "If any of you want to be the chief, let him become the servant of all" (cf. [Mark 9:35](#)). And Jesus set the example for all ministry when He took and girded Himself with a towel and went around and washed His disciples' feet. And He said, "Do you see what I have done?" (cf. [John 12:12](#)). More than just merely washing their feet, He had set for them an example for everyone who wants to be in the ministry.

The word minister itself signifies servant. Now, I do not know how we have gotten things so twisted in our thinking, but there are many people who are involved in the ministry who think that people are to minister to them. And they come in with the kind of an attitude of "Well, who is going to shine my shoes and buy my gas?" They are looking for people to minister to them. "Don't I get a ten percent discount? I am a minister, you know." It is as though they should have special privileges and special treatment. Not so. The true minister is one who serves.

Now, God prepares us for the work that He has in mind for us to do. Paul said, in talking about our salvation, that it is—

Not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. ([Ephesians 2:9-10](#))

Now, to me it is comforting to know that God knows exactly what He has in mind for me, for my life, for whatever ministry He might have for me. God already does know, has always known, that which He had planned and purposed for me to do and to be. And in the meantime, God is working in me preparing me for that work that He has already before ordained that I should fulfill for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when you get to be my age and you are on the other side of the hill, it is easy to look back upon all of the trials, upon all of the hardships, upon all of the testings and say, "Oh, I can see what God was doing. I can see how God was working in my life. Oh, I see the reason for that experience." From my perspective I can look back and see how God was preparing me, working in my life, preparing me for that work that He had in mind for me to do. Now believe me, I had no idea what God had in mind for me. In my wildest imagination or dream or ambition or hope or whatever, I had no dream or idea what God had in mind.

In fact, when I was in seminary we were taught that you can only hold (on a consistent basis) five-sixths of the seating capacity of your church auditorium. So in designing your auditorium, you need to design it a little larger than what your actual needs are. In other words, you take your needs and add one-sixth and then you take what your goal is and then add a sixth, and you will be able to maintain only five-sixths of the seating capacity. So when we built the first chapel, we built it for 300 because my dream was to one day pastor a church of 250 people. That was my ambition—my life's goal and desire. Now I had been pastoring for about seventeen years and I

had never attained that. But I thought, “Oh how glorious it would be to have a church of 250 people!”

So according to the rulebook, we built our auditorium for 300. I had no idea what God had in mind, no concept at all. In looking back at the seventeen years of hard labor with very little to show for it, I can see how in all of that, God was preparing me for the work He was wanting to do. He allowed me to experience failure for seventeen years as I followed every program that came down the pike. I used all of my skills and abilities that I had developed and learned in college, and then later on through experience. And He let me run on the treadmill for seventeen years to prepare me for the work that He had in mind to do. I was so sick and tired of the treadmill, I was so sick and tired of church programs, I was so sick and tired of pushing people, and I was so sick and tired of artificial life-support systems for practically everything in the church. I determined that I was going to let everything die a natural death and not keep the life-support systems on anything. I thought, “If it does not and cannot function on its own, let it die. I am tired of trying to keep these programs alive in the church. I am tired of trying to build the church.”

When we came to Calvary Chapel, after seventeen years of pastoring, there were only 25 people. For the seventeen years that I had been pastoring, I always worked apart from the church in various jobs. When I first came down to pastor Calvary Chapel, I was doing mobile home repairs. I was building cabanas and cleaning trailers and repairing trailers, and all because the church could not pay me adequately to take care of the family needs. We had three kids in high school, so I determined that though we just had 25 people, I would make them the most knowledgeable people in God’s Word in the whole area. I was just going to teach them the Word of God.

There is a Scripture that describes it as teaching and showing. Paul is talking about his ministry to the Ephesians in [Acts 20:31–36](#). He is talking to the elders and he reminds them that for the space of three and a half years he taught and he showed them things (sort of a show-and-tell kind of thing) with the ministry. Your life has to be the example of what you are saying.

And God began to make these people the most knowledgeable people in the area, as far as His Word was concerned. And as they began to grow in the knowledge of God, they began to share that knowledge of God with others and others became interested. And of course, the rest is just a matter of history—what God has done.

And in looking at it I realize that the basic mistake that I had been making for so many years was that, number one: I was seeking to build the church of Jesus Christ through programs, through contests, and through all kinds of devices. I was seeking to build the church of Jesus Christ. And yet, when Jesus was talking about His church to Peter, He said, “On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” ([Matthew 16:18](#)).

Now, there are two ways to build a church. One is by programs. And if you are the “hype type” you can hype the people up in a program. You can set your goals and you can push and you can push and you can get a crowd of people. But I have discovered that if you strive to gain, then you have to continue to strive to maintain, and that can kill you. There are so many pastors around the county who are just being driven into the ground because they are striving to maintain since they strove to gain.

Now, when you do not strive to gain, you do not have to strive to maintain. So the words of Jesus are true when He said, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” ([Matthew 11:30](#)). People are saying, “I do not know how you can pastor a church with that many people.” I do not know either, but in reality, I consider that I have an easy yoke. I have a light burden because we did not strive

to gain and thus, we do not have to strive to maintain. It is in the Lord's hands. He is the one who did it. It is His responsibility. Of course the seventeen years of failure were important, so that when God did His work there was no way that we could take credit for it. We now know all we can do with our best efforts is fail. And we know what God can do when we get tired and over the hill. We can see what God has done and rejoice in what God has done and not try to take credit for it.

Now, in the whole experience I came to a very drastic change of philosophy in regards to the church. And I think that this is extremely important as we talk now about the ministry, the church, and the purpose of the church. Once a year when we were in seminary, Oswald J. Smith, the pastor of the People's Church in Toronto, Canada, which was one of the greatest missionary giving churches in the world, would come to the seminary and have a missionary emphasis week. And I was very much taken by Oswald J. Smith. He was a very dynamic man. He had the People's Church that his son Paul now pastors in Toronto, which has always been a model church as far as its missionary giving. I read every book that Oswald J. Smith wrote. I availed myself of every opportunity to hear him speak. There was one thing that he kept emphasizing over and over again, and it was also emphasized over and over again in the seminary that I attended. I can just close my eyes and hear him say it now: "The primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world. The church exists to evangelize the world." And that was just drummed into my head and I believed it. I believed it for years that the church exists primarily to evangelize the world. That is the primary purpose of the church. And thus, for the first seventeen years of my ministry, I sought to evangelize the world. And most of my sermons were evangelistic sermons. I endeavored to preach God's Good News to the people.

My wife sought to help me and she would say, "Honey, you are just not dynamic enough. Now watch Billy Graham. He does not just stand behind the pulpit. He moves around." And of course, in those days he would pick up the microphone and walk back and forth across the platform with a microphone and stand there and hold it out in front of him. She said, "Now watch him. He moves around. He is active and he is dynamic and you just are not dynamic enough."

So I decided that I would try to be more dynamic. And as I was preaching my message, if I decided to emphasize a point, I would walk over to the side of the platform and give it the old emphatic hand gesture. And so, I walked on over to the side and started to give it the emphatic gestures and I became so self-conscious that my mind went blank. And I could not even remember the point I was going to make. I was just standing there and I really could not think of a single thing to say. I stood there for just a few moments, trying to think, but my mind was just playing games with me and just flipping up blank cards. So I had to walk back to the pulpit and look down at my notes and get myself back together. And that is the last pulpit walk I took and the last time I tried to be dynamic.

Now because the denomination we were in had evangelism as that constant goad, when we filled out our reports the very first little box was, "how many souls saved?" The second was "how many baptized?" And we were always measured by our effectiveness in winning souls to Jesus Christ. If ever we were to be considered for another church, a larger church, they would always get out the records and see how many people had accepted the Lord and how effective we were in our evangelism and all. And we knew that that was the criteria. So man, we really pushed to get people to accept the Lord and my sermons were all evangelistic. And we would count the little kids that raised their hands and all of this kind of stuff, so that we would look good on the reports.

Now one of the most frustrating things that I found in the ministry was that often times the Lord would give to me a fantastic evangelistic sermon. Oh man, it was so powerful it could convince

the hardest sinner that he needed to repent and receive Jesus Christ. And I would be so excited with the message because surely no one would be able to resist coming to Christ when they heard this message. I would go to church on Sunday night with this message burning in my heart and I would look around and I knew everyone by first name. There was not a sinner in the house! And if you want to know something that is really frustrating, it is to have a powerful evangelistic sermon burning in your heart and not a sinner to preach it to. They were all saints.

Well, that would upset me. And so, I would start adding a little bit to my sermon that was not in the notes about how they were failing in their Christian walk and life. If they were doing what God would have them to be doing, they would have been inviting their neighbors and friends to church that evening. “You are not really being witnesses for Jesus Christ. You are just taking it yourself, enjoying it yourself. You ought to be out witnessing to others and sharing the gospel with others.” And I was beginning to lay on them their failure. Well, they knew what I was saying was true. They knew that they were not all they should be. And of course they would start getting the guilts. There was no use asking people to be saved, so I would ask them to really commit their lives to the Lord and all. I knew I could get someone forward if I just made the appeal general enough because well, that was just the way it was. The success of the sermon was always measured by the amount of emotion that was demonstrated at the altar after the sermon. I mean, that was how we could tell whether the sermon was successful or not—how many people were saved and then how many were really crying. That was how they measured how powerful a sermon was preached.

Now, what I was very successful in doing was creating a lot of guilt-ridden, frustrated saints and they were guilt-ridden because I was laying a guilt trip on them. “You are not what you should be.” And they knew it. “Oh, I know. God, I am such a failure.” But also they were frustrated. “God, I want to be better. God, I want to serve You. God, I want to be a witness. But I just do not know how.”

And you see, it all came back to me. They did not know how because all they knew was Jesus died for their sins. All they knew was that they were to repent from sin and receive Jesus Christ. That is all I ever preached to them in a hundred various forms, but basically that was the message. So they did not know anything beyond repentance, receiving Jesus, and being baptized. That is about all they knew. Come get hands laid on you if you get sick. They knew nothing about walking in the Spirit. They knew nothing about growing and maturing in Christ because I never taught them those things. So I was guilty of keeping them in spiritual infancy and then jumping on their cases because they were still little babies when they should have been grown up. “You have been around here for years and you are still sucking your thumbs and shaking the rattles when you ought to be mature and grown up.” But you see, they could not mature on what I was teaching them or preaching to them.

Now, I only had a certain number of evangelistic sermons and so it was necessary that I change churches about every two years because in that length of time when you have services on Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night, I would just about run out of evangelistic messages. And I finally ended up in Huntington Beach and we were there for two years. I really did not want to move because we really liked Huntington Beach. I had a good job with Alpha Beta, working in the store in the packinghouse there. I had excellent hours. I was also working for Smith’s Mortuary in Huntington Beach and I was going out and picking up bodies. And it was pretty neat because I got five dollars a body which usually came in real handy. Then I was driving a flower car or preaching the sermons or singing the solos or whatever they needed at the mortuary. And we loved Huntington Beach. It was a small little town of 6,000 people. We knew everybody in

town and they all knew us. Of course, going down and surfing every morning was an extra blessing. And I did not want to leave, but I had run out of sermons. My two years were up.

Then I came across Griffith Thomas's book, *The Apostle John*, in my library and I began to read it. Now one of the hardest things I always had in the ministry was finding a sermon for Sunday morning and Sunday night. It was hard because when you are looking for a text and there is this whole Bible to look through, it is an awful lot to look through to find a text. And I would usually go through and just read and try and find a text for my sermon. The hardest thing was finding a text, finding something to preach on week after week. Well, Thomas had some real classic outline studies of 1 John. And I looked at those and I thought, "Wow, those are neat outlines." I counted them and I realized I had almost a whole year of Sunday morning sermons and I was really excited. So I announced to the people that we were going to start a study in 1 John on Sunday mornings. And I started this study of 1 John.

Well, the people started to grow. They started to mature. They were getting something besides evangelistic sermons now. I was not laying the heavy guilt trip on them anymore. And as they started to grow, their lives started being witnesses. And their friends started to come with them. They began to get excited about the Word. By the time I was through with 1 John, our church had doubled. We did not have to have any contests or anything, which we were always pushing in those days.

Of course, as I got into 1 John I found that I did not like all of Thomas's outlines, so I started making some of my own outlines. And man, this was exciting! I started buying other commentaries on 1 John. I started using *The Pulpit Commentary*, really doing some background study and all. And it really became, to me, a very exciting thing—I learned so much.

So then, a professor in seminary said, "If you want to revolutionize a church, study the book of Romans." So I thought, "Well, that will be exciting. Let's study the book of Romans." And I will tell you, it revolutionized me more than the church, because I came to an understanding of the grace of God that I had never had before. It also revolutionized the church.

But through this, I realized that I did not fit with the denomination. I knew that I was going to have to make a break. God was developing His work in my own life. I was reading in 1 Corinthians where one says, "I am of Cephas, another says I am of Apollos, another says I am of Paul. Is Christ divided?" (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:12-13](#)). And I saw that this "party spirit" was really spiritual carnality. The emphasis on denominational loyalty and all this kind of stuff, was only pandering to people's party spirit which is carnal. We were failing to see the whole body of Christ. I read where G. Campbell Morgan said, "I have discovered that the more spiritual a man becomes the less denominational he is." And I found myself becoming very nondenominational. Instead I was just seeking the kingdom of God, and seeking to serve the kingdom of God and not just our little church.

Well, God began to revolutionize, of course, my own ministry. It became a lot easier. I did not have to go through the whole Bible to find a text anymore. I knew where I was going to have to preach from, and so I would just do all my research and study in that area. It is a lot easier to preach out of just consistently going through books than it is to search the whole Bible. Suddenly we had a lot of baptisms and everything else, because the people were growing. And so the supervisor sent me to a larger church. And we had started this new method of teaching, so we just continued it. And God blessed this church that we were in. And so they sent us to another church. And about that time, I realized that I just did not fit their mold anymore. It was time to get out and go on my own.

Now all of this was a radical departure for me because somehow, I had slowly gone away from the concept of the primary purpose of the church being the evangelization of the world. And I almost felt subconsciously guilty because I was not preaching so many evangelistic messages. But this was so natural to me, so easy for me to just teach.

And then as I was reading in Ephesians 4, the Holy Spirit really opened up my eyes to the real purpose of the church. And I began to see what the real purpose of the church was not. The church did not exist for evangelism, but the church existed for the church's sake. Now, Paul is saying in Ephesians,

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. ([Ephesians 4:7–11](#), KJV)

So these various gifts, or ministry gifts, are for what purpose?— “For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry” ([Ephesians 4:12](#)). And I began to see that the church existed for the purpose of the perfecting of the saints.

You see, unfortunately most of my sermons were for the person who was not there, the person who should have been sitting in that pew but was home. He was the one that I was really lambasting, but he was not hearing it. These poor, precious saints that came out to get fed were hearing it, but they did not need it! They did not need the beating that I was administering; they were there! I was decrying how horrible it was that the churches were empty, and who was I telling but these blessed people who were there.

And so I began to minister to the church, forgetting about numbers. From the time I was a little kid, we always had a Sunday school board up there and counted how many we had in Sunday school this Sunday, and how many we had last Sunday, and how many we had a year ago, and what the offering was. We took that board out. Of course there were a lot of cries. They said I was a revolutionary. And a lot of these people were traditional and they said, “We have always had a board up there.” I said, “Get your eyes off of numbers and get your eyes on Jesus. Let's forget about numbers. Let's just get into the Lord. Let's become perfected.”

Now the word “perfect” in the Greek is literally, “of full age or full maturity.” So the purpose of the church is to bring the saints into a full maturity in their walk and in their experience with Jesus Christ.

This is something I had never done for the saints. My messages were not designed to do this. There was nothing consistent about my preaching at all—except its inconsistency. It is because one week I would be inspired by a text in Genesis and the next week I would have a message out of Ephesians; the following week out of Jeremiah; the following week out of Revelation; the following week out of Isaiah; and the following week out of Mark. I was just jumping all over and the people were eating hodge-podge every Sunday. Nothing was consistent. There was no plan by which they could have a consistent growth in their knowledge and their understanding of the

Word of God. But when I started going through books and doing book studies, by the time we were through with that book, they had a good understanding of what that book was all about. There was a consistency in their growth now. They were being fed a diet that promoted spiritual growth in the believer.

And then of course, we started this through the entire Bible so that the people could get a bird's-eye view of the whole of Scripture. Most of my congregation had been Christians, going to church all of their lives, and the average age was probably 30 or so. I asked them, "How many of you have read the Bible all the way through?" And not one of them raised their hand. I said, "We are going to start reading the Bible all the way through together. We will start in Genesis and take the first ten chapters of Genesis and go straight through." Now the people began to get an overall view of the Word, and it helped them to better understand the particular sections of the books that we were studying.

You see, if you have a single piece of a jigsaw puzzle and you look at that one little piece and you try to figure out what in the world is this all about, it is difficult. You are thinking, "I do not understand these colors. I do not understand these little leaves. I do not understand this. That just does not make any sense to me." But if you have the whole picture and this is the last piece, when you fit it into its place, then you see how it relates to the total picture. You say, "Oh yes, I see. It all makes sense." Now you see, too often people are picking out one little verse and saying, "I do not understand this. I do not understand how God could command Abraham to offer his son as a living sacrifice." Well, you take that one little part and of course you cannot understand it. But if you fit it in with the whole picture, you see that it is beautiful. You say, "Oh wow! Far out! Whew!" It is exciting when you see how it fits in the total picture. But that is the problem. People are taking just isolated parts and trying to understand them, and you cannot. You need to see it in its whole.

So we started teaching people the Word of God, as it says here, "For the perfecting of the saints," bringing them into full maturity, "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying"—and the word means *to build up*—the building up of the body of Christ. I had never done that in my ministry before. I had never been interested in doing that in my ministry. I never thought of doing that in my ministry before because I had believed that the primary purpose of the church is evangelization of the world. I was more interested in the guys in the bars that were not coming to church than these people who were there faithfully Sunday by Sunday. And I was really neglecting the church because of this burning desire to win souls for Jesus Christ. But I was not really effectively winning souls for Jesus Christ, so I was frustrated and the people were frustrated.

Now, what we discovered is that as the people began to be strong in the Word, as the people began to understand the Scriptures, as they began to grow in their own experience in Christ, as they began to mature in Christ, Christ became their lives. Witnessing was no longer some difficult thing that they had to do. It became a very natural thing for them to do. Witnessing is just very natural because Christ is your life. So if you are going to share anything, what are you going to share? You are going to share your life. And as they began to naturally witness, rather than nervously—"Do you know the four spiritual laws?"—and going through the program, their witness became a very natural thing. And as a result, people began to come and accept Christ. For you see, the body was being perfected for the work of the ministry. They were beginning now to minister as they had come into this maturity in Christ.

So I came to a realization: 1) sick sheep cannot beget sheep. They cannot reproduce no matter how much you beat them. And what I was doing was beating sick sheep week after week.



I also found there was a corollary: 2) healthy sheep just reproduce naturally. It is the natural function of a healthy sheep to reproduce. So as the sheep became healthy and strong, they just began to reproduce. It is not something you have to push them to do or encourage them or coax them or whatever, it is just a natural function of healthy sheep, to reproduce. So evangelism of the world is the byproduct of a healthy body. If the church is strong and healthy, there will be evangelism. People will be brought to Jesus Christ. So my whole emphasis of ministry changed and the whole philosophy of the church changed. I saw the purpose of our gathering together. We do not gather here to evangelize the world. We gather here to be built up in Jesus Christ. We gather here to be brought into a maturity in our walk with Him and in our relationship to Him. There was a whole change of philosophy, as we began to develop healthy sheep.

Now, Paul says that this is why God has given evangelists, prophets, pastors, teachers, and apostles. This is the purpose of the whole thing: “To perfect the saints for the work of the ministry and the building up of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith to the knowledge of the Son of God unto the complete man, into full maturity” (cf. [Ephesians 4:12–13](#)). We began bringing these people into full maturity.

Now if you have a Bible class, concentrate on those who are there in bringing them into a full maturity. May God deliver us from the bondage of numbers and counting heads. What is more important than the number is that there is the quality of the Word that is coming to them. That is what is important—to make sure that if there are one or two there—that they are being enriched in God’s truth and in God’s Word. This leads them unto the fully matured man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. We are to bring them on into the image of Jesus Christ, through the Word so that “they no longer are like children who are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (cf. [Ephesians 4:13–14](#)).

A church that does not have a strong biblical base, a strong biblical teaching, these people are going to be the prey for every pied piper that comes along tooting some new doctrine. And believe me, the world is full of these guys—guys that just sit and think of some new kind of a gimmick in order to attract people to themselves and to their ministries. And if people are not strong and taught in the Word, if they are experience-oriented and all, they are really easy prey.

There is here in Orange County, a floating congregation. They just float from one meeting to another. They hear that everything is “cooking” over here right now. They all float over there. And then they get sort of fed up with that one, or it gets old, and then they hear that something is happening at another church. And poof, they all go over there. And here this pastor is wondering, “What happened to my congregation?” And there are several hundred here in Orange County who are floaters. They have no foundation in the Word. They have no real understanding of the Word. Every new little gimmick or whatever comes along—there they go. It is sad because they become victims of these men who, through their cunning craftiness are just waiting there to deceive them, and boy, they get taken. These guys get up with these offering pleas and all. “God is just broke. He is filing bankruptcy next Monday unless you give tonight.” And these poor immature believers get fleeced everywhere they go.

Jesus said, “Feed My sheep” ([John 21:17](#)). But there are so many shepherds are out there to fleece the sheep. They measure a congregation and they can tell you just how much money they can milk out of that congregation. In fact, they come down here to Calvary on Thursday night and see this place full, and they cannot believe that we do not take an offering. “Do you know how much you could get?” We are not interested in what we can get. We are interested in what we can give.

Now, if we are faithful in giving, God will also be faithful in supplying for us. When God guides, God provides. God does not need our help. God does not need our support. We need His help and His support. I would not serve a God that I had to support.

“But speaking the truth in love...” And there is the secret. Sometimes the truth cuts, sometimes the truth is harsh, but we have to speak it. But it is important that when we speak it that we speak it in love. “Speaking the truth in love that they may grow up into Him, into Christ, in all things” (cf. [Ephesians 4:15](#)).

Now there is another passage of Scripture in Hebrews 6 that the Lord used to confirm this whole new philosophy of the church that He had given to me. It was such a change from what I had been taught in school and had been drilled into me, that it was awfully hard for me not to feel guilty for a long time for not preaching evangelistic sermons. But in Hebrews 6 he declares:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. ([Hebrews 6:1–3](#), KJV)

Let us quit preaching the hell fire and the resurrection of the dead and all of this. Let us go on into a full maturity. Let us take the people into full maturity. Let us not be laying again over and over and over and over these first principles of the doctrines of Christ. It is important that we lay them. Let us lay them, but then let us go on. Let us develop the people into a full maturity in Christ Jesus. And that, of course, can only be done through the Word of God and a consistent study of the Word of God.

Now the early church was, by far, the most successful that the church has ever been in all of its history. The early church, within its generation, had reached the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul, in writing to the Colossians said, “And the word of Christ which has come to you, which it has in all of the world” (cf. [Colossians 1:5–6](#)). They had reached the whole world. They started out with just 120 on the Day of Pentecost, but soon the whole world was touched with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have been going down hill ever since.

Now a part of the reason for this downhill trend is the fact that we have sought to substitute seminaries, education, and all of these things, for the Holy Spirit. “We really do not need the Holy Spirit anymore,” you will hear taught and declared. “They needed the Holy Spirit then because they did not have the seminaries and seminary training, and thus they needed the Holy Spirit. But now that we have these marvelous educational institutes and all, we do not really need the power or the help of the Holy Spirit anymore. God has just sort of turned the job over to us.” And that is, in my mind, one of the reasons why the church is failing.

Now, the unfortunate part is that those who claim the Holy Spirit, the gifts and the power, are so weak in the teaching of the Word that the people remain very shallow.

The Pentecostal Church’s greatest weakness is the lack of the solid consistent teaching of the Word of God. You can go and get preached at, but preaching is really for the unconverted. Once a person has received Jesus Christ they do not need to be preached at anymore. What they need is to be taught. “God has chosen that through the foolishness of preaching, men should believe the gospel” (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:21](#)). But once they believe the gospel, then they need to be taught the

walk in Jesus Christ. So there is a place for preaching—that is to the unconverted. But once a person is converted, then the teaching of the Word of God is what is so vital.

So we always look back at the early church as the model, the model of success. In [Acts 2:42](#), when the church was born, after the experience on the Day of Pentecost when all of these people had gladly received the word and were baptized (about 3,000 of them) it says: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

These are the four functions of the early church: 1) is the apostles' doctrine, or the teaching, the solid teaching of the Word of God. They continued steadfastly in the teaching of God's Word.

2) They were in fellowship. It is an interesting Greek word that we cannot really translate into English. We do not have any English equivalent to *koinonia*. It means a oneness, it means a communion, it means a fellowship—all of them. Bunch them all up into one. It is the fellowship of oneness where you become really a part of each other, sharing together the life of Christ. And this is what we need to be developing within the church, the *koinonia*, or the concern in the body for one another. It is the recognition of the body and its inter-relationship to itself and the importance of every aspect of the body in order to be a total, whole body—a complete body. And what we need to be developing is this love amongst each other that comes into a godly concern for one another. The body, where one member suffers they all suffer, and where one is exalted they are all exalted. And we will begin to really develop this kind of closeness, communion, fellowship, care and concern for each other.

That is why I am so strong on home Bible studies. When I left the denomination and decided I was just going to start over again in the ministry, from the beginning, I was teaching five home Bible studies. And I thought that my ministry was going to be just a teacher in home Bible studies. I thought, “That is it.” I started contracting and building to supply for the needs of the family, and then in the evenings I would go out and teach these home Bible studies. And I was, at that time, saying, “Well, the church started in the homes and it will probably end in the homes,” because we were seeing such phenomenal results in these home Bible studies. We were seeing lives changed. We were seeing the real fellowship, the oneness, the *koinonia*, developing among these people within these home Bible study fellowships. They were fabulous. I loved them. The only problem is the home soon became too small, as more people were wanting to come than we could fit into the homes.

We were meeting in a home out in Corona. And these people said, “We are just getting fat in the Word. We are just being so blessed. We ought to be doing something. It is not right that we just sit here week after week and just get so fat in the Word. We ought to be doing something.” So, they said, “Let's form a corporation—Corona Christian Association. And we will start tithing into it. And we will sponsor a daily radio broadcast on KREL.” So they formed Corona Christian Association, started tithing into it and sponsored me for fifteen minutes on the radio out there in Corona. We had been announcing that there was a group of nondenominational Christians meeting together to study the Word of God on Tuesday evenings over at this home in Corona. When I got there Tuesday night for Bible study, there was no place to park my car in the neighborhood. I had to park it up the street on the next block. And I thought, “Wow, they must be having a block party here today, or something.” And when I got down to the house where we were having the meeting, I saw the people standing out in the yard, out in front and all, and I said, “What is going on?” And they said, “Well, there is a Bible study here tonight.” I said, “You mean you are all here for the Bible study?” “Yeah.” Well, we decided then that we better start renting the American Legion Hall there in Corona, and out of it a church grew.

These Bible studies are great, because they are an excellent way of developing this *koinonia*. You need the small groups for that.

3) Breaking of bread: Now this a beautiful thing about the breaking of bread; it was far more meaningful to them than it is to us today. Eating together is not something that you just do casually in the Jewish culture in society. Eating together is really a very significant act. Breaking bread together is an extremely significant act. It is an act that symbolizes your lives becoming a part of each other. Because I am eating a piece of this bread and you are eating a piece of this bread, so that the same bread that is nourishing me is now nourishing you. That same bread which is being assimilated by my body and becoming a part of my body is becoming a part of your body. And if a part of my body is now becoming a part of your body, we are becoming a part of each other because we are partaking of the same bread, we are drinking from the same cup.

That is why the Jew would never eat with a Gentile because there was no way that the Jew wanted to become a part of a Gentile, or to have a Gentile become a part of him. And that is why, even in the early church there was a big stink over this. When Peter came down to Antioch, he was eating with the Gentiles, before certain brethren came down from Jerusalem. But when they came down, he did not want them to know that he had been eating with the Gentiles because then they would not want to eat with him—since he had been eating with Gentiles. “And if I eat with you then I become a part of you and you are a part of a Gentile.” And so it was a heavy-duty thing. And Paul had to stand up and rebuke Peter openly over this because it created quite a dissention there in the church.

Now in this breaking of bread together, in the taking of the bread and taking of the cup, you see, it means that I am being nourished by Jesus Christ. But it also means you are being nourished by Jesus Christ. And if we are both being nourished by the same source—I am assimilating and He is becoming a part of my life. He is also becoming a part of your life. Our lives are becoming a part of each other through Jesus Christ, you see. This is what *koinonia* is all about, becoming a part of each other in Jesus Christ. That is true *koinonia* and it is expressed probably best in breaking of bread together, if you understand the oriental mind in that.

4) And in prayer: the fourth aspect of the early church was the prayers. Now of course, we pointed this out as the first characteristic of the man whom God uses; he is a man of prayer. And one of the vital functions of the early church was its prayer, the prayer meetings, praying together for the common good of the body, and praying together for the needs of the community. Prayer.

We have looked at four things: study the Word, which is the apostles’ doctrine; *koinonia*; breaking of bread; and prayer (cf. [Acts 2:41-42](#)). Now, this is what the church was doing. This is what the church was. It did not say anything about visitation committees, choir rehearsals, or all of the stuff that has become so much a part of the church today. It does not say anything about any of those—enlargement programs or pledge committees. But down at the end of the chapter it does say, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” ([Acts 2:47](#)).

Now here you have the key for the success of the early church. But it is also a key for success for the church today. When the church becomes what God wants it to be—a place of the study of the Word, a place of the *koinonia* developing among it, as we enter into that covenant, breaking of bread together, and as we are praying together—as the church becomes what God wants the church to be, then God will do what He is desiring to do for the church. That is, He will add daily to the church such as should be saved.

That is not the church's task, to mobilize for evangelism. And yet over and over and over we hear of mobilization for evangelism. No! When we become what God wants us to be, God will do what He is wanting to do, He will add daily. That is God's business. Jesus said, "I will build My church" ([Matthew 16:18](#)). That is His business. My business is not to build the church of Jesus Christ. My job is not to go out and conscript people to come. My business is to minister God's Word, God's love, to God's people through the anointing of the Spirit. And the work of the Spirit through the Word of God in the lives of the believers of God, is the thing that makes for success in the church.

Now there are churches that have the Word, but no Spirit and they are sterile. There are churches that have the Spirit, but no Word. But when you get the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God in the lives of the believers of God, then you have a combination that will light a fire anywhere. And it will grow. God will add to the church daily those that should be saved.

Now this is not a "get rich quick" kind of a program. This is not one of those overnight phenomenal successes. This is more like the penny double. You do not see much at the beginning because you are laying a foundation. It takes a while to build these people up in the Word. It takes a while to bring them into maturity. And so you are apt to go along for quite awhile with just a smaller group, but you are all the while laying the foundation of the Word of God and you are praying and you are developing this *koinonia*. And God is working, perfecting the saints, building them up and bringing them into maturity. And then, when you hit this level where they begin to come into maturity, then is when they begin to share their faith with others and you get a new group in. And then you start the same thing again—laying the foundations, bringing them into maturity. And then, when they get to maturity, they start bringing their friends in and soon you are doubling again. And then you work with them as you build them up in Christ and bring them on into maturity. And then they go out and bring their friends. And you can look at Calvary's growth and it comes in sort of stair-step spurts. Where you start out, the first day you make a penny. Second day you make two pennies. Third day you make four pennies. Fourth day you make eight pennies. Fifth day you make sixteen. Then you make thirty-two. And by the end of the month, you are a millionaire, on the penny double system.

Now with the church, it is an exponential type of a growth. You do not see rapid, overnight kind of success. And that is why a lot of people do not follow this because they are looking for—"I want a hundred in church tomorrow." And so they get a big evangelist or get a big-name movie star or something to get a crowd. Well, you get all these little lookie-loos and these floaters that are going around, but the problem is then you have to get someone more sensational with a bigger name and all. And you get into a trap. And then you have to strive to maintain that whole thing and that becomes a heavy, heavy thing.

It is better, much better, to just follow the scriptural pattern. It is a little slower, but in the long run it is much bigger and much stronger.

Now Jesus said to His disciples,

"You have not chosen Me. I have chosen you and ordained you that you should be My disciples, that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain" (cf. [John 15:16](#)).

You see, there are two things I want: not just to bring forth fruit, but I want fruit that remains, lasting fruit from the ministry. And that will come through the Word. God bless you!