

**My Years  
As A New  
Testament  
Baptist Preacher**

By Roger D. Reed

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## **Dedication**

*To my God and Saviour Jesus Christ  
Who called me to do a work  
here on earth, and has led  
me to do His will and helped  
me in times of distress and  
forgiven me in my times  
of disobedience.*

*And*

*To my beautiful  
and loving wife Joan, who has  
put up with me and stood by me  
as she has seen the things  
I have gone through  
over the years as a pastor.  
I couldn't imagine having anyone  
but her to stand by me for  
the last 47 years.*



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## Forward

**Proverbs 1:2-5, 7-8 - “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: ... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father...”**

What a privilege it is to write this introduction to Brother Roger’s insightful book for young preachers! I had considered myself to still be “one of the young guys”, but if I’m writing the Forward, then I must have somehow slipped out of the “young guy” category...

Brother Roger’s writing is always “sitting on the edge of the seat” stuff. As you read this book, you’re not going to be short-changed. He’s really lived the life that he’s writing about. There’s a lot of personal information in the following pages, but that’s what it takes to make it “real” to us as we read it. He drives home every point with a “been there, done that” reality that rings true and brings us full-circle to face the most important person in the world, Jesus Christ.

My dear friend has an invaluable, pithy approach of dissecting the many problems that are facing our young generation of preachers; and in the following chapters, he provides sage solutions to exalt our Blessed Saviour and avoid the devil’s traps. It’s easy to tell what Brother

Roger's priorities have been through the years as he relates his trials and tribulations, and also his triumphs and steadfast stand for the glory of God; his priorities are Jesus Christ and the Gospel!

Practical, practical, practical! If you're looking for arguments and debates on doctrinal matters, this is the wrong book; but if you want to make application of wisdom and common sense in a pastor's life, then Elder Roger Reed has written just for you. He doesn't beat around the bush, for sure! Some might shrink back at his sometimes-acidic writing style, but no one can deny his candid stand for the Truth, and that's what makes this straight-forward book so special and valuable to Baptists in these politically correct times.

**Ecclesiastes 12:10-12 - "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies ... And further, by these, my son, be admonished...*"**

Take my advice, and read the book and take up Brother Roger's advice as godly instructions that are guided by God's Word and his many years of service to his Precious Master, Jesus Christ.

*Pastor Matthew Stepp  
Big Creek Baptist Church  
Wayne, West Virginia, USA  
March 21, 2018*



## **Introduction**

I am now in my 29<sup>th</sup> year as a Baptist preacher. Not just any old Baptist preacher, but a New Testament sovereign grace Baptist preacher. To some this may mean little, but to those that are of the same “like faith and practice” it speaks volumes.

Some may wonder why the need for such a book? Well I believe two reasons may be given. The first is that when the Lord has burdened me with any kind of writing, I can’t get it out of my head until it is on paper. The second reason is that I asked the same question, “Why the need for such a book?” As I have pondered that question for a couple of months, to me the answer is, “...because of the awful state many church members are in and the proverbial wool that people try and pull over the preachers’ eyes.” Also the experiences that I have encountered may just help those young men (older men as well) that the Lord has recently called to the ministry. My hopes are not to scare them off, but to let them see certain circumstances which they may encounter.

I recently made the statement to a fellow Baptist preacher, “I wonder if we wrote a book about our experiences as Baptist preachers, if anyone would read it?” So that is how the idea for this book came about.

One of the problems is trying to write each situation that I have experienced without

mentioning names, so I just won't use any. But if it so happens it sounds like you, well, all I can say is, "If the shoe fits..." I am not writing this to cast judgment on any, but only to relate the facts as they happened and how well I did (or did not) handle them. Most of the time it was not very well, but I've learned and I would like to pass that on to others.

I will tell you that Baptist church members are the stubbornest and the most hard-headed people I have ever met, myself included. After all I was once a member of a Baptist church before the Lord called me to preach-and still am! My first pastor, the late Oscar B. Mink, used to tell me, "Brother Roger, you are like a bull in a china shop; you just run head-on into any situation". Well, he was right; what can I say! I think he would be proud, though, of how I have progressed and tried to incorporate many of the things he tried to teach me. I wish he were still around. I really miss him, as well as some others.

My intent is not at all to offend anyone, and if you are offended because you might say "Well, he's talking about me", just remember these are my experiences not yours. I like to remind people of this passage (**Psalm 119:165 KJV**) "**Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.**" So, again, I'll just say, "If the shoe fits..." My hope is that if it does, you will seek God's help to remedy the situation. Let us cast off our earthly shoes!

This book will be to the best of my knowledge what the Lord will help me remember over the last 29 years, from the day I was ordained until this present day. And if the rapture were to happen before it's finished, then my mind will be at ease and I'll be glad these things will now be on paper and not stuck in my head. May the Lord be pleased to use the words in this book until He does return. May God bless all who have the opportunity to read the pages written herein. God Bless!

Roger D. Reed  
December 15, 2014



## Chapter One

### Acknowledgments

**(Hebrews 4:16 KJV) "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."**

Before I get into the heart of this book, I would like the reader to know about those men that have had, and are now having, a major influence in my ministry. There have been four men that have had a major impact on my life and two that were a hindrance to it. Three of the four that I will name, I have been blessed to have as my pastors. To make a note here, I will exclude all names of churches that I have been affiliated with, so as not to bring any attention to them personally. Some of the subject matter in this book will be quite unbelievable and I have no intention to offend any, as I stated in the introduction, but I will name the preachers that have helped me the most, early on and currently now in my ministry.

My first pastor was the late Elder Oscar B. Mink who baptized me by the authority of the church he pastored. We butted heads sometimes, but by sticking with those rough times, he helped me tremendously later on in my early ministry. We had a wonderful relationship and had many conversations over the phone, up until he got sick. The second man was the late Elder Milburn Cockrell, who helped me see some

of my errors and helped me through some of my heartaches. He was the preacher who moderated my ordination and was the pastor of the church we had a mission out of.

The third man was Elder Ray Sexton who was the mission pastor for the above mentioned mission work I was involved with. I came to know Brother Ray at one of the earlier churches where I was a member, which I helped organize with the authority of another New Testament Baptist Church. He was the preacher we called and he accepted and became our pastor. Just a brief mention, Brother Ray and I got off on shaky ground because of my hardheadedness. The church at that time disbanded and we all were left out in the cold, including Brother Ray. Then, when a mission was organized by the authority of Berea Baptist Church, Mantachie, Mississippi under the leadership of Brother Ray, I reconciled with Brother Ray, asking his forgiveness and we have had a wonderful relationship from that point on, even up to this present day.

The last Baptist preacher I have known for many years, who was not one of my pastors, but who has been a father figure to me is Elder Doyal Thomas. He helped me many times to see things that I struggled with and helped show me the proper way of doing things in the New Testament Church. He is a very wise and studious man who loves the Lord, as do the others I have and will mention.

As I mentioned, there were two Baptist preachers that were a hindrance to me and I will

not bring attention to them. I will just say this of them. I did learn one thing from them. What I learned is how NOT to behave as a Baptist preacher. I believe God teaches us even though those experiences are not to our liking.

I now want to mention two other preachers that I have learned to love and respect that have really been there for me and helped me through these present day challenges. The first is my pastor, at the writing of this book, because I am the missionary sent out from the church he pastors. He is Elder Matthew Stepp, who has become more than just my pastor, but a wonderful Christian brother to me and a good friend. We communicate on the average of once a week. We have known each other for years, but have drawn much closer since the mission work began. Last, but not least, is Elder Jerry Asberry whom I have only had the pleasure of knowing for a short time, three years I believe, but have come to dearly love. He is down to earth and has street-smart sense that is needed in this world and is also a very wise individual. *(Since the writing of this chapter, the Lord has taken Brother Jerry home and he is very much missed).*

These men, with their good or bad influences, have had the most impact on my life and have helped shape the preacher I am today. I could say more, but I'm sure their names will come up throughout the course of this book. Of course, it goes without saying, even though these men have been a help and have had a major role in my ministry, all credit goes to my

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has been there for me every step of the way. He truly has stuck closer to me than any brother (**Proverbs 18:24** KJV) “**A man *that hath* friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend *that sticketh* closer than a brother.”**

Special thanks to Sister Sylvia Tweet. She was gracious enough to proof read and make the proper changes. Too Brother James Reynolds a longtime friend and Brother in Christ, who formatted the manuscript to get this book ready to be published. And lastly, Brother Chris Cockrell who did the layout for the cover and helped me to get this book to the publisher.



## Chapter Two

### The Beginning

**(Psalms 40:8 KJV) “I delight to do thy will, O my God:  
yea, thy law is within my heart.”**

There were many things that I can recall that stick out when I first took over a newly organized church. Something hit me though and I really realized how serious it now was to pastor and be the under-shepherd of one of the Lord’s churches. Not that it wasn’t serious before, but now all the responsibility was on my shoulders to be an example to others, and to see that this little flock God had given me got fed.

But there was a problem (I was going say small problem, but it wasn’t). The problem was that no one else took it any more serious than when we were still a mission. All the preparation and long talks with Brother Ray Sexton could not have prepared me for the things that were about to unfold.

It didn’t take long before my wife and children were on me for being too strict. Okay?! I had to stop and weigh this out. Really, I was doing that? Well I guess, I was a little, but still today I don’t believe anyone other than another Baptist preacher understands how serious it is. I have learned, as hard as it is, that there must be a balance. But let me caution the young preacher here. Be careful the scales don’t get tipped the other direction, because it is very

easily done. Wives are a wonderful help but they sometimes can hinder unknowingly.

I will touch on this more in-depth in another chapter devoted to this next point, but I learned that pastoring those that were close friends and/or fellow church members is a bad combination. Jesus made it very plain when He said, **(Matthew 13:57 KJV) “And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.” (Luke 4:24 KJV) “And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.” (John 4:44 KJV) “For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.”** I will, as I said, expound on this further later on in the book.

At the time I was ordained, I also was taking classes at our local university and had a new job at work (worked at the same place, just in a different department and more demanding), so there was not much time for anything else. My wife and I did manage to be on a Christian bowling league, so that allowed us to have some time together.

Let me share with you something that happened almost immediately. Somehow our local newspaper got word that I was newly ordained and wanted to come out to our house and do an interview and take pictures inside the church building of me. I am for the most part very shy until I get to know someone and then I seem to fit in, but that initial meeting has always been hard for me. Well, they wrote the

story of local boy called to the ministry and ordained. When the article came out in the paper, it was more about me than the purpose, which is of course giving God the glory and the gospel preached to the lost. Somehow that didn't all get in the paper. Well, I felt terrible; I didn't want the attention on me, but the Lord. So again I was on the phone to Brother Ray Sexton all upset because of how badly I felt. Of course, I always wanted it straight and Brother Sexton would always give it to me straight. I got wrapped up in the moment and some pride got in there and oops on my face I went. He was very good at pointing that out to me, and he was right.

Young preacher, pride can be a very dangerous thing and I am so glad I have an understanding and longsuffering God and godly men that were there to help me through my ignorance. Don't ever feel that you can't call your former pastor(s), because they can be a great asset to a young preacher. I praise God for giving me loving men who loved me enough to get me through difficult times. May God bless you, young preacher, in such a way.

There were two issues that came up that I had never thought of as being a pastor; the thought had never crossed my mind. But anyway, because it was in the paper, people I had once known were calling me to marry them. Marriage, really, me marry someone? That was the last thing on my mind, but now I was faced with, "What do I do now?" That was my first reaction. So I told the person that I would get

back with her once I figured it out. So I thought about it, thinking of all the different variables, like are they saved? Are they divorced? Is one saved and the other one lost? Then I thought, "Why were they divorced, and where would I marry them?" Wow, I mean it may seem so easy just to marry them and go on and then I realized, if I am going to perform a wedding and say, "**What God has joined together...**" at the end of the ceremony, then I better know what I am doing and if God will be pleased with whom I am going to be marrying. I have to give credit where credit is due: I called Brother Milburn Cockrell up on the phone and explained everything, and he gave me some wise insights and told me to study up on marriage and divorce, and that I would know what each situation would entail.

Now I have had some good weddings, but mostly bad because those I married are now divorced. I can't tell you for sure how many, maybe 10 or more, but the very last one was such a fiasco that I told my wife, "No more", and that was my last one. Some may criticize my decision, because they say, "People need to get married in a church by a preacher." Well this book is not about defending or debating doctrines, so I will let it go at that. The only way I would ever consider marrying anyone now, would only be two members, one male and one female that are in the church I pastor, and even then, there would be some serious discussions with that couple.

The second issue that I never thought of, being a preacher, was preaching a funeral. That never ever crossed my mind ever. The first time I was asked, I was petrified. I'm still petrified, but God will give you the grace, young preacher, as He does me, each and every time I am asked. I have never turned one down. Here again, I sought out Brother Cockrell for advice; I'd never preached a funeral, and what if someone wasn't saved (had never made a profession of faith)? If you never have the opportunity to talk to a person before he becomes deceased and no one else knows, what do you do? Well, he gave me great advice, but the main thing he said was, "Never preach anyone into hell, because no one really knows if a person is saved except God". We don't know if that person was saved at his last breath or not (**Acts 2:21 KJV**) "**And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

Now I am not going to say it's easier, but I can breathe much better if I at least know by talking to a person before he dies, or that someone else can confirm he made a profession of faith before the Lord takes him home. And I always try to do what the family wants, unless it really tramples on my beliefs. If it does, then I am honest and tell them I can't do what they are asking and explain or I try to lead them in a different direction.

One other thing I learned (and learned the hard way) is you need to be careful how you deal with the children of church members. This can be the most devastating thing to a pastor and

the church. Jesus said, (**Matthew 10:37** KJV) **“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”** Ah, right! That’s what He said but not too many folks care about what He said here. I won’t say nobody cares, but there are very few. You can slice it and dice it anyway you want, but when it is all said and done, *“Blood is thicker than water.”* Let me give you an example. The building we were in at the time had a flat roof on it, with a basement in the ground and only two sides were totally exposed (not in the ground). Tar had to be put on the roof often to keep it from leaking. One Saturday there was a Work Day. Now everyone knew not to get on the roof or let their children up there to play (the one side was in the ground and was at ground level) or it would cause the roof to leak. Well, as we worked, the kids got on the roof and I said something to the father and he took care of it. It rained that night and when I went in the next morning, the ceiling light was bowed full of water. So during the announcements I mentioned it to everyone there about letting their kids on the roof. There was only one family with smaller children there; mine were teenagers. After the services, the mother gave me the third degree about pointing out her children, when everyone knew they were the only ones who had small kids...woops!

So, it doesn’t matter how or what you say, if it’s about someone’s children, look out! You are going to hear about it. The bad thing is that

people don't forget about things like that and then it causes other problems and they won't forget about it, or let you forget what you said or did to their child. When my children did something wrong, I didn't try to hide it. I told the church and I think our son was excluded several times. He would come back and repent and be reinstated, but I never tried to hide it. Hey, kids will be kids, but it is the Lord's House and if they are members or even the preachers' kids, that doesn't give them any special privileges. I always had heard that preacher's kids were the worst. That may be so, but I tried to keep mine in check, and probably was harder on them at times than need be.

So as I mentioned earlier, I learned many of these things the hard way. In fact, even though I was in college at the beginning, most everything I learned and now know, I learned through the school of hard knocks, humanly speaking.

I will devote the next chapter concerning the many things I have seen with moms, dads, and their children.

Just to point out one other thing, I mentioned earlier in this chapter about meeting in a basement building. We went out door-knocking at the very beginning in the general area, to let people know we were there. The response we got was very heart-sickening. This was the response we got from many, "A basement? You're meeting in a basement? I would never go to church that is in a basement." We kept door-knocking, but never had one

person come. Oh, we had the curious members and pastors from other churches stop in to see what we were preaching, but that was the extent of our visitors at the beginning. It is heart-sickening, as I said, but don't lose heart. God will reward, in due time. One verse of Scripture has always come to mind concerning this, **(Mark 6:11 KJV) "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."**



## Chapter Three

### Heartache

**(Psalms 25:17 KJV) “The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.”**

The date is now December 30, 2015. It has been just a little over a year since I started to write this book. What started out to be a 2-year project has been prolonged by the events that have taken place during the 2015 year. I have inserted this chapter in front of the one intended to be next **“Parents and Their Children”**.

I had to stop working on the book due to the poor health of my parents. They both went home to be with the Lord, our mom on March 16<sup>th</sup> and then our dad on April 16<sup>th</sup> one month to the day. The events leading up to these days were very long and hard. There were many trips to doctors, the VA, the nursing homes and hospitals. I think there was for me anyway, more of a *“heartache”* watching and waiting for the inevitable than their actual deaths.

I felt led to insert this, because as a young preacher (or any age preacher), this becomes very difficult during one’s ministry and time does not stop because we are pastors. Sermons still need to be prepared, members need to be cared and prayed for. We need to make sure our wives are not neglected, even though sometimes they are. I have tried to include my wife as much

as I could, but sometimes my mind is elsewhere. This is one of those issues that have to be cultivated in the ministry.

So there will be distractions along the way. One thing I've learnt along the way as a minister of the gospel is it's not all about preaching when the church doors are opened. I have said it and seen it many times, "There is more to pastoring than preaching." Young preachers, remember that. You can be a great orator, but not have the first idea how to take care of the Lord's churches.

When men are called to the ministry, God never gave anybody a money-back guarantee or said it would be easy. We have to remember we are all human first, and then we branch out to other things as God calls.

Not only did my parents go home, which was hard to see humanly speaking, but there were arrangements that needed to be made. Now if you are the only one making all the decisions, then things should run smoother than they did for me. I have two other siblings to consider and they have their own ideas about what is best for everyone, or themselves. So it becomes more difficult if you can't all agree. Where the problems come in is the difference in each of our denominations and/or doctrine, something you don't really think about until you're staring it in the face. I won't go into the details, but there were some hurt feelings because of our different beliefs. We all three learned things about each other that we didn't know before.

As a Baptist preacher, I had to make a stand on certain issues which didn't always go over really well. Our mom was a member of the same Baptist church I belonged to and, being a missionary sent out from our mother church, I had more to consider than most. We have to make a stand and I felt badly that feelings were hurt, but at the end of the day I have to answer to God for my actions. And because my mom sat under my ministry, I was speaking for her as well on certain issues.

The next "heartache" was regarding our daughter who was due to have her first baby at age 37. So, about two weeks after our dad died, our new granddaughter was born (**Job 1:21 KJV**) "**And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.**" In this case, the Lord took away, but then He gave back, "**blessed be the name of the LORD.**"

But then came the "heartache"! Our daughter got an infection and we thought we were going to lose her as well. She was in the hospital for almost two weeks and had to be on an antibiotic for almost a month. The Lord was gracious and both are very healthy today (**Psalm 16:9 KJV**) "**Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.**"

Many other things have happened during the course of 2015, but the point I want to make here is that I think sometimes as a minister that

everything is going to be perfectly fine as long as I am preaching, but that's not the case. I believe God wants the best for us, but I also know Satan wants the worst and things are allowed to happen even to the man God has ordained to preach His Word. During this 2015 year, I have never cried so hard and loud about the things that have happened (**Psalms 6:6** KJV) "**I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.**" But there will be a day that I'll never cry or grieve again (**Revelation 21:4** KJV) "**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**" I pray this is a help to the young preacher! Praise God!

## Chapter Four

### Parents and Their Children

**(Proverbs 22:15 KJV) “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”**

Let me tell you of two situations that are always puzzling to me concerning kids and their parents. The first one is, “Who is in charge?” Many times I would ask the parents, “Where is so and so?” - referring to their child and the answer would be “Oh, he’s home in bed, he didn’t want to get up!” Really...? I don’t understand that concept. I believe the Bible states, **(Proverbs 22:6 KJV) “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** **(Proverbs 29:15 KJV) “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”** I have time and time again seen these two Scriptures come to life. And I have seen many times that the child, when he/she grows up, has hurt the parents pretty badly.

The second thing is, the great lengths to which a parent will go to protect his children, even if they are wrong. I’ve seen actual lies by the parent just so the child gets off from the greater punishment, and I was aware that God’s counsel was never sought in the decision-making. You would think when a family had to face such issues, they would seek the pastor and the

church to help pray for these things. But this is not the case, at least in my experience.

There are many examples in the Bible that show how things were done without men including God in their decision-making. One sticks out to me more than any others (**Genesis 13:10** KJV) **“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.”** Nothing is recorded about Lot seeking the Lord in His decision of making the move to **“Sodom and Gomorrah”**, and we know how that all turned out. In fact, because of his decision-making his children (all but two) along with his wife lost their lives because Lot compromised and would not stand his ground and be the witness he could have been to them. Many of our children drift away from the church and parents because “mommy and daddy” were too lenient with them. This is not so in every case. There are some children that simply rebel and the tighter the grip a parent puts on them, the greater the rebellion.

My wife and I raised two children, a son who is the oldest and our daughter who is four years younger. Both were raised up in the same house, same church, same rules, and same values. Our son always was, and still is rebellious, and our daughter is serving God in a New Testament Baptist Church. Our son listened to others and would rarely take our advice and he still today will hardly ever listen to

us. Our daughter, on the other hand, was terrified at the very thought of disobeying us. She is not perfect, but we couldn't have asked for a better daughter. We love both our children and are proud of their accomplishments, but our son seems like he's in a different world than our daughter.

We may ask, "How this is possible?" The answer, as far as I am concerned is simple. A child is like he is because of the parent. Yes, parents, we are to blame. This chapter of the book has been the one I've dreaded the most and at the writing of this chapter our son has totally and utterly disowned us from his life and doesn't want any more to do with his mother or me. I have learned over the last few weeks that we are not alone in this matter.

Years ago, the late Elder Milburn Cockrell wrote a tract called "**What's Wrong with the Kids Today?**" I would like to quote a couple statements from that tract. He stated, "*The parents must begin early to develop the intellectual and moral powers of the soul. Childhood is the special period for this. The correct training of a child cannot be over-emphasized.*" Well that is a mark against me already, because when our son was born, my wife and I were not saved, so we got off on the wrong foot at the start.

I came from a home of over-the-top discipline. In fact, if my mother had done today what she did to me back in the fifties, she would probably have been put in jail. I didn't want that for my children, but I was, and still am, a strong

disciplinarian. I am the adult, not the child. My wife on the other hand, came from a larger and quieter home and even though there were some spankings, her home life was a more peaceful and calm environment. My parents were divorced before I was three, and my mother came from divorced parents. She died a very unhappy person, humanly speaking, but was so glad that she had a heavenly home that was awaiting her- she is at peace now.

Brother Cockrell also stated, *“The parents must know the Bible well enough to be able to effectively impart it to their children.”* Not only did I not know the Bible well enough, I never was a parent before! I married my wife not even a year out of High School. She was a High School senior and I was only 21 when our son was born two years later. A year after he was born, the Lord saved my wife and me. Of course our ideas of discipline were quite different and also different somewhat from God’s Word at first. So far, I have made two mistakes in the raising of our son. I should mention that, although I believe the dad is responsible for a child’s discipline, “Mom, Dad, and the Word of God” should be in agreement and considered. My attitude back then was “My way or the highway”. But now it is “God’s way” or “pay the price for disobedience”.

Upon reading **“What’s Wrong with the Kids Today”**, I disagreed with Brother Cockrell’s answer at first, which is this: (I quote again from his tract) *“The answer is simple: The problem with most kids is their parents. Children are*



*products of the home that produced them. While the school and church in some measure aid parents in the rearing of their children, it is primarily the responsibility of the parents to properly bring up their children. God has put the responsibility there, and it cannot be transferred to the church or state.”* I totally agree with him now. I would encourage all parents and grandparents to read this tract.

No parent wants to think he's a bad parent, including me. But a look in the mirror and time spent in God's Word by the adults is what is needed for the youth of today. Our two middle grandchildren (whom we are no longer allowed to see) are in jeopardy. They have not been raised in church, they have never been disciplined, (maybe grounding or their phones taken away) but never have they been spanked that I know of. The children have many issues, but they are victims. Not only depraved in their own nature, but they have ungodly parents that have no care for their souls. This is very sad for my wife and me, because we have no influence on their lives.

In the process of writing this chapter, our daughter has had her first child, a little girl, Jordan Elizabeth, and she is being raised in the same Baptist church my wife and I were baptized in. Also, the Lord has blessed us with our oldest grandson Brandon, who is a good kid and is asking questions about God. Brandon turned eighteen and had been so verbally abused that he left home. Since he left home, he has made the honor roll and is a star football

player and has been accepted to the University Of Tiffin, Ohio. He was a 2017 graduate and we couldn't be prouder.

Please excuse my bragging, but if you knew all we've been through with our son, you would more than understand. For the young preacher, the point is that there are so many disappointments that we sometimes don't even think would happen, that Satan takes advantage of us and we don't even see it coming.

Even today, parents are not listening to God when it comes to their children. And many pastors are having a hard time, because the parents believe their children are innocent and they will fight tooth and nail to defend them, instead of siding with God and the church. Most of the time, if not all of the time, the child is wrong, but the parents will still defend them. I will support my children, but if they're wrong, they're wrong. I have brought my own son up for discipline in the church. Sin is sin; call it what it is, parents. And if they want to leave the church because their child has been disciplined, then let them go, because they will be no good to you or the church, if they have that kind of a spirit. Sad but true!

There are always exceptions to the rule; Brother Cockrell's statement that "*The problem with most kids is their parents*" may not fit every single scenario. I suppose the parents may want to do some soul searching. But in defense of some parents, children will rebel if they want to do it their way.

Many times, when the children get out on their own from being raised in a Christian home, they are shell-shocked at how sheltered they were by their Christian parents and they go in an unexpected direction. I know several children that have problems adjusting to the real world and really struggle with things they never experienced living in the Christian home. Let's face it parents, when our children get out of the house and away from our control, some just get out of control. They want to taste the real world and all it has to offer. I truly wish that wasn't so. I know this is not uncommon when a Baptist preacher's child ends up marrying a Catholic girl or boy.

People want to criticize the preacher for going off the deep end, but he has put a lot of effort in raising (or trying to raise) that child the right way. All we can do as Christian parents is to hold onto God's promise (**Proverbs 22:6 KJV**) **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."**

One more thing I would like to say before I close this chapter, as a pastor that is a parent. When you tell your children they can or can't do something; don't just say, "...because I said so." Be a little more understanding and tell them the reason why you are not allowing them to do something. We sometimes get too busy to understand they have it tough enough being a PK (preacher's kid) and need to realize that just a little extra time with them may make the difference.

I could write a whole book just on this subject, but I believe that we will not always have perfect kids, because we're not perfect. However, one thing is for sure: if we don't do it God's way, we will have more heartache than we can handle. God help us!

## Chapter Five

### Preacher to Preacher

**(2 Timothy 4:11 KJV) “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”**

There have been many preachers over the years that I have loved and respected. Many have been called home now and are no longer with us. As I meditate on the years of experience and knowledge that have passed, I find it astonishing.

One of the things I have struggled with over the years is the manner in which these great preachers (at least I think so) had suffered in the flesh before the Lord took them home. They were devoted men for the cause of Jesus Christ and to see how they left this world is puzzling to me. One verse of Scripture speaks out to me, though and I have comfort somewhat in it. **(Romans 8:18 KJV) “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”**

I won't go into the suffering that many have dealt with toward the end, but I will say that all things are from God and are ordained by Him and He knows the purpose for each one, so I must not question His reasoning.

For the young preacher, the elder pastor can be of great help because many times he has

gone through the very thing that the younger man may be experiencing. I have always wondered why I have had to experience certain things in my life as a Baptist preacher, and not just as a preacher, but many things in my life, period. I am convinced it has been to help others!

One such experience that I have had numerous times has been with how little respect a few Baptist Preachers have for some others. It's like other preachers are looked upon by some as "ignorant" and "don't know what they are doing". Too many times I have unfortunately experienced meanness and disrespect from other ministers. Nothing can be accomplished by one preacher writing a letter or sending an email to blast a preacher for something he heard about from a third party. Whatever happened to **(James 5:16 KJV)? "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."**

I find it very disrespectful that preachers can't come together face-to-face with their disagreements. I received an email one Sunday morning from a preacher that just blasted me for something that someone else told him, who didn't know what he was talking about. But instead of talking preacher-to-preacher, he had to seem like a big shot and lay me out, not knowing the whole story. I handled it by calling the brother on the phone and settling the matter. But the emotional damage on Sunday morning had already been done, very

disrespectful and disappointing. I would advise against such a practice.

If you are a preacher, be a man! You've got a problem with another preacher? At least have the courtesy to call to get the story right! No one is above another, I don't care how long he's been preaching or how old he is: **(Matthew 18:15 KJV) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."**

I have also experienced bully preachers. My advice to any young preacher is to turn and run from this sort of man, because he will bring you down and try to run roughshod over you. I know what you're thinking dear reader, but I am just giving you my experience with many preachers I have been in contact with. Just because they are preachers, doesn't make them perfect, but they should meet the qualifications to be ordained. **(Titus 1:7 KJV) "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;"**

I know this may be hard to believe, but many preachers have stuck their noses into other churches' business and it is not for them to do, unless they have been asked for advice **(Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV) "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."**

I have met many a preacher, and for the most part, I have loved them all, but I DO NOT care for preachers who are bullies. There is so much to be learned by those preachers you may come into contact with. Pick their brain, ask them questions. Even as I write this, I wish so many that the Lord has taken home were here for me to converse with. So much knowledge is gone and if you don't take the time to sit down with the remaining ones (I almost said old ones, but that would include me), you will lose out on a great many blessings.

I will add this as well to this chapter. Being a minister of the gospel message is a lonely life. Praise the Lord that Jesus walks and talks with us through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He is our true Friend. He is everything to us, but it doesn't hurt to have other preacher friends to help us in time of need. One day, when you're older and wiser, you may get a call from a young preacher like yourself, to give counsel unto.

Think of the Apostle Paul. Remember the disappointment when many left him? Demas had forsaken him and only Luke remained (**2 Timothy 4:10-12 KJV**) **"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus."** Human fellowship is very much needed in a preacher's



life and to have fellow preachers to talk with is a huge blessing.

## Chapter Six

### Ravening Wolves

**(Matthew 10:16 KJV) “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”**

One of the many true statements in the Bible is that above. For the young preacher it would be good to heed these words by our Lord, for they are very true in nature. I have experienced firsthand how accurate this statement truly is.

I have had preachers from other churches come in and try to disrupt our services with their bullying and rudeness that is beyond belief. Some have even claimed to be sovereign grace preachers. They literally tried to take over the services with their thoughts and beliefs.

I had one such preacher come in and just blast me because our women were wearing head coverings. That same morning I had a very good preacher friend come in who was also a sovereign grace preacher and once this man found out what circle we were in (which I'll cover in the next chapter), he said, very sarcastically “Oh yeah, I know that group!”

I have had well-educated men and women come in with college degrees to tell me they can show me a better way to build the Lord's church.

Others have come in just for handouts, drug and alcohol money. Some have even come

to hear other members preach, because they were told they preach there from time to time, and to top it off the person who invited them stayed home in bed that day! Even more surprisingly, they turned around and left when that person wasn't there! Makes you wonder why they came at all? Don't think it was for the Truth's sake.

I had one man from Beirut, Lebanon attend services at the mission where I currently pastor. This was the scariest visitor we ever had. I never did know his full intentions for coming, other than disrupting the service and trying to take it over. I went to the mission on a Saturday, just to talk to him at his request and spent three hours with him and he never once asked me a doctrinal question on what we believed. He would get up in the middle of a service and take pictures; he would try and stop me in the middle of the message. Almost every Sunday after I was done, he would try to preach to everyone.

Eventually he called me a fake and phony and never came back. I tried to be nice and hospitable, but he wasn't interested. One of the things I preached that gave me a heads-up, was how Satan can only do what God allows him to do. After I was done preaching, he stood up and said God has no control over Satan at all. It is amazing what the intention of your visitors might be when they come through the doors.

There are three sisters in the membership at our current mission, and their daddy was a very good Baptist preacher, the late Pastor Alvin Green. They had a real nice building, but not a

real big congregation. They were renting the building and had done so for years. The women that collected the rent eventually died and her daughter took over. She took the church to court and won because she wanted to sell the building. There is more to the story, but you can see how Satan works. Eventually Brother Green had to take his family and go elsewhere.

Today more likely than not, depending on where you are located, it could easily happen to any of us, if the church doesn't own the building. The mission is leasing and we signed a lease, but anymore you never know what may happen. Depravity knows no bounds.

We would do good to heed the warning of our Saviour. Paul warned of it too (**Acts 20:29** KJV) **“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”** In the next verse he states that even those that are within can destroy the work. (**Acts 20:30** KJV) **“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”**

I am somewhat wiser today and am not afraid to call them down. I had a young lady come in one Sunday and I really thought the Lord had brought her to us. She seemed to be really studied, but kept speaking out and then raised her hand to ask a question. I told her I would answer any question she had after the service. So I went over to her and asked how I could help. She asked all kinds of questions that it appeared she had been studying. I told her we believed the Bible and I made it clear that the

women are to keep silent in the church worship service. I invited her back and she said she probably would be back, but she never did return.

It's hard to see people come and go when you're hoping to build an assembly, but the truth must prevail no matter what. That's why the Saviour tells us to be "**wise as serpents, and harmless as doves**" (**Matthew 10:16**).

## Chapter Seven

### Which Baptist?

**(Philippians 4:8 KJV) “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”**

I know, strange chapter title, right? Well after I explain, hopefully you will understand the meaning. As a young preacher, you will notice that what many churches believe on certain things, may differ from you. Not all Baptist churches (for some reason or another) will agree on every jot and tittle.

You will run into various beliefs along the way. And I am not talking about religion in general or Christianity as a whole. I'm talking about what we consider to be our sister churches. Yes, that's right, not all sovereign grace churches all agree with each other. I will endeavor to try and make a list here and I am sure I won't list every single one, but it will be something you will need to consider in your ministry. Here is a partial list:

1. Wine or grape juice in the Lord's Supper
2. Holidays...Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and all the rest the world are involved with

3. The use of the King James Bible only
4. Pre-trib or post-trib rapture
5. Church organization
6. The woman's place in the church
7. Divorced and remarried preachers
8. The head covering

There are more, but this is enough to give you the general idea. The point I want to make is, even though our sister churches have the same doctrine on salvation and the church, you will find that there are two camps of Baptists, sometimes three, on these topics. What I believe doesn't necessarily mean a sister church will believe the same things from this list above, but it doesn't matter what I believe. It comes down to what the church you will pastor believes. Normally if you are considering accepting the pastorate of a certain church, you would want to be on the same page as that church.

I have seen men accept churches and think that they can change the church's view and or a certain church will go ahead and take a man, thinking they will come around to the church's way of thinking. Usually, neither will work.

A young preacher shouldn't get discouraged over this; it's just the way it is. There are sister churches that support the mission where I pastor that are not totally in agreement with my home church, but it's not something to break fellowship over. If it were something like alien immersion or other doctrines that Baptists have held for years, then we would have a problem. But on issues like the head covering and

holidays, I have learned to accept what others believe, even though I disagree and they disagree with me or our home church. But again it's not something we would break fellowship over.

I had asked the late Milburn Cockrell once why one church does it one way and the church he was pastoring did it another, and he said, "this is the way we chose to do it." You will find that when you ask Baptist preachers a question, most of the time you will not get a straight answer. If you have ever looked up anything in Gill's Commentary, you will know what I mean. Oh, you may get the answer, but you'll have to run around the proverbial bush to get it.

This is a good Scripture to keep in mind when you find yourself in disagreement with the church. (**Proverbs 6:16-19** KJV) "**These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.**" Sowing discord is an abomination, so I would advise you to be in agreement with whatever church the Lord would lead you to, before you go there.

I have learned fighting or fussing doesn't get me anywhere, so I am comfortable with what I believe and even if I disagree with my church on anything, I just preach the truth we agree on and let the rest go. We will not believe everything one hundred percent. I call that, being a "hard-headed Baptist"!



I'll leave you with this verse of Scripture that Paul wrote, **(1 Corinthians 2:2 KJV) "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."** That's all we really know for sure anyway. And we would do well to keep in mind what Paul told young Timothy, **(2 Timothy 4:2 KJV) "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."** The young preacher should read First and Second Timothy over and over; I did at the advice of my pastor before I was ordained.

**(1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 KJV) "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."**

## Chapter Eight

### The Pastor Friend

**(John 4:44 KJV) “For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.”**

I have learned that pastoring those that were close friends and/or fellow church members is a bad combination at least it didn't work out for me and I believe Jesus made it very plain when He said, **(Matthew 13:57 KJV) “And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.” (Luke 4:24 KJV) “And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.”** John makes it very plain, **(John 4:44 KJV) “For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.”**

In Chapter Two, I said I would expound on this situation a little more, and I know very well from experience what Jesus was saying here. Now, this may not be the case for all young preachers, but it was for me, and I confess my personality may have been part of the problem (the bull in the china shop thing).

When you become the pastor of a group of people with whom you were fellow church members together, there may be conflict. This is what happened to me. Some of the people I pastored were older now, and I had taught them

back as teenagers in Bible School (Sunday School).

One of the things that Brother Mink had said from the pulpit puzzled me for years until I became a pastor myself of such a familiar, close-knit church. There is such a disregard for the Lord's house that I blew a gasket. I remember Brother Mink getting upset because people were cutting their fingernails in church and he found clippings on the floor, gum under the pews, and candy and gum wrappers on the floor as well. I would come in and there was scrap paper lying all over the pews, among other things. Then all that he had said hit me right in the face. It was important to me, more than ever, how the church was kept, but seemingly not to others.

I had a couple who brought their cat and cat box over and left it in the building (in the sanctuary) and I just happened to go over to the building: talk about surprise! The same couple went over to cut the grass and wasn't expecting me to be there and the wife had on a pair of short shorts that would make a preacher blush! She then said to me, "I didn't know you were going to be here". I replied, "It's not me you should be worried about or trying to please, but God!" **(Numbers 32:23 KJV) "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."**

Let me stop here and explain something. Other than my family and two elderly ladies, they were the only other members and I had been in the

same church with them for years. So we were a very small group.

Now, the husband came one Sunday and told me they wouldn't be there the following Sunday. I asked, "Why?" and he said, "We are going to the basketball game on Saturday night." Now they only lived about ten minutes away, so I said, "Well that's Saturday; why can't you be at church?" His reply was, "We won't be getting back home until midnight." Really...?

I eventually had another couple of families come in and it was the same scenario. We had all been church members together for years. Here's the point- what they all wanted from me was to pat them on the back and tell them it was okay. Of course I wouldn't do it, so we had conflict. There have been other cases where I have had friends in the church and we end up not seeing eye-to-eye with each other, and some of the things they have done would make your hair stand on end. Trust me when I say I have made many mistakes along the way that I have had to repent of, because of not thinking and because of my own stupidity. Most people don't remember preachers are human beings too, and we do make mistakes. Mistakes that many cannot or will not forgive! You can be the best pastor and preacher, but make just one mistake and people will never forget it.

So if you as a young preacher are considering pastoring a church of which you have been a member for years, please weigh it carefully. I am not saying it can't be done, I just believe it may be much harder on the young preacher than he

thinks. Believe me when I say that friends will take advantage of you.

I also believe the preacher can be friendly with his congregation, but should be careful becoming best friends with them. I have to say that the group of people I have now is very gracious and patient with me, but I also tell them everything, so if someone on the outside were to accuse me, they would already know about it. When I was working, there were a couple of times that I had an argument with someone and even one time it almost came to fisticuffs. I told the church all about it. I thank the Lord for the folks at the mission He has given me to pastor.

There are many churches today that need pastors and many young men that have been called to the ministry. It is very easy to take a church that you have been raised in versus one where you have to pick up your family, quit your job and move away. Many a young preacher would jump at the chance to stay put and stay in familiar surroundings. Again, be cautious when deciding.

## Chapter Nine

### Satan Attacks

**(2 Corinthians 11:14 KJV) “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”**

Don't be fooled in thinking you are impenetrable because you are young or because God has called you to the ministry. I have talked with and heard many a preacher that is being attacked today in so many different directions, including myself. I wake up in the morning dreading to see what is in store for me that day. Don't get me wrong, God is good and He blesses me each day, even if I am having a bad day. I can walk, talk, and breathe. What more could we ask for?

But Satan (not necessarily him, but he has plenty of helpers) attacks from all sides, and our spiritual condition that day will determine the outcome. Like, did we spend time in His Word and prayer before we started our day? Did we go to bed angry? **(Ephesians 4:26-27 KJV) “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.”** If we did, then it may not be a very good day. There is a hymn I dearly love, *“What A Friend We Have In Jesus.”* We should sing this every morning to remind ourselves that Jesus is our friend. The third and fourth lines of the first verse say, “O, what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do

not carry - Everything to God in prayer". Oh how true that is! I believe the writer of this hymn knew very well the struggles that a Christian faces each and every day!

Satan will attack you! He will use all his resources to bring you down, and the first place he will start is in the home. I talked to my wife about what I am about to say, just to see if she agreed with it. We laughed a little, but the fact of the matter is quite true- at least for us! Some preachers may say they have a perfect marriage, but I don't believe there is such a thing. It would be wonderful if there were, but the only perfect marriage is the one between The Lamb and His wife (**Revelation 19:7 KJV**) "**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**" That marriage will be perfect, praise the Lord!

Young preacher, you will want to spend as much time as possible in the Word of God and studying, preparing sermons, maybe even writing a book or writing articles, but you have to learn balance (I'm not sure I have yet, and I have been doing this for almost thirty years.)

Wives are like a classic car, and in order for them to run right and stay in good-working condition, you need to spend time caring for them. Most wives like to talk, shop, and visit family. I am a home-body and when I get in my office, I don't want to come out. My wife will call me for lunch, and I'll say, "Just a minute", probably because I am trying to finish a sermon or I'm in deep thought about what I am writing

and I don't want to quit. Well before I know it ten to fifteen minutes (an hour) has gone by and my wife is half done with her lunch (she likes her food hot, I don't, so a few extra minutes for me is no big deal, but it is to her). So I am in hot water most of the time. Even my chiropractor has told me to get up and move around more and don't sit so long.

This is where no one understands but another preacher. It's so aggravating to start something you can't finish. Wives are surely a blessing from the Lord; I know mine is, even though we don't see eye-to-eye on everything all the time.

I once had an elderly lady in the church I pastored. She once was a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Ashland Kentucky. She was very well versed in the Bible, and kept me on my toes, I'll tell you. She was a great prayer warrior and loved the Lord! She told my wife one time that the husband may be the head of the wife, but the wife is the neck. My point is, if that's the case, the neck gets a little stiff sometimes and the head can't turn like it should!

You may remember I mentioned in the first chapter that wives are a wonderful help, but they sometimes can hinder unknowingly. I said I would touch on it later. The reason I saved it for this chapter, is because this is where Satan gets his foot in the door. To me, there is nothing more important than the Word of God. I have a great responsibility and it is serious business. So interruptions from my wife are not really welcomed. She thinks they're important, but I may not share the same enthusiasm. My wife, a



few years back, said I was spending too much time in my office and that I needed a hobby to get me out of the house. She practically begged me. So I got a hobby, and now my friends that do the same hobby say I am a workaholic. But I don't agree; things just have to be done. The church is most important.

So, I have had to make adjustments, and you will too. I am a morning person, so after one in the afternoon I become a zombie. My wife babysits our granddaughter and I try to take a quick nap and then get up and fix our supper and have it on the table for her and then it's back to my office for a couple of hours. We bowl together, go to see our daughter, (not as often as she would like), and go out to eat from time to time.

I think you see the point in all of this. But the main thing is that Satan will use what I'm doing for the Lord and make my wife jealous that I spend so much time in my office. Then there's an explosion and we aren't very kind to each other and Satan laughs at our situation. But we repent, forgive each other and move on. Paul knew this. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11 KJV) **"To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."**

It's not just with preachers and their wives; it's with church members as well. Satan starts in the home to disrupt it and then moves on to the church, and it's a trickle-down effect. Satan

doesn't want to see the church succeed, so sometimes you can tell there is tension. Folks aren't always as happy as they should be. It could be family problems, sickness, or maybe a death; but Satan uses every opportunity to bring us down. Especially the pastor- bring the pastor down, and the church will falter.

Paul tells Timothy that if a man is going to rule the church, he needs to know how to rule his own house. (1 Timothy 3:4-5 KJV) **“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?)”** Some may say that if your wife doesn't listen and do everything you say that the man doesn't have a backbone. But you can't make your wife do something she doesn't want to do, or anyone else for that matter; it takes the Holy Spirit to do that. All I can do is pray for my wife, as should all preachers, when it comes to such things and hope we both would prayerfully consider this instruction from the Word of God. (1 Peter 3:6-7 KJV) **“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”**

Young preacher, Satan will hit you from every side, as I have already stated, in areas you

wouldn't even imagine. We need more than anybody else, to put on the whole armor of God. **(Ephesians 6:11-13 KJV) "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."**

I have heard many young preachers say, "*Things are going to get better!*" I used to think that, but not anymore. Things are growing worse by the minute, and there is so much wickedness and lawlessness in our world today that all we can hope for is the rapture or death to take us to our heavenly home.

I totally understand that a young preacher, who has a young wife and young children would want to see things improve, that is understandable. I wish I could agree with him, but I have lived too long and have seen too much to believe it anymore. As long as Satan has the rule, he will do all he can to ruin our lives.

You, your wife, and your children, if you still have them at home, need to spend time in the Bible and in prayer. Without it, you are opening yourselves up for attack. Even at that, there are no guarantees. My first pastor told me that being a Christian will be the hardest thing you will ever have to endure in this life, and he was

right. Now add being a preacher and pastor of one of the Lord's churches!

When you pastor one of the Lord's churches, there is no greater responsibility. Do you really think Satan is going to leave you alone? My pastor also told me that it is the highest position in the world and if he were to become President of the United States, he would have to step down.

But always remember the words of Paul to young Timothy, (**2 Timothy 4:2** KJV) "**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.**"

There are preachers all over the world that are suffering, they are praying without ceasing for you. And most of all, Jesus will never leave you or forsake you. (**Hebrews 13:5** KJV) "**Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**"

(**James 4:7** KJV) "**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**"

## Closing Thoughts

**(Proverbs 2:1-6 KJV) “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”**

The date is March 20, 2018 and it has taken almost three and a half years from the time I started until now. Many of the things discussed in the previous chapters I was personally dealing with, as I struggled to finish the book. My biggest hang-up was Chapter Four, since I was actually dealing with some of what I wrote at the time. Like I said, “*A whole book could be written about that chapter.*” Our son disowned us, our oldest grandson left home and graduated from High School. And then we helped him move to start college. Life goes on!

Also, the mission I am currently pastoring is moving forward with its building program and there were a lot of meetings to attend, and letters to write that took much of my time. But during that time, my mind was on the finishing of this book. And finally today, by God’s Grace I am about to do that.

I want to thank Elder Matthew Stepp, who is the pastor of my home church which sent me out to be their missionary. He was an

encouragement to me for this book and though he is much younger than I am, he is wise beyond his years. He also painstakingly proof-read every chapter and honored me by writing the comments in the Forward section of the book.

This book is dedicated to young preachers- not necessarily young in years, but experience. I hope the wisdom, trials, and tribulations that I have experienced in my years of pastoring will be passed down to others by the words written herein.

Young preacher, as stated, your elder preachers will be your friends, but there will never be a Friend greater than Jesus Christ. You are going to have tremendous storms in your life as pastor and preacher, so that you will need Him close to you. I am reminded of a hymn and something Elder Oscar B. Mink said to me when he counseled me after I was ordained and in a violent storm myself. The hymn is Priscilla Owen's, "**We Have An Anchor**" and the first verse goes like this, "*Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?*" The refrain goes like this, "*We have anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*" Praise the Lord, how beautiful and true!

Elder Mink told me, "*Brother Roger, no matter what kind of storm you go through and no*

*matter what happens, stay at the helm!*" I have never forgotten those words. I have wanted to quit so many times, but I am not a quitter, by God's grace. I have wanted to throw up my hands and say, "Just Forget It, It's Not Worth The Effort!" But it is worth the effort! There are souls waiting to be saved, and they are worth the effort.

Sometimes you may have to take another church, as I have had to, but I didn't quit. You will find there are some of God's people who will not move; they are fastened to the pew and they feel that's all they have to do. When that happens, it's time to move on. I spent seventeen years trying to encourage folks to move and grow, but they didn't, so I moved on. Let's be clear here, I wasn't the one who moved myself; it was God. God moved me, or I would still be there. I only lived six miles from the church I pastored, and now I drive eighty-six miles. It takes me an hour and a half and I am driving through one of the biggest cities in the nation-Columbus, Ohio. So if were my choice, I would much rather drive six miles than eight-six!

I learned a lesson a long time ago, when God says move, you'd better get on down the road. If you don't, you will wish you had. Remember Jonah?

So, storms will come and go. Heartaches will come and go as well. No one lives forever and dying is just a part of living. I have learned to say, "*Just another bump in the road, and one day I'll make it to the end!*"

Hopefully those who go on before us know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. I've lost four dear and sweet members in my ministry- three of which I preached their funerals and I am confident that they are with the Lord. **(2 Corinthians 5:6 KJV) "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord"; (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV) "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."**

Along the way, I lost one of my dearest friends and preacher brothers that I have ever known, John R. Lenegar. His funeral was the hardest I have ever had to preach. I truly loved that man. I watched him suffer so severely and it was bittersweet and really hard when he was taken home. I was able to be there at his last breath, and thank the Lord He allowed me to be with him and his family at the end. There have been many preachers I dearly loved that the Lord has taken, but Brother John was my very best friend.

Young preacher, you will find that the hardest struggles will come from within. I am my own worst critic. Well I should be! Paul said, **(1 Corinthians 9:27 KJV) "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."**

There are certain polarizing things like holidays that many churches do, among other things. My advice is to study! **(2 Timothy 2:15**



**KJV) “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

Don't be intimidated by other preachers. Prayerfully study with the leadership of the Holy Spirit and you will come to the truth. Put aside what you have seen of others and do your own research. You may not always be right, but at least you studied for yourself. There were many things at first that I would not see or believe, until I studied it for myself. Oh, I asked advice from others, but I also listened very carefully why they did or did not believe something. You will be amazed at what you will hear. And most of all, have a backbone. I've always said that preachers need to be rough, tough, and hard to bluff, but also be gentle, kind, and loving!

If you have children, spend time with them, listen to them. Once they've grown up and leave the home, it will never be the same. Be the husband to your wife that the Lord has instructed you to be. Remember, she is the weaker vessel, but she is also your strong helpmeet. You are to love her and be willing to die for her as Christ did the church. She needs to be loved and cherished. Read the Song of Solomon to each other. That may sound corny, but I have read many books on marriage by Christian authors and that's one thing they seem to have in common and recommend.

Keep your armor bright and your intentions true, so Satan doesn't get the advantage of you. Read the Book of Proverbs over and over, as well as 1 and 2 Timothy.

Finally, (2 Timothy 4:1-5 KJV) **“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”**

Above all, never cease to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ! There is no other more important thing to do, than to preach the Gospel. Jesus left us such a grave responsibility, that nothing else compares. (Matthew 28:18-20 KJV) **“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”**

That late Elder Milburn Cockrell gave me this advice when I was at the end of my rope and it didn't seem like I was doing any good and the people didn't seem to be listening. He said, *“Just preach Jesus, nothing else, just Jesus.”*

*Don't fuss or fight, don't get upset (that's easier said than done), just preach Jesus. No one can argue with what Jesus says."* I took his advice and I would encourage you to do the same, when things get tough. **(Acts 5:42 KJV) "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."**

May God Bless you, dear preacher and reader, with the words of this book, and may it help you along your journey to serve "...**the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.**"

I pray that if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour that God will save you and add you to His true Church. **(Romans 10:8-13 KJV) "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

God Bless!