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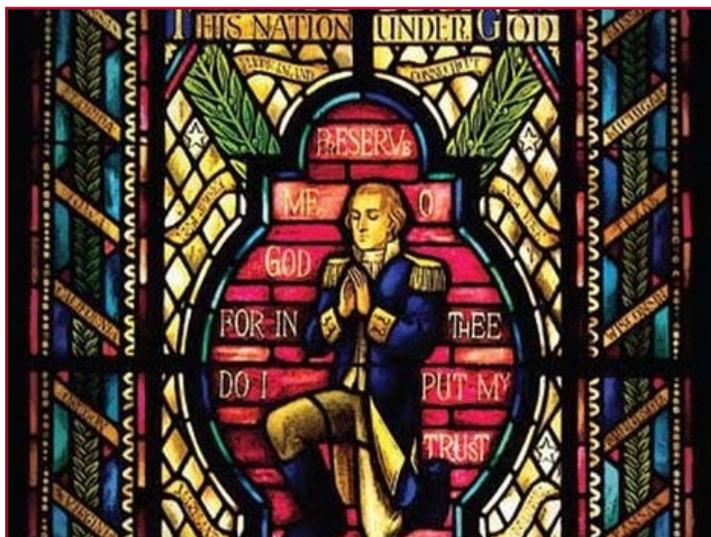
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# How Important Is a Bible-Based Ministry in the Capitol?



Stained glass window of George Washington in prayer, Capitol Prayer Room.

God judged Israel when His people worshipped other gods. Too often this betrayal was fostered by their spiritual leaders. The great I AM of the Old Testament does not take kindly to betrayal; rightfully so, He is a jealous God—because there is no other!

Similarly, today, it is tragic when God’s spiritual leaders lead God’s people into religious syncretism, i.e., worshipping other gods.

It stands to reason that spiritual leaders who minister to our government leaders are critically important to the health of the nation. Whether or not they lead them in God’s ways has huge repercussions relative to if or not God blesses a nation.

Read on, beloved, as I develop this important topic.

Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff: Wednesdays 7am, Zoom.
- Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
- House Members: Thursdays 8am, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.



### ■ MINISTRY UPDATE

## Rus Willette

*Ministry Leader, Maine*



“The light shines brightest in the darkness,” said Rus Willette who is readying to resume efforts to build a ministry to members of the state legislature in the state of Maine.

“The largest county in Maine is 97 percent unchurched,” Willette said. “When you refer to the 10 Commandments, many people have no reference, and these are the people who are electing our leaders. As Ralph says, to have God-honoring laws, a society needs godly leaders.”

Willette was named CapMin ministry leader for Maine in 2020. As has happened with several ministries, Willette’s efforts to build a weekly discipleship Bible-study ministry to legislators was delayed due to widespread COVID-19 meeting restrictions. Willette has used the down time wisely. He’s been meeting legislators, members of the faith community, and others who share

*Continued on next page*

### I. INTRODUCTION

This week let us turn the table a bit—rather than me attempting to apply the Word to your life, the life of a public servant, let us apply the Word to the life of someone like me. What are the biblical standards that you should know about and hold me to? How can you tell a good ministry leader from a bad one? In the passage I would like to examine this week, there is one standard that you should definitely know about and hold me, or others like me, to uphold at all costs.

### II. THE ONE MAIN POINT

In the New Testament book of Acts, the Apostle Paul stops by to visit the leadership from the Church at Ephesus. He had planted this church, spending more than three years there during one of his earlier missionary journeys. In reminiscing with the leadership of the church to whom he had ministered for so long, he states, among other things, the following in Acts 20:24–27:

*“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”*

Much could be said from this warm, reminiscent passage, but pertinent to this study is verse 26: *“Therefore, I*

*testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.”* What does verse mean? How does this Scripture contextually relate to that which follows?

In answer, I want to examine Joshua 2:17–21 and Ezekiel 33:7–9. Paul was undoubtedly familiar with these passages since, prior to his conversion, he was a former Pharisee. A brief study of them will provide a better understanding of what Paul meant by what he recorded in Acts.

In the Joshua narrative, Joshua’s spies were clandestinely inspecting Jericho prior to the invasion and desolation of the walled, pagan city. In doing so they encountered Rahab whose faithfulness to them would eventually save her family:

*“The men said to her, ‘We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father’s household. It shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.’ She said, ‘According to your words, so be it.’ So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window” (Joshua 2:17–21).*



♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

**Acts 20:26–27***“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”*

Notice again from reading this passage how the descriptor of someone’s blood being *on his own head* or conversely *on our head* is an Old Testament (OT) portrayal paralleling our modern meaning: this phrase conveys personal responsibility for an action. Read it again if you don’t grasp what I am saying.

In the Ezekiel passage this Hebrew imagery connoting personal responsibility is taken a step further. In this passage the same phrase relates directly to the faithfulness of God’s messenger (in this instance, Ezekiel). Take note of such as God addresses His spokesperson:

*“Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand. But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life”* (Ezekiel 33:7–9).

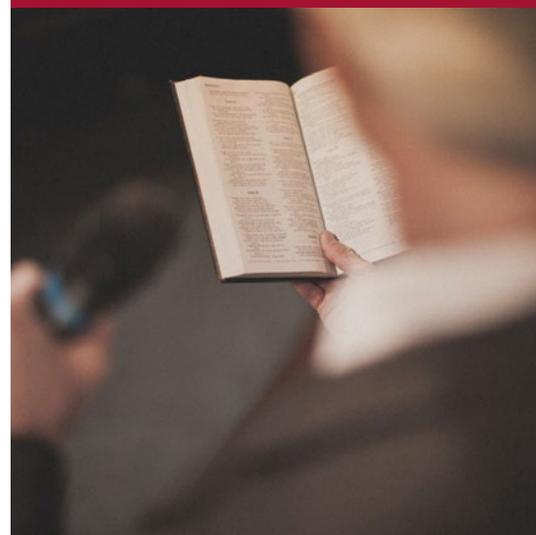
These passages serve to illustrate the meaning that Paul, again, an expert in the Old Testament, is carrying forward into his New Testament writing and understanding that God’s spokesman accurately represent God’s Word. For this reason Paul states in the home passage, Acts 20:27, as he speaks to the Ephesian believers, *“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”* Why? Because

the minister of God who shrinks from declaring the whole counsel of God becomes personally responsible for the sin of those whom he has defrauded of God’s truth! That is the main point; God’s spokesmen must deliver God’s message lest they become responsible for the spiritual plight of those to whom they have failed to proclaim God’s Word. This is the profound principle that Paul is conveying in the twentieth chapter of Acts!

Paul states in Romans 10:14 the essence of the economy God has set forth to communicate His way of salvation to mankind (and in our case, public servants). *“How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?”* This truth of Scripture is extremely sobering—haunting—for anyone like myself who has been set apart by God into vocational ministry.

With such a clear understanding of this principle in Paul’s mind, he was extremely motivated to *not shrink from declaring ... the whole counsel of God* in and throughout his life! This profound truth in Scripture is very sobering if you are charged with being God’s ambassador—especially to a nation’s leaders.

The man of God has been chosen before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) and is God’s ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20) to communicate the singularity of salvation in Christ and to make disciples. Being a chaplain or a minister is not to be taken lightly! Understood through the lens of Scripture, this high calling has huge eternal repercussions not only in the life of others, but also in his own.



God’s spokesman must not shrink from *declaring the whole purpose of God* (Acts 20:27), lest he become personally responsible for the sin of those whom he has defrauded of God’s truth!





*Continued from page 2*

the vision of taking the Word of God into the Maine State House. Already several legislators have offered support. Willette’s role as CapMin ministry leader dovetails well with his ongoing work with The Navigators to create ministries where people live, work, worship, and play.

The battle to establish a discipleship ministry to legislators is an uphill one as Maine is known for being a strong post-Christian state. Most residents do not believe in God, disagree that faith is important, and do not believe the Bible is inerrant. Willette is aiming for a January 2022 ministry launch and has asked for prayers from CapMin supporters. “Please pray that we will proceed with compassion as we see the disarray around us, and pray for laborers in this work,” he said.

While the soil may be rocky and the environs dark, Willette holds a deep desire in his heart that a great awakening is about to erupt. “We pray that the next awakening will begin in Maine and spread throughout the nation as it never has before,” he said. “We are excited about what God will do.”

Opposite the minister or chaplain who is faithful to the aforementioned are those who take the name of Christ and only partially or incorrectly teach the Bible, i.e., be it a “social gospel,” a prosperity message, a self-help message or one of theological syncretism (as though all religions lead someone to heaven). Perhaps the latter is the most severe, the supposed minister, aka the apostate minister who is accepting of false religions, giving other religions prominence and accepting their rejection of the singular saving gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. John 3:16). Without taking a stand for Christ alone, they are guilty of this one main point: shrinking from accurately declaring the counsel of God.

**How can a chaplain be syncretistic when Jesus states clearly, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father but through Me” (John 14:6)? Such apostate ministers will pay a huge price when they stand before their Maker.**

In Matthew 7:13 Jesus states specifically in contradistinction to the “all paths lead to heaven” mentality: *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”* Biblically, a person cannot be a syncretistic Christian chaplain. Make no mistake; all legitimate God-sent chaplains will be and are narrow-minded in terms of their salvation message. In addition, they will desire to teach *the whole counsel of God*.

Not only does Acts 20 speak to the

profundity of this truth, the solemn duties, the sacred responsibilities of a chaplain, as well as the catastrophic consequences of a chaplain’s messages, these truths are also conveyed in numerous other New Testament passages. The following passages elaborate upon this one main point:

### III. FIVE SUPPORTING PASSAGES

#### A. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-2

*“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”*

In the context of this passage, Paul is informing the Church at Corinth how to *regard us*, which references Paul’s speaking about himself, and ostensibly, all the leaders in the church in the present and in the future. He states that God’s messengers are not to posture themselves as powerful, prideful prophets; rather, they are to be exactly the opposite: as His envoys steeped in humility concerning their high calling and privilege. They are to be regarded as *servants* (*huperetas*) meaning “an under rower.” Paul pictures himself and other true ministers of the Gospel as servants by choosing an ancient Greek word that describes a menial galley slave, i.e., “one who rows on the bottom tier of a ship.”

Secondly, he refers to himself as a *steward* (*oikonomos*) meaning “one who is entrusted with the responsibilities for his master’s entire household.”

Both words are beautiful descriptors of



true ministers, providing the believer with great insight and discernment relative to whom they should follow as a spiritual leader. Having a *servant* spirit toward you as a public servant and a *stewardship* sense of responsibility to accurately communicate the Scriptures are litmus tests of ministerial legitimacy.

Note that *mysteries of God* are connected to the idea of stewardship. Paul commonly used this reference throughout the New Testament to connote the divine revelation of the New Testament, which was previously not seen from the viewpoint of the OT. In other words, a legitimate minister is a *steward* of the divine revelation of the NT.

What is perhaps most important in this passage as it relates to this study is what follows: *“Moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”* The word *trustworthy* (*pistos*) can also be translated as “reliable” or “faithful,” i.e., the chaplain or minister’s utmost faithfulness pertains to his calling as God’s messenger of God’s truth. This attribute should be understood in stark contrast to those who “tickle the ears” of their followers per 2 Timothy 4:3:

*“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.”*

Illustratively, I will never forget a leading legislator from some years ago who arrogantly told me how he likes his religion to be served to him: in other words, watered down—all with a heavy

inference that I wasn’t doing what he liked. This example serves to illustrate the point of 2 Timothy 4:3. There is an increasing temptation in the ministry to be pleasing unto people rather than pleasing unto God. To underscore the minister’s conviction not to compromise God’s Word, earlier in 2 Timothy, Paul instructs his understudy pastor, Timothy, that God’s Word is to be used not simply for encouragement, but *“for reproof, for correction,”* and *“for training in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

### B. CORINTHIANS 9:16

*“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.”*

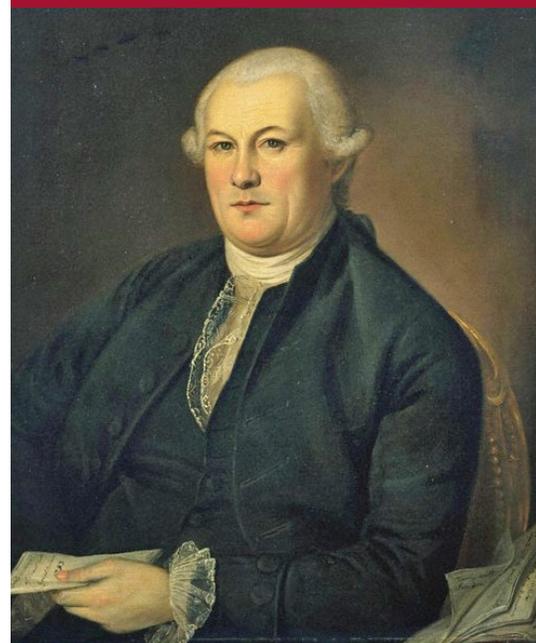
*Woe* is “an expression of grief and denunciation in Greek.” As already seen from the Old Testament, God’s most severe chastening is reserved for ministers who fail to be faithful to their calling and alter the cross of Christ and the centrality of Scripture.

Out of a desire to please people, some ministers succumb to the pressure of making people feel comfortable in their sin. Every man, woman, and child needs Christ in order to be saved from an eternity in hell that awaits them. Apart from Christ’s imputed righteousness, no one can stand before the Holy Creator God of the universe.

The great apostle reveals more of his inspired mind regarding his ultimate audience in ministry when he states the following in Galatians 1:10:

*“For am I now seeking the favor of men,*

*Elias Boudinot*



*“For nearly half a century have I anxiously and critically studied that invaluable treasure [the Bible]; and I still scarcely ever take it up that I do not find something new—that I do not receive some valuable addition to my stock of knowledge or perceive some instructive fact never observed before. In short, were you to ask me to recommend the most valuable book in the world, I should fix on the Bible as the most instructive both to the wise and ignorant. Were you to ask me for one affording the most rational and pleasing entertainment to the inquiring mind, I should repeat, it is the Bible; and should you renew the inquiry for the best philosophy or*

*Continued on page 7*



Patrick Henry



*or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”*

This verse contains yet another descriptor Paul uses to describe himself and all true ministers of Christ. They are *bond-servants* (*doulos*), the common ancient word for “a slave.” Again, depicting ministers as God’s slaves, Scripture reiterates the genuine humility that will always accompany God’s legitimate spokesmen. This Scripture embraces a powerful insight into how Paul and other bona fide ministers view themselves. They have no choice but to serve the One who called them as they are totally owned by Him! They can do nothing else! What results from such an internal picture of oneself? Not only do genuine ministers stay on message, they persevere in their calling.

### C. JAMES 3:1

*“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”*

The Greek word for *teachers* (*didaskalos*) found in this passage is the frequent New Testament reference for someone who functions in an official capacity as a Bible *teacher* or *preacher*. James is written to believers, so the context of this passage is referring to believing *teachers* of God’s Word, not false *teachers*. The word for *judgment* refers to a future *judgment* when he is rewarded—or not—before Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:3–5; Revelation 20:12).

What’s the point of this passage? Those who name the name of Christ and

know Christ, but are sloppy or inaccurate in their *teaching* responsibilities, whose priority is to make sure those whom they *teach* always feel good as a result of their teaching, will find little, if any, reward in Heaven. These passages for anyone in my profession are heavy-duty!

Many have remarked how much time I take in preparing my weekly Bible study notes. This insight on James 3:1 should help you to understand the reason why.

### D. 1 PETER 5:1–4

*“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

Note the last sentence of this passage. Peter’s epistle helps to inform the insights commented on previously in the Jamesian passage pertaining to a stricter judgment for teachers. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd who will determine the rewards of His undershepherds. Those rewards are here described as receiving the *unfading crown of glory*. 1 Corinthians 3:15 further builds this theological thought (of points C and D): *“If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as*

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”

— Patrick Henry, American Revolutionary War general, legislator, “The Voice of Liberty,” ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, Governor of Virginia.

Patrick Henry, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, William Wirt Henry, editor (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891), Vol. II, 592, to Archibald Blairon January 8, 1799.



*through fire.*” God’s legitimate under-shepherd has a passion to please the One who gave him his assignment versus serving to exalt himself. Those contrasting attitudes become readily apparent and should be taken into consideration when choosing which minister(s) you follow.

#### E. HEBREWS 13:17

***“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”***

Again, notice the repetition of Scripture. Spiritual leaders are ***those who will give an account*** to the Chief Shepherd. My point again: they understand that their ultimate accountability is not horizontal, but vertical. They want to serve and be pleasing to their boss.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Spiritual discernment says believers should avoid “ministers” who play all sides. In love, cut to the chase with ministers in your midst:

- What does he say about the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone, by faith alone?
- Does he vacillate in order to please people and gain a larger audience?
- Does he strive to please the One who enlisted him as a bond servant of Christ?

One quick way to ascertain a legitimate minister and ministry is as follows:

**Does the chaplain sanction all religions, or does he take the heat for standing up for the exclusivity of Christ?**

For sure, those who do not compromise their calling will be persecuted for their singularity. But remember, persecution and suffering are normative for the church leader and every believer alike. As a matter of fact, if the leader in the church or the saint in the pew is not suffering for his faith, perhaps he is failing to proclaim the exclusivity of Christ loud enough. (Cf. Romans 8:17; Philemon 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Timothy 1:12, 2:3, 2:9; 1 Peter 2:20, 3:14.)

Acts 20:26–27 is an apt summary conclusion:

***“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men”*** (v. 26).

Why?

***“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God”*** (v. 27).

*Elias Boudinot (continued)*

**the most interesting history, I should still urge you to look into your Bible. I would make it, in short, the Alpha and Omega of knowledge.”**

— Elias Boudinot, President of Congress, signer of the peace treaty to end the American Revolutionary War, first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, framer of the Bill of Rights, Director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, *The Age of Revelation, or the Age of Reason Shewn to be An Age of Infidelity* (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickins, 1801), xv, from his “Dedication: Letter to his daughter Susan Bradford.”





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