

Life on Life: Personal Ministry 201
January-February, 2021

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Life on Life: The Art of Personal Ministry (201)

Class One – January 3, 2021

Why is Personal Ministry Needed in the Church?

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ. Ephesians 4:15

I. Purpose of believers in the church - *Glorify God By Means of the Great Commission*

A. Glorify God

Psalm 72:19b – May the whole earth be **filled with His glory**

Matt 5:16 – Let your light shine so **they may glorify your Father** in heaven

1 Cor. 10:31 – Whatever you do, do it all **to the glory of God**

B. Fulfill the Great Commission by making disciples

Matt 28:18-20 – *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded....*

C. Reflect Christ to a lost and dying world

John 17:20-23 – *I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their words; that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in Me and I in you, that they also may be in us that the world may believe....*

1 Cor. 11:1 – *Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ*

II. The Church is called

A. Called to entrust to faithful people what was entrusted to us (2 Tim. 2:2)

B. Called to lead each member to maturity (“progressive sanctification”)

1. Romans 8:28-29 – And we know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His son** that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

2. 2 Cor. 5:9 – *We make it our ambition... to be **pleasing to God***

3. Ephesians 4:11-14 – *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to a mature man... so that we may no longer be children...***

4. Colossians 1:28-29 – *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man... **that we may present every man complete in Christ***

- C. Called to teach, admonish, exhort, encourage, comfort, build up “one another”
1. 1 Thess. 5:14 – *We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men...*
 2. Colossians 3:16 – *Let Christ’s Word dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...*
 3. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 – *All scripture is God-breathed, and profitable for instruction, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
 4. Gal. 6:1 – *Brothers, if anyone is overtaken in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore him in a spirit of gentleness.*
 5. James 5:19-20 – *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*
 6. Heb. 3:12-13 – *Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, that falls away from the living God. But exhort one another day after day as long as it still called today, lest any of you be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.*

III. The Church and the Bible

- A. The Bible says that through the **true knowledge** of Christ, we will experience multiplied grace and peace, and we have everything needed for abundant life and godliness (2 Peter 1:2-3). Those who adhere to it will have a restored soul, confidence, joy, opened eyes, endurance, warning and reward. (Psalm 19:7-12)
- B. Those w/o Christ and those with Christ not living as if these things are true need to bring the Bible to bear on their life and that is where a life-on-life relationship helps.
1. FBC receives about three help requests per week (without advertising that it is available). We are currently able to fill about 65% of those requests.
 2. About 1/3 of our requests are from outside FBC.
 3. A small percentage (15%?) of those asking for help do not know Christ.
 4. Requests for help are #1 (relational) and #2 (personal).
- C. We need to equip one another how to use the scriptures to help ourselves, our families and others with whom we come into contact, to address the problems of life that we all encounter through Christ. ***That is Life-on-Life Personal Ministry.***

IV. How can I know what to tell someone who asks for help or shows the need for it?

The answer to “what do I tell someone” depends on what is true. Problems don’t always align easily as “I got in trouble for stealing, what should I do?” (Don’t steal, admit the truth, make reparations, get some guidance for how to walk in the truth). Often problems are more confusing. So in these cases, how do I determine what is true?

Theological Pyramid on Which Life on Life Personal Ministry Rests

Practical Theology

How to change and grow

As a single mother of a 3 year old, I struggle with anxiety about what will happen to my daughter if something happens to me.

Systematic Theology

Unifies "fruit" of Biblical theology into a useable whole

What is there about God, the nature of man, my tendency towards sin, and my relationship with Him that could help me understand how my love for my daughter and desire to be responsible could produce anxiety? How can I replace it with peace and confidence for the future and the unknown?

Biblical Theology

Propositional statements, doctrine

The Bible teaches me that the nature of man is not to trust God but to mistakenly trust oneself, that God is sovereign, good and almighty, and that in letting go of my life for Christ's sake, I'll find it.

Exegesis

Translation, vocabulary, grammar, forms, structural relations, syntax

I can examine Genesis 50:20, Exodus and Israel's distrustful relationship with God, Numbers 16 (Korah's Rebellion), 1 Kings 17 (Elijah and the widow at Zarapheth), Proverbs 3:5-6 and 14:12, Isaiah 26:3 and 55:8-9, Jeremiah 2:10-13 and 17:9, Lamentations 3:22-38, Matthew 6:25-34, Rom. 8:31-39, Hebrews 11.

Hermeneutics

Grammatical historical method

Here is where I'll recognize that direct, didactic instruction helps me see what to believe and do, and narrative helps me see a display of the development of a relationship with God, both in the failure to trust and in repenting so as to trust. I'll properly interpret narrative and didactic literature since both help people trust and obey.

Canon

Inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency

My confidence in God's inerrant and sufficient word instructs me to go there for the answers to life.

Personal Ministry: Life on Life Definition

Life-on-life personal ministry is a **unique relationship** characterized by five components.

- **First**, it is a ***discipling relationship*** offered by a maturing believer to another person who faces personal struggle (like financial stress, depression, chronic anger, anxiety, marriage tensions).
- **Second**, it is offered with the conviction that the Bible is ***authoritative and sufficient*** to supply the answers God wants us to know to solve or live confidently with the problems we face.
- **Third**, the relationship is marked by ***caring, humble, gracious acceptance of the person in need as well as teaching, correction and exhortation*** (see John 1:14, 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 3:16-17).
- **Fourth**, this is offered as part of ***life in community with God's people***. It is not a doctor/patient sort of relationship. What is learned in this relationship is reinforced in community.
- **Finally**, Personal Ministry is offered with the goal of the ***individual's maturity in Christ*** (2 Cor. 5:9, Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:28-29) and the ***long-term strengthening of the church*** (Eph. 4:12-16). There is *no situation* for which God has not made victory certain (2 Cor. 2:14) and there is *no situation* that is so great that God's love and sustaining grace does not cover us (Rom. 8:31-39).

Life-on-Life Personal Ministry is:

- 1. Rooted in God's authority**
Matt 28:18
Matt 9:6
- 2. Rooted in Christ's sufficiency**
Col 2:9-10
2 Peter 1:2-3
- 3. Rooted in the sufficiency of scriptures**
Psalm 19
2 Tim 3:16-17
- 4. Superior to the wisdom of men**
Isaiah 55:8-9
Prov. 3:5-7
1 Cor. 1:18-25; 2:12-13
- 5. The Bible is inerrant so it has the authority**
Prov. 30:5-6
2 Tim. 3:16-17
2 Pet. 1:19-21, 3:1-2
Rom. 15:4-6

V. Classroom Discussion Questions

A. Progressive sanctification

Read aloud at the group **James 1:22-25** and **Colossians 1:28-29**. How do these passages align with the goal of progressive sanctification?

B. Life-on-Life Personal Ministry (also known as Biblical Counseling)

Discuss with your group the ten statements you underlined or highlighted in the booklet by Lou Priolo, "What to Expect From Biblical Counseling."

VI. Homework

A. Scripture Memory Verse (3 minutes x 6 days = ~ 20 minutes)

Ephesians 4:15

B. Read attached brief essay on Biblical Authority by John Morrison in anticipation of next week. Highlight or jot down 1-2 takeaways for you. **(15 minutes)**

C. Practical Training Exercise (20 minutes)

Make three vertical columns on a piece of paper.

Left column, entitle "*Event or Challenge.*"

Center column, entitle "*World, Flesh, Devil.*"

Right column, entitle "*Holding All Thoughts Captive to Christ.*"

Event or Challenge	World, Flesh, Devil	Holding Thoughts Captive to Christ

Three times this week, **jot a challenge or conflict that you encounter** that could or did lead to **disappointment, anger or frustration**. In the center column, write what *the world, your flesh or the devil* would say about the particular situation. In the right hand column, write what you believe the Lord would say about it, with supporting scripture if possible.

This is part of training us to see how in our own lives and in the lives of those we minister to, it really is a choice between biblical thinking and "other."

What is Biblical Authority and What Does it Mean?

John Morrison

Authority is the right to rule. It is the reason a subservient obeys a superior in rank, a child obeys a parent or a student obeys a teacher.

For example, God expresses authority in Isaiah 45:9: "*Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'?*" God reminds us: He made us and has the right to command us.

Biblical authority refers to the Bible's claims over people. Wikipedia accurately states, *Biblical Authority refers to the extent to which the commands and doctrines within the Old and New Testament scriptures are authoritative over human belief and conduct.*

The concept of Biblical Authority flows from a few theological claims. First, that God is our authority. Second, that the Bible is His revealed Word and will. Third, the Bible in its original autographs is inerrant and infallible. Fourth, we have a completely reliable text. If God does not justly claim to be our authority, if the Bible is not His Word, if our Bible is unreliable, then we cannot make authority claims of the Bible. But if He claims to be our authority, if the Bible is His revealed Word, if it is without error (and therefore reliable), then its authority can be convincingly claimed.

Biblical inerrancy is the idea that the Bible "in its original autographs is without error." We hold that it is completely God-breathed and God-preserved, and that the Bibles we have are faithful translations of extremely well-preserved texts, which are 99.9% pure copies of the original autographs. The .5% variant readings within the 25,000 extant manuscripts are infinitesimal. We can have complete confidence in the Bible we have. We do not have space in this short essay to validate all these claims¹, but we can at least articulate them.

Biblical infallibility is an outgrowth of the Bible's assertion that God cannot lie (Num. 23:19; Tit. 1:2). It means that if the Bible is God's word, it cannot contain error, since no one *informs Him of anything* (Isaiah 40:12-14), and *He declares the end from the beginning* (Isaiah 46:10). Since there's nothing He does not know, since He cannot be corrected and cannot lie, if the Bible in its original autographs is His word and if we have a well-preserved copy of that canon, then the Bible does not and cannot contain error, and that supports its authority.

The utter reliability of the Bible is indicated in many ways. One of those is its remarkable **foretelling of the future** in 100's of verses. For example, Micah 5:2 says the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. *He was* (Matthew 2:1). He was to be a son of David from the root of Jesse (2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 11:10), and *He was* (Matthew 1:6, Luke 2:1-7, Romans 15:12). Psalm 22:14-18 describes the Messiah's "*bones out of joint*", "*feet and hands pierced*" and "*garments divided and lots cast for his clothing*" and *they were* (Matthew 27:35). It is all the more remarkable that Psalm 22 was written around 950 BC, but crucifixion was not invented until 600 hundred years later (Wikipedia, *Crucifixion*).

Another way the Bible reveals its reliability is its **internal consistency**. God uses forty authors over 2000 years, yet each of 66 books points to the redemption of sinful man through the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus.

From Genesis 3:15 (*bruise him on the head*) to Isaiah 53 (*pierced for our transgressions*) to Jesus revealing Himself to Saul in Acts 9, to the glory of the Lamb in Revelation 22 (cf., Isa. 6), this book points to the glory of the Son of God who redeems men and who in turn points to the glory of the Father (John 17:4).

That mark of reliability brings us back to the issue of authority. If what you say is without error, then you have authority. God's authority stems from His perfections. Deut. 32:4 says, "*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*" If God is authority personified, and the Bible is *His word* (2 Tim. 3:16-17), then the Bible has authority.

Jesus displays His recognition of the Word as authoritative when He uses the Word as *His* authority when combatting temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). We see the same reliance on the Word as normative for us in Ephesians 6:14 ("*girding your loins with truth*") where we learn that truth, which is the Word of God (John 17:17) is the first part of our spiritual armor and Ephesians 6:17 ("*taking up the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*") where it is the final piece of armor as well as the only offensive weapon.

Though at times the Bible directly asserts its authority (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21), other times its authority is inferred. Matthew 7:28-29 tells us that when Jesus taught, the people marveled because He taught as "one having authority." Since the Bible records His words (cf., Matthew 7:24-27, *everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man...*) and is written to tell His story (cf., John 20:30-31 *these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ*), we can infer that the Bible speaks authoritatively about the One who taught authoritatively.

When the Pharisees asked Him *by what authority* He cleansed the temple, He appealed to the baptism of John (Matthew 21:23-27), at which time God affirmed Him from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.*" That He is 'God's Son' automatically conveys authority. If that wasn't enough, He adds to those words at the Mount of Transfiguration where He said, "*Hear Him!*" As a result, authority is clearly vested in the Son (Matt. 28:18 *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*; John 17:2 *You gave Him authority over all flesh*). If He has the authority, then His Word carries that authority.

¹Walt Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable*
Josh McDowell, *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*
Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked* (chapter 4)
FF Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable*