

David Houston's
The Ministry of a Pastor
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8/10/88

How to be Somebody-- by Guest Speaker

Luke 8:41-56 tells of Jesus on his way to Jairus's daughter to raise her from the dead. During Jesus' journey He was touched by a woman and He asks, "who is the one who touched Me?" (verse 45). Jesus said in verse 46, "someone did touch Me." Regardless of who we are or what we have, we are not anybody until God touches us. Only the touch of Christ makes us someone--somebody with a vision and a purpose.

The disciples saw this journey as an important mission since much success could come from Jesus' healing the daughter. However, on the way, Jesus was interrupted. **During important missions, there will be times when we will be interrupted**, but we should not get irritated or frustrated because God will sometimes use us during these interruptions. The woman who had a hemorrhage thought she could just touch Christ and slip into the crowd unnoticed. "When you touch Christ, He touches you." God can pick you out of the crowd.

21 Important Things for the Life of a Pastor

First, you must have **daily devotion** and dig into the Word since this is the source of your power. Second, **form a prayer list** and put yourself at the top and then pray for your friends and enemies. Third, develop the skill and the art of **preaching**. Be a **self-starter** and **set up goals and objectives**. Objectives will help you attain your goals. Next, be a **listener**, a **follower**, and a **leader**. Ninth, **bloom** where you are planted. **Offer disappointments to God**. **Major in love and minor in criticism**. Be thankful and appreciative to God. "**Learn from other peoples' mistakes**, you'll never live long enough to make them all yourself." Fifteenth, be careful how you use the words "**my church**" since it is Jesus' church. "It's only your church because you belong to it, it doesn't belong to you, it belongs to Christ." People who have belonged to a church for so long sometimes make the mistake that the church is theirs'. Eighteenth, **keep your freedom to change**--to grow and develop. Nineteenth, beware of **jealousy and competition** with one another. Beware of comparing your church with another. God can do a work in your life if you get our eyes off of yourself and onto God.

Confess Your Sins to One Another

David Houston, a pastor for 10 years, talked about an experience in his church. "God sovereignly began opening up peoples' lives' and bringing forth unconfessed sin. It started with one man with a very serious sexual sin that he was involved in for many years." This started a chain reaction among the people to confess their sins. After one and one-half weeks, David preached on holiness and the importance of confessing your sins and the danger of hiding your sin. **Prov. 28:13** says, "he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper." About one-third of the

church stood up after David's message, because of either unconfessed sin or just to have someone stand with them in battling their sin. He then had them confess their sin that they are battling to their discipler so that he could stand with them. **James 5:16** says, "confess your sin one to another." We've seen the Catholics abuse this Scripture, but Protestants don't give it enough consideration. We don't confess our sin for the other person to say, "O.K. I forgive you, your sins are forgiven--your sins are cleansed." Instead David says "there is something about doing that, humbling myself before my brother, that enables me to get the victory in that sin--especially sexual sins. I have found in my short time pastoring, if there are sexual sins, in particular, that operate in darkness, and if you will expose it in the light, if you will humble yourself and share it with your discipler or your pastor it will give you the necessary punch to get the victory, and if you don't many times you will never get the victory over it. There is that subtle lie that comes in and says, 'if I tell my discipler or pastor I am going through this he will think less of me--he will reject me. I believe I can get the victory on my own-- I will read the Bible more or pray more.' You can do all the things you want to, but if God is zeroing in on that area then you will not get the victory until you go to your brother or sister and confess your sin and say, 'you stand with me.'"

It is important to walk in humility and acceptance before one another. We are a performance oriented generation. Many of us did not have good moms and dads that we could really share with. "There is that fear of rejection-- that hesitancy to go to an authority and share with them our weakness and sins... The fear of rejection can be stronger than pride."

Church Discipline

The man with a sexual sin of pornography did not confess his sin to David sooner because he was afraid David would kick him out of the church. Many people may have a misunderstanding of the Scriptures pertaining to church discipline:

And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he **does not listen to you**, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he **refuses** to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he **refuses** to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. (**Matt. 18:15-17**)

If misunderstood, these Scriptures could scare someone from sharing his sins to anyone, especially after he has tried to repent from them. The key word in these Scriptures is "**refuse**." Suppose a brother comes to a pastor and says that he has a problem in a certain sin, and then he comes back six months later saying that he fell in the same sin. "Does that mean he refused to listen to me, or does that mean **he is having a problem over-coming it.**" The church at Corinth had people with terrible sins, but they did not automatically cast people out. "**We want to teach people to hate sin and to fight sin, but there is an area of standing with one another-- of compassion-- of understanding** and being patient with one another and saying 'brother, I am going to stand with you and we are going to beat this thing in the name of Jesus.' **Refusing to listen** is where a person says, 'oh, I believe I can do this and be a Christian. I believe this doesn't matter to God, I can walk in this lust. God doesn't matter. I don't care what the Bible says. I can do it.' If this person refuses the clear Scriptures and the witness of the church, then with tears in your eyes, you go the first step, then take it in front of the church and say, 'we love this brother, but he doesn't understand his sin'

is going to kill him and he'll lose his salvation if he continues in his sin. This is a sin unto death, and we are bringing it before the whole church to let you know that we pleaded with him to repent and **he will not repent** of it. So we are going to have to remove him from the church." **This incident is different from a person who is having to fight against strong principalities over him that holds him in sin.**

Group Support

We can learn from Alcoholics Anonymous since they have taken a principle out of the Bible that is working for them. They don't teach repentance or the blood of Jesus, but they have a **group support** system, a group encouragement, "where people who want to beat their problem get together and they say, 'I got a problem in this area, and I'm finally confessing that and I'm saying I need help.'" They each have accountability and are standing with one another, and they have some success as a result of the group coming together and supporting each other.

Encouragement in Confessing Sin

David was recently battling lust and God told him to tell his leaders to stand with him. After he removed his pride, he confessed his sin and an amazing thing happened. The leaders were tremendously encouraged saying, "wow, you're having problems." They then confessed they were having problems in the same area.

The most encouraging tape that people write to David about is the one where Houston cursed out of anger. "**People need to hear that leaders have problems.**" David was angry with his children and said, "damn it," on the tape. People wrote that when they heard how he confessed his cursing, they were encouraged and blessed. There needs to be that openness and transparency. People should not have to battle that fear of rejection and fear of losing their leadership. Unconfessed sin will erode your confidence, personality, and bring decay and all kinds of problems. I wonder "how many men right here are having problems with lust or masturbation or some area of sexual sin that you don't feel the liberty to go to your discipler or pastor and tell him about it. You need to do that. You need to fight off that fear of rejection." The pastor must provide an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement.

Patience with Those Who are Weak

We need to realize that no one is perfect, but we all have weak areas. **James 3:2** says, "we all stumble in **many ways.**" "**Because I'm strong in one area, I tend to think everybody ought to be strong in this area.**" We can't just go to our weaker brother and say, "if you just meditate on the Word, if you just speak the Word out of your mouth like I do you'll be free from it. I don't know what your problem is. Why can't you get free of this thing." C. S. Lewis says, "about half the time when we credit ourselves' with virtue, it is really just a matter of temperament and constitution and not of spirituality." "Sometimes our personality, or temperament is just full of faith or boldness." Some people are just born that way. "**We need to have patience and mercy in dealing with other people.**" Jewish legend has the following story:

When God was about to create man, He took into account some of the angels who stood

about His throne. "Don't create man," said the angel of justice, "for if you do he will commit all kinds of wickedness against his fellow man-- he will be hard and cruel and dishonest."

"Create him not," said the angel of truth," for he will be false and deceitful to his brother and even to You." Create him not," said the angel of holiness, "for he will follow that which is impure and unholy and dishonor You to Your face."

Then stepped forth the angel of **mercy**, God's most beloved angel. And he said, "Create him our heavenly Father, **for when he sins and turns away from justice, truth, and purity, I will take him tenderly by the hand and speak loving words to him and lead him back to You.**"

"God wants to release a new mercy, a new tenderness, a new compassion in our ministry."

A Father's Heart

"A pastor must have a father's heart." The best training ground for being a pastor is having a family and taking care of children. The apostle Paul had a father's heart as described in **1 Thess. 2:5-12**. History tells us that "Paul was a short man whose speech was unimpressive, but Paul had tremendous authority in the churches. Do you know where his authority came from? It did not come from loud, harsh preaching. It did not come from an insecure man who said, 'I'm the apostle; I founded this church; You're going to do what I say.' **It [Paul's authority] came from a man who had a servant's heart, a father's heart toward people, who loved them and got under them and wanted them to be everything they could be in God. And because of that they would do anything for that man, and they gave him authority in their lives'.**" **1 Cor. 4:15** tells that Paul felt like a father to the church at Corinth. He loved them and cared for them as a good father would his own children.

Characteristics of a Good Father

First, "**the father should understand and impart to his children that their worth is in who they are and not what they are doing.**" David's children have not done a lot for his family, but his love for them is not dependant upon what they do for him. He loves his children and considers them having great worth just because they are his children. As pastors we need to oppose performance orientation in our people. "We need to teach them that their acceptance from God is based on what Jesus Christ has done and not what they are doing." Maranatha, with its high goals and standards draws people who are high achievers and hard workers. "The root and trunk of life from which all branches spring is your relationship with your mom and your dad... God is clothed with the same mannerisms of our mom and our dad. And if you could never please your dad, your soul tends to think God is the same way... People need inner healing. The reason they are the way they are is because of the dad they had. **Now that's not to give you an excuse for sin.** God will give grace, but part of that grace God is pouring out on us is inner healing, deliverance, breaking curses. It is so important for you to realize you are a part of your parents' upbringing, especially their love, their words of love and affirmation or lack of it."

Joe Smith prophesied to Maranatha Ministries, "I shall raise up gentle people among you.

I shall raise up those who will be like a gentle breeze. I shall bring forth pastors who have a tenderness toward my people. Now **prepare your hearts to receive them. Do not refuse the pastor** or people who I raise up to speak tenderly and kindly to the people." We are too used to a militant leader who is always pushing us to do more. God is the god of all encouragement, so we should always go to Him. **Jer. 3:15** says, "I [God] will give you shepherds [pastors] after My own heart."

Second, a good father should have "**a positive, continuous, never ending believing in his children...** Every pastor needs to develop a ministry of encouragement." The pastor needs to develop an atmosphere of security and acceptance so that people will feel free to take risks, which involve possible mistakes.

Third, a good father **cultivates an atmosphere of freedom to fail.** A pastor needs to not lash out in the same bad spirit that someone else does toward him. This makes them feel secure to be open and disagree, rather than holding their thoughts to themselves. The pastor will not always have the word of the Lord. Openness starts with the pastor and goes through to the leaders to the church. We need to be sincere with one another, and let the "cracks" in our life show.

Fourth, a good father's "**fulfillment is intertwined with his children. They are a great part of his future.**" David's passion in life is to see each member grow up to be all that they can be in God. David takes joy in the success and prosperity of his flock. A pastor progressively loses sight of himself and wraps himself in the lives' of his people. People should feel comfortable about being around the pastor. He needs to believe in people even when they don't believe in themselves. People will live to meet that expectation. A lot of pastoral care is just listening to people.