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Sermon Notes

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## **Elements of a Fruitful Ministry**

### **Colossians 1:24-29**

Every year, experts on church growth pump out new assessments of what makes a successful church ministry:

Elements include good facilities with ample parking; friendly people greeting visitors; excellent child care; a wide variety of programs for all ages and all interest levels; comfortable sanctuary with plenty of seating; high energy worship with contemporary music; etc. etc. etc.

Recent innovations have pushed beyond this: some churches have the equivalent of food courts, computer game arcades, cutting edge use of audio-visual equipment; others are part of the “Emerging Church” movement and advocate radical approaches including abandoning Sunday morning worship; going for a more relational missional approach in which lost people are engaged in their home turf seven days a week

Closer to home for me as a pastor, these same people will tell me what I need to do and be to have a successful ministry: what kind of social skills, what kind of managerial style is best, what kind of clothes I should wear or how much I should smile while preaching... how to use cable TV, podcasts, internet resources, etc.

Some of these ministry experts put on glitzy pastor’s conferences in which pastors can be trained in these kinds of techniques to ensure success in their local churches

A deeper question flows right from the chapter we’ve looked at now for four weeks: in light of the awesome supremacy of Christ:

- The image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation
- Creator of all things visible and invisible
- Ruler over all authorities, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities
- Head of the church... redeemer of every man woman or child who will ever attain heaven

- In light of all this, what kind of ministry will accomplish His worldwide purposes?
- What kind of ministry will truly establish Christ in the hearts of people to the ends of the earth?

Paul's Pattern for Fruitful Ministry: Eight Elements (1:24-29)

Stewardship Joy Suffering Full Proclamation Christ-Focus Shepherding  
Goal: Maturity Co-Labor

### **I. Stewardship Perspective (vs. 23, 25)**

***Colossians 1:23 This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.***

***Colossians 1:25 of [the church]I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known***

- A. "Minister" = servant, tablewaiter... someone who receives something from a master and obeys
- B. Paul considers himself a servant of the church by the commission or stewardship entrusted him by God
  1. Key: our spiritual gifts and the ministries that connect with them are given for the good of the church
  2. They are not our talents alone, to enjoy for our own benefit
  3. They are given to build up the church, to serve the church
- C. Paul had an acute sense of stewardship, of something entrusted to him by Christ
  1. Vs. 25 uses the word commonly translated "stewardship"
  2. The idea is a servant who is entrusted with someone else's property, who manages it on behalf of the master

***NASB 1 Corinthians 9:16-17 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. <sup>17</sup> For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.***

***1 Corinthians 4:1-2 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. <sup>2</sup> Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.***

#### D. Application:

1. Do you believe that Christ has entrusted a ministry to you? If not, what are you doing with your life??
2. Do you see yourself as a servant of the church which Christ bought with His blood?
3. Do you see the gospel message itself and the word of God as something precious, entrusted you by Christ for the good of His people?
4. Do you see yourself on judgment day giving this stewardship back to the Master and giving him a careful account of what you did with it? Paul did!!

***2 Corinthians 5:9-10 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

#### II. Sustaining Joy (vs. 24)

***Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you***

1. Paul had a powerful commitment to JOY in the Christian ministry

***2 Corinthians 6:10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing***

2. This was a prior commitment, a command to be obeyed
3. Almost all of Philippians is given to addressing the attitude

***Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!***

4. Joy is the only proper response to the greatness of the hope Christ has purchased for us... the hope of glory in the New Heavens and the New Earth
5. This is VERY DIFFICULT but ESSENTIAL in ministry: **JOY in Christ**

Illus. Canary in a Coal Mine... a fragile bird in a cage, an early warning system of trouble with the air in the tunnels; lightweight bird very sensitive to methane gas or to carbon monoxide, which is odorless and colorless

If the tiny yellow bird was singing happily on its perch, all was well; But if the bird began to sway and swoon, stagger and fall, they knew there was great danger

Joy is the fragile early warning system of our service to Christ

The attitude with which we serve means everything:

***2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

God doesn't just love a giver... but a cheerful giver

God doesn't just love a missionary... but a cheerful missionary; the issue is JOY

- a. Satan sends joy thieves against us every day to rob our joy in Christ
- b. If Satan can get us grumbling, complaining, out of sorts, he knows our gospel will be completely unattractive to a watching world
- c. Conversely, an otherworldly, supernatural joy in all afflictions is the most attractive apologetic the world has ever seen

Illus. Paul and Silas, beaten publicly and thrown in a nasty jail, chose to rejoice and worship Christ; singing in the Philippian jail led to a supernatural earthquake and the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his whole family, and the establishment of the Philippian church

BUT if they had been sullen, joyless, complainers, none of that would have happened

God's power is unleashed when we rejoice in the midst of afflictions! People get saved!!!

6. A commitment to joy is a commitment to defend it against all joy thieves
  - a. Pride is a joy thief: it says "I don't deserve the trials I am facing... I deserve better than this"
  - b. Selfishness is a joy thief
  - c. A guilty conscience is a joy thief
  - d. Unbelief is a joy thief
  - e. False doctrine and works religion is a joy thief
  - f. Sin is the greatest joy thief
7. David's mighty men... one of them, (2 Samuel 23:8) Josheb-Basshebeth killed eight hundred men in one encounter with a spear!! How do you do that? ONE AT A TIME!!
  - a. So we must take on each temptation and each joy-thief one at a time and defeat them!
  - b. Colossians 3 will tell us how...

**III. Embracing Suffering (vs. 24)**

1. Paul specifically rejoices about the suffering given for the Colossians

***Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.***

- a. Many translations speak of Paul's suffering for the Colossians... but the Greek doesn't support this
- b. It's more the suffering of Epaphras, and whoever else labored to plant that church
- c. Larger issue: a royal heritage of brothers and sisters who

***"Did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."***

d. MARTYR STORIES

- i) Tertullian: "The blood of martyrs is seed for the church"; That is precisely how the simple gospel message conquered the mighty Roman empire... as one Christian after another was willing to die as a martyr rather than renounce Christ
- ii) Polycarp, burned at the stake, saying "Eight-six years I have served him and he's never failed me. How can I betray my king who saved me?"
- iii) Perpetua: who said to the Roman prefect: "While I live, I shall defeat you; and if you kill me, I shall defeat you even more!"
- iv) Other kinds of suffering: like Medieval missionaries trained on the Rocky windswept island of Iona by Columba and sent out over the spiritual darkness that was Western Europe to suffer privation, rejection, bodily abuse, harsh weather, poverty, and even death to establish the gospel even among the Viking lands
- v) Adoniram Judson: who buried two wives and a child in his efforts to establish the church of Jesus Christ in hostile Burma
- vi) Today: unknown heroes in the Muslim world; like in Iran,
  - Mehdi Dibaj was a hero of the faith. He had been born into a mega-rich Muslim family in Iran. As a teenager, he asked Christ to be his Savior after reading a tract. Later he attended seminary and became a missionary in Iran.
  - In 1979 he was put in jail for 68 days because of his beliefs. In 1984 he was arrested again. While in jail he experienced stuff like solitary confinement (for 2 solid years!), mock executions, and regular beatings.

- What's more, in 1988 his wife divorced him and went back to being a Muslim after being threatened with death by stoning. Church and family members took custody of his four children.
- Yet, a few years later while still in prison, Mehdi wrote these words to his son: "What a privilege to live for our Lord and to die for Him as well."
- In 1994, he finally gained release from prison. For the next 6 months he traveled around Iran encouraging fellow believers. Then he was murdered.
- He died for Christ. Life was not as important as the love and hope he had found for eternity.

WE WILL SPEND ETERNITY GLORIFYING IN CHRIST BY LISTENING TO THE ACCOUNTS OF HUMBLE SERVANTS WHO WERE WILLING TO SUFFER TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL...

Paul REJOICES in what was suffered for the Colossian Christians

Perhaps Epaphras faced great suffering and persecution in order to plant this church

In any case, Paul rejoiced in the principle of displaying the worth of Christ by what His servants are willing to suffer to see Him glorified

BUT... Paul goes beyond that in the theology of suffering

2. Deep questions about this verse!! Colossians 1:24

- a. Why does Paul rejoice in what was suffered for the Colossians?
- b. What does Paul mean when he says

***Vs. 24 I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.***

3. "What is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions"

- a. Cannot mean that anything is lacking in Christ's blood atonement for sin
  - i) Colossians has already established the perfection of Christ's suffering for us

***Colossians 1:19-20 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.***

- ii) Jesus' victor's cry:

***John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.***

- b. No... Christ's sufferings are perfect and nothing can be added
  - i) Certainly does not teach purgatory, or that our own suffering can in any way atone for our sins
  - ii) Our own suffering can NEVER atone for sin
- c. What then? Well... Christ's work of redemption was perfectly accomplished at the cross, but not yet perfectly applied
  - i) The message of the gospel had to be preached to lost people
  - ii) The spread of the gospel message to the distant shores would finish the work of redemption
  - iii) And that work could only be advanced by people willing to SUFFER

***John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.***

- iv) Paul's own sufferings were for the sake of the advance of the gospel... an essential part of God's plan for the world

***2 Corinthians 11:23-27 I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.***

- v) These sufferings were the sufferings of Christ... just as Paul himself learned on the Road to Damascus, as he continued breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's Disciples

***Acts 9:3-5 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.***

vi) Every unreached people group has been evangelized only at the cost of missionaries and martyrs who were willing to lose their lives that others might believe

vii) This is what Paul means by

4. Now... why does he rejoice in what was suffered for the Colossians?

- a. It doesn't matter which Christian paid the price in blood, sweat and tears to plant the church at Colosse
- b. It was a GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT, done to the glory of God!
- c. God ordained not only that Christ suffer for the church but also that WE should suffer for it as well
- d. The price of martyr's blood, of missionary sweat, of pastors' tears is GLORIOUS to God, and for this Paul rejoices

5. Application

- a. What are you willing to suffer to reach your target group?
- b. Are you zealous to add your sweat, tears, prayers, labor, and maybe even your blood to the long and glorious record of our brothers and sisters in Christ?
- c. Do you rejoice in the suffering it takes to plant a church? The more we suffer the more will be our glory on judgment day, when Christ will reward each act

#### **IV. Full Proclamation (vs. 25)**

***Colossians 1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness***

***Colossians 1:28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.***

1. The essence of Paul's ministry was the proclamation of the word... preaching, teaching the word of God in its fullness
2. Preaching is at the center of God's plan for the salvation of the world
  - a. Greek: focus in vs. 25, is on "fullness" or completeness of the ministry of the word; in vs. 28, on proclamation
  - b. Paul is preaching the gospel, yes, but much more than the milk

***Acts 20:20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.***

***Acts 20:27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.***

3. Paul deeply yearns to run the race to the finish line... to proclaim the WHOLE word of God

***Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.***

4. Paul is serving the church as a steward of the mysteries of the word of God
5. This is essential to the fullness of the Great Commission

***Matthew 28:19-20 go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

6. Application
  - a. Can you plant a church among your target group without this? NO
  - b. You must be totally committed to presenting the word of God in its fullness
  - c. It is a deep and thorough ministry of the word of God... proclaiming the WHOLE COUNSEL of God's word
  - d. Too often these days pragmatism (the drive to achieve preordained goals... so many evangelistic encounters, so many baptisms, so many churches planted, etc., we neglect a thorough proclamation of the whole counsel of God's word

#### **V. Christ-Focus: "Christ in You, the Hope of Glory" (vs. 26-27)**

***Colossians 1:26-28 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. WE PROCLAIM HIM...***

1. This is the focus of Paul's entire preaching ministry: CHRIST
2. More specifically, the unveiling of a great mystery... a mystery hidden for ages and generations (in the Old Testament era)... that the Gentiles would join with Jews in "one new man"... not Jew, not Gentile, but CHRISTIAN... new

creation person... and that we would actually be INDWELT with God Himself

3. The indwelling of Christ by His Spirit was a mystery
4. The inclusion of the Gentiles in numbers far outstripping the Jews was a mystery
5. And Paul preaches this as the focus of his ministry:

***the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

6. Note the words
  - a. “the glorious riches”... a sense of immense and glorious wealth in the gospel... the vast inheritance of God Himself and of the New Heaven and the New Earth
  - b. Christ in you: the indwelling of Almighty God in Christ by the power of the Spirit, right within human hearts
    - i) AMAZING... the Christ whom Paul described so powerfully in chapter one, the “image of the invisible God, the one who created all things visible and invisible” and who reigns over all things for His glory... this Christ is actually IN you, dwelling inside you
    - ii) Thus we are called the “temple of the Holy Spirit”

***Romans 8:9-10 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.***

***1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?***

- c. “the hope of glory”: hope is for a certainty promised by God but which hasn’t come yet; Christ in our mortal bodies by His Spirit is called a deposit, a downpayment of the full inheritance we will get in the New Heaven and the New Earth

***Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their***

***God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***

This is the hope of glory... that our own bodies will be perfect, conformed to Christ's resurrection body and that we will dwell face to face with God in a perfect and glorious world

This is the center of Paul's preaching ministry: Christ in you, the hope of glory

7. "We proclaim Him"... Christ-centered preaching, from every text, in every sermon

a. Christ should be the center of our preaching ministry

***1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

b. Spurgeon illustration:

Preach Jesus Christ, brethren, always and everywhere; and every time you preach be sure to have much of Jesus Christ in the sermon. You remember the story of the old minister who heard a sermon by a young man, and when he was asked by the preacher what he thought of it he was rather slow to answer, but at last he said, "If I must tell you, I did not like it at all; there was no Christ in your sermon." "No," answered the young man, "because I did not see that Christ was in the text." "Oh!" said the old minister, "but do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, "There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I mean to keep on His track till I get to Him." "Well," said the young man, "but suppose you are preaching from a text that says nothing about Christ?" "Then I will go over hedge and ditch but what I will get at Him." [C.H. Spurgeon, Sermons Likely to Win Souls]

Obvious need for balance: vs. 25 speaks of presenting the "word of God in its fullness" and Acts 20 of proclaiming the whole counsel of God, anything that would be helpful

Verses 28 and 1 Corinthians 2 says "We proclaim HIM...Christ"... so all roads lead to Christ crucified

**DEAR FRIEND... ARE YOU SAVED? HAVE YOU TRUSTED CHRIST???**

## **VI. A Shepherding Heart (vs. 28)**

***Colossians 1:28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.***

1. Here Paul becomes very practical about the application of the word of God to the specific lives and hearts of his hearers

2. The ministry of the word of God must be forcefully APPLIED to people's daily lives... this is the SHEPHERDING to which we are called, the specific care of souls entrusted to our watchfulness

Here we see the NEGATIVE and POSITIVE APPLICATION of the word to individual souls as their needs arise... this is personal ministry, shepherding ministry

Negatively, ADMONISHING; Positively, TEACHING

3. "Admonishing"

- a. Incredibly important word... "noutheteo" the NEGATIVE aspect of ministry,

NANC: "National Association of Nouthetic Counselors" Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel...* essence of Biblical Counseling is Admonishment based on the word of God

- b. It has to do with wisely, spiritually confronting individuals in their sin
- c. It can be translated, "warning"
- d. It'll come up later in Colossians 3:16... showing how word-based this ministry is

***Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom***

- e. When you see one of your converts, or church members or children or even your spouse walking in sin, or if any of these come to you for counsel, it is your job to ADMONISH them based on the Word of Christ

4. "Teaching"

- a. This is the POSITIVE aspect of the personalized ministry
- b. Building them up in the doctrines of the faith... carefully building their knowledge of the faith brick by brick, dressed stone by dressed stone, until a magnificent city of truth is erected in their hearts
- c. This is what Christ meant in the Great Commission

***"Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"***

- d. It is not just information... but right doctrine, commands and promises from the living God, meant to transform their lifestyles

5. "Everyone with all wisdom"

- a. This is a personalized ministry, a personalized application of the word of God to individual people as their needs arise
- b. This is shepherding of souls... and it takes the wisdom of God to do it

## **VII. A Clear Goal: Maturity in Christ (vs. 28)**

***Colossians 1:28 so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.***

1. The Goal of a Healthy Ministry is clear: “presenting everyone perfect in Christ”
2. “presenting” implies on Judgment Day... like a masterpiece the aspiring apprentice presents to the master craftsman for his inspection, so will we present our ministries to Christ on judgment day...
3. and it will be PEOPLE we present to Him for His inspection... they are the fruit of our ministry
4. “Perfect” = “Mature”... not sinless perfection, but full maturity in Christ

***Luke 6:40 A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.***

5. Thus the goal is NOT MERELY CONVERSIONS... but fully mature disciples
  - a. Solid doctrinally
  - b. Strong in faith
  - c. With Christlike character
  - d. A Lifestyle of consistent obedience to God’s commands
6. It is so easy to slide into pragmatism in making easily measurable goals... how many baptisms, how many churches planted
7. But here the goal is this:

***“that we may present everyone perfect in Christ”***

## **VIII. Sustainable Labor with Christ (vs. 29)**

***Colossians 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.***

1. Here finally we see the immense LABOR that this kind of ministry entails, AND the eternally renewable source of energy for that labor

2. This kind of ministry is hard work and no mistake!!
3. Paul uses two words that give us a sense of that labor
  - a. *Kopiao* = to work to the point of exhaustion
  - b. *Agonizomai* = from which “agonize”, to struggle as in a military battle, hand to hand combat; or wrestling in a match for the Olympic crown

***2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger***

***1 Corinthians 4:12 We work hard with our own hands***

***Acts 20:34-35 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. <sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'***

I think Paul regularly worked in the evenings sowing tents to pay for his ministry, then did the work of evangelism in the marketplace by day and discipleship of believers in the evenings... incredible TOIL for the kingdom

***1 Thessalonians 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.***

And where does the strength come from to see this race through to the end?

Illus. It would take the Gross National Product of the United States of America for 100,000 years all focused on producing energy to keep the sun running for one second!!! The sun puts out that amount of energy second after second after second for thousands of years

God alone can sustain this kind of ministry for a lifetime!!!

4. “With all his energy which works so powerfully in me”
  - a. Christ, by the power of the Spirit, sustained Paul supernaturally in this labor
  - b. Each day’s trouble was sufficient for the day, and Christ gave to Paul the physical, mental and emotional strength he needed to keep going
  - c. This was CO-LABOR... Paul and Christ laboring together

***1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.***

5. Application:

- a. Are you working hard in your ministry... or are you coasting? It is so easy to find a comfortable niche and coast in the ministry... Paul's example of consistent hard work for the Kingdom convicts me... it should convict all of us
- b. On the other hand:
  - i) Do you feel exhausted in the ministry? Do you feel worn down, physically, mentally drained, emotionally spent?
  - ii) Come again to Christ and allow Him to renew you
  - iii) Thoughts of quitting are from Satan... Christ has limitless strength to give His servants
- c. Only that renewable energy source can keep us going to the end of our lives in ministry for Christ

Summary: So we have seen eight aspects of Paul's model ministry:

|                |     |           |                   |              |             |
|----------------|-----|-----------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Stewardship    | Joy | Suffering | Full Proclamation | Christ-Focus | Shepherding |
| Goal: Maturity |     | Co-Labor  |                   |              |             |

### **Overall Applications:**

1. Pray for this kind of ministry to develop and advance here at FBC. Pray for me to be this kind of a pastor, characterized by these eight elements.
2. Challenge yourself in the Christian life: embrace a ministry as a steward, for which you will give God an accounting.
3. How is your joy? We spoke of a canary in a coal mine... Are you consistently characterized by joy in the Lord, or by complaining, grumbling, discouragement or listlessness? Do you protect your joy from the thieves which can steal it?
4. Suffering: do you rejoice in the suffering it takes to advance the Kingdom? Do you honor the memory of missionaries, pastors, martyrs, and other suffering servants who were willing to lay down their lives for others? Real question: are you willing to suffer for Christ? To suffer in the internal journey of sanctification by FIGHTING TEMPTATION rather than yielding to it? To suffer in the external journey by being willing to take the gospel to a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or even to a lost person from another culture? To suffer the rejection or even persecution?
5. Full proclamation: do you delight in the FULL COUNSEL of God's word? Do you desire for a careful exposition of scripture when you hear sermons? Are you feeding yourself on the word and praying for others to do the same?

6. Christ-focus: Grow in a sense of constant dependence on Christ. He is the Vine, we the Branches... apart from Him, we can do nothing. Rely on Him more... speak prayers to Him throughout the day, acknowledging your total dependence on Him
7. Shepherding: “Admonishing” = willingness to confront someone lovingly in their sin; willing to give godly counsel to them; are you interested in a COUNSELING MINISTRY? We took some major steps in that direction in 2006-2007; but we need to do even more!!
8. Goal—Maturity: Are you personally growing? Do you keep ever before yourself the internal journey’s goal: “Complete in Christ”... perfect Christ-likeness. Are you involved in discipling someone else? We need older men to disciple younger men, older women to do the same for younger women
9. Co-labor: are you working hard for Christ? Do you have a sense of toil, labor, energy expended for the gospel? If not, what are you waiting for? What are you afraid of?