

# A PASTOR'S PRIORITY:

## “THE FLOCK OF GOD NEEDS MY PERSONAL HOLINESS”

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Robert Murray M'Cheyne once said: "The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness." This axiom must redound in the shepherd's heart continually. Many pursuits plague pastors today and busy them to such a degree that many shepherds have forgotten to keep the main thing the main thing. And O how easily business can distract us; even being busy with good matters! Yet the flock of God, more than anything else, needs my personal holiness. Dear man of God and leader who serves Christ's flock, you must remember: the flock needs your personal holiness!

### **1) The *priority* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: make the pursuit of holiness the driving ambition of your life. Don't let anything deter you, distract you, sway you, or discourage you away from the primary goal of God's election of you: holiness! O strive to be like Christ! Emulate Him! Seek Him. Commune with Him! Love Him! Savor Him. Diligently and determinatively drive toward holiness! If it's not your priority, then it certainly won't be that of your people's. Prioritize it!

### **2) The *necessity* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: listen to what God unambiguously declares: 'without holiness no one will see the Lord' (Heb 12:14). Let that truth ring in your ears daily. Rise early and pray that you'd be holy. As you go about your work, endeavor to excel at holiness. With your family, emulate holiness. As you lie down at night after a long (=trying, affliction-filled) day, resolve to be holy. Sir, if you are to enter heaven: be holy! Let your people see this in you.

### **3) The *pursuit* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: as a male, you pursue what you love. You did it with your wife. You did it in that sport. You did it for that reward. Remember, precious soul, that you must pursue holiness. If your flock doesn't see it in you, then they won't know *how* to pursue it. Let them see you pray, hear you evangelize, watch you suffer, experience you lead your family, and observe you prioritize your marriage above everything. Pray hard. Pray much. Read tirelessly. Memorize faithfully. Meditate diligently. Pursue holiness and the flock will see it, emulate it, mature in it and grow in the same.

### **4) The *community* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: kill individualism. It isn't helpful. Even as a pastor, fellowship with men. Be vulnerable. Talk about your sins, struggles, battles, and welcome accountability. Live in community. Ask men to hold you accountable. Live not only for Christ's people but also *with* them. Encourage one another as long as it is still called today so you aren't hardened by sin (Hebrews 3:13). Don't forget this. O man who leads: remember, a limb severed from the body won't live long. It'll soon die. Be a part of the flock. Model this. Be with God's people. Benefit from it. Love it. Embrace it. Delight in it.

### **5) The *joy* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: God's kind of person who lives under His reign has the joy in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in fact the Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4) and if the Spirit indwells you, then He makes you holy. As this happens, He pours joy in your soul (Romans 5:5). No greater joy can ever be found by a soul than the satisfying and ever-continuing pursuit of holiness and Christlikeness. For the glory of Christ and the joy of your soul: pursue holiness.

### **6) The *accountability* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: if *when* you fail, embrace reproof. Accept accountability to accelerate your holiness. Don't reject it. Mortify all pride and self-preservation. Welcome the man of God who worships his master enough to come to you and expose your sin and call you to repentance! O God is near to the humble, the broken, the penitent. He makes whole the bruised and beggars. Don't hide. Seek accountability to stimulate your growth!

### **7) The *example* of holiness.**

Dear man of God: exemplify holiness. Show the flock what it means to lead in prayer. Pray early. Pray often. Pray specifically. Pray watchfully. Pray fervently. Read, study, memorize, speak about and discuss God's precious Word. Model for your people what it is to prioritize your marriage. Say no to people when you need to say yes to your wife. Love her. Ravish her. Satisfy her. Love her. Cherish her. Lead your family and children in regular family worship. Let people see you do this frequently and with diligence. Trust God to save your children and pray faithfully & fervently for their souls. Manage your time well. Don't neglect the essentials for the innumerable good things. Shepherd your wife and family *before* you shepherd the flock. If you don't, then the other husbands will also follow your lead and neglect their families for other things. Model this, O shepherd! Be sure to repent quickly of all known. Keep very short accounts with God. Let no sin remain and let no vice grow deep in the soil of your heart. Pluck it quickly, decisively, and completely. Annihilate that soiled weed! Mortify your sin. Have violence and take pains with killing your sin. And do it quickly before the roots spread and thicken. And keep your heart tender and warm toward Christ. Ravish your soul with His unspeakable delights for soon you'll be round the Throne bowed down, looking at the hands that were pierced to win your soul! Love Him from the heart! Galaxies of joy, bankless oceans of delights, eternal mercies to study, and a sweet Savior living for you is worthy to follow. Exemplify this.