

Secrets Of A Thriving Church

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[0 : 00] Thank you for tuning into this message by David Entry. Every true revival is a product of the strong preaching of God's Word. May you receive a word from this message that will spark a revival in you.

Acts chapter 6, reading again from verse 1 to 7. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a memory of the Christians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, It is no reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over others' business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word. And the same pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

And Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parnabas and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, whom they said before the apostles.

[1 : 20] And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. The number of the disciples increased. And the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.

And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith here as the reading of God's Word. Please let's pray. Father, thank you so much for gathering us together. And thank you for the privilege of being exposed to your Word.

Your Word is the only means you can feed our spirit. We pray that as your Word is taught, feed us with fresh bread. Oh, bread of heaven.

Fill us till we want no more. We pray that, Lord, enlighten our sensitivity and our discernment. That as your Word is taught, we will hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Thank you that as your Word is taught, healings are taking place. Faith is rising. Encouragement and hope is rising. Demonic situations are crumbling.

[2 : 23] Chains and shackles are falling. Broken hearts are being healed. Complicated health conditions are being mended by the power of the Word.

Thank you that the lost is being saved and the sinner is being convicted. Thank you that your church is growing. Your church is being built. Thank you that you are the only one who can feed us. Holy Spirit, feed us with your Word in Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah. Amen. Amen. Well, we've been talking about Acts chapter 6.

It's a very, very pivotal text in Scripture, in the church, the life of the church. Acts chapter 6 is foundational. Acts chapter 6 is a turning point in church life or in the history of the church.

It's pivotal. Something happened in Acts chapter 6 that became a foundation. It's historic. It's foundational. It's fundamental. It's fundamental. It's something.

[3 : 25] There was a shift in the church life through Acts chapter 6, which was necessary. So the text we read and we have been familiar with for the past two weeks, that the verse 1 talks about, in the Bible says, in the Bible says, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, the number was multiplied.

So there and there you see that it says that when the number was multiplied, something also came in. Memorandum came in. So church growth comes with some problems.

Every church growth comes with some problems that if not tackled, it will create dissension and it will stifle the growth and it will spoil the move of God.

So as I said at that time, in Acts chapter 5, the problem that came was sin against God. But in Acts chapter 6, the problem that came in the church was sin against one another.

And that one, God didn't do anything. The sin against God, God eliminated Ananias and Sapphira. But in Acts chapter 6, the apostles had to take an action.

[4 : 36] So it says that there was a problem because of church growth. Church growth is a good thing, but the problem was developing. And as I explained in the previous sessions, that the problem was not those who felt neglected.

The Grecian widows who felt neglected. But the problem was the fact that there was a whisper campaign. It wasn't like they were addressing the situation.

They were talking about each other in each other's ears. And the apostles had to do something. So the apostles in the verse 2, then the 12, the Bible calls them the 12.

The 12 is the apostles. So the 12 leaders. They used to be 12, one went out. Satan entered one. And so they had to appoint somebody as Matthias to replace that person.

And so the 12 called a multitude of the disciples. Their focus was the disciples. And they said to them, it's not right. It's not morally right.

[5 : 44] It's not spiritually right. It's not organizationally right. It's not socially right. What is not right? That we should live. So they used this word. It's not right that we should live.

So the problem at hand, if we have to tackle it, it might mean that we live in something. Okay. And then he said, no, it's just not possible.

Even though the problem had to be handled and solved, it cannot be solved at the expense of what keeps us going. You know, you can't be so thirsty that now you are drinking petrol.

You know, petrol, I know you are thirsty. It's liquid. But the fact that you are thirsty doesn't mean you can't drink anything liquid to quench your thirst. So they said, these are two important things.

One had to be, both had to be attended to. But as I told you previously, there are two important things, but they are not equal.

[6 : 54] One of high priority. So he said, it is not right that we should live. Or if we attempt to solve this, we will end up leaving.

Or if we attempt to tackle this ourselves, we will end up leaving what is keeping all of us going. So when you look at the verse, verse 7, it says that, and the word of God increased.

Did you see that? In your Bibles. Let me do it the way we used to do it in the old days. Can you underline? Yes. Underline, and the word of God increased.

Yes. Underline it. That's very important. And the word of God. Secrets. Secrets for a thriving church. Secrets for church growth.

The secret behind any genuine godly thriving church. Key. Is, and the word of the Lord increased. Shall we all say that together?

[7 : 56] Let's say it again, please. Are you tired? We are not, are you fasting? Even if you are fasting, normally this time you should be fasting anyway.

Let's read it out loud. And the word of the Lord increased. Let's go. Sorry. And the word of God. I'm sorry. And the word of God increased. One more time. Louder.

And the word of God increased. That's all they were looking for. That's all they were looking for. It's not church growth until this is in the place.

Until the word of God is increasing. And the word of God does not increase naturally, automatically, or spontaneously. Simply because we are Christians and gathering doesn't mean the word of God will increase spontaneously.

When they say the word of God increased, in other ways, the word of people were knowing God's word more in their congregation. They were knowing God's word more.

[8 : 57] They were not confused about biblical matters. The longer you are in church, the more the word of God must have increased in you. Sad to say there are people who have been in church many years and they haven't gone anywhere.

The word has never increased in them. Spiritual growth is not spiritual growth until the word of God is increasing in the one who claims to be growing. So for our church to grow, the word of God must increase.

I'm not talking about quotation of scriptures. I'm talking about understanding of scripture. In Nehemiah, it says that, and Ezra read the scriptures and made the, chapter 8, I think verse 2 and 3. And Ezra read the script and he made the people to understand. He read it from morning to evening. They gathered and all they were doing was reading of scriptures.

In fact, the people gathered from verse 1. When the people gathered and said, please open. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man in the street that was before the water gate. And they spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses with the Lord and commanded Israel.

[10:13] They asked Ezra, listen. When you are listening to a preacher, one of the things that you must develop is, tell me about what the word of God is saying. It must be in you.

If they are not making reference to God's word or explaining God's word, you must start getting tired. Anytime I'm preaching and there's a lot of stories, stories, stories, stories, and the word is not coming alive.

You must start getting tired and, hmm. Begin to show your disapproval in a way, kind of. Oh yeah, that's nice. Nice to hear that.

But they asked Ezra, can you bring the book and read it from to us? Every healthy congregation looks for the word of God being opened.

And not just being opened and read, but being explained. That is what it means to teach God's word. It means we have to get the word explained what God meant, what the scripture means by this.

[11:13] So it says that they asked Ezra to open. Look at verse 2. It says, and Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both men and women. And all that could hear with understanding.

Upon the first day of the seventh month. Verse 3 said, and he read daring before the street that was before the water gates from the morning to midday. Before the men and the women and those that could understand.

And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. The ears of the people were attentive unto them. Verse 4 says that, and Ezra the scribe stood upon the pulpit of wood, which they had made for their purpose.

And beside him stood Matahiah and Shima and Aniah and Uraja and Hilkiyah and Mazzeah. Sounds like a footballer's name. On his right hand and on his left hand, Pediah and Meshiel and Melkiah and Hashum and Hashbadanah and Zachariah and Meshulam.

[12:25] Verse 5. Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. For he was above all the people. Because he was standing on a pedestal so higher. And when he opened it, all the people stood up.

The next verse. And I move on. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen and Amen. With lifted up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped them.

When the word of God is truly taught, people come into a place of worship. So, the Bible says that, Acts chapter 6 verse 7.

And the word of God increased. And the word of God increased. Now watch this. That was the target of the 12.

Jesus had taught these guys so well. They said, what will sustain our future, the future of this work, is the increase of the word of God. But the word of God doesn't increase, as I said, spontaneously or automatically.

[13:30] It's there and it's just increasing. Just the way, maybe your nail will grow. Those of us whose nails grow. Or hair will grow. Those of us who, hairs grow.

You know. So, the word of God doesn't just happen because we have got it. There must be pain taking process to make the word of God increase.

And now, when you look at the text again. That's where they were going. I want to, because I want to talk about secrets for church growth. Or a thriving church. So, when you look at the text, verse 7 again.

Please open to your Bibles, if you don't mind. Are you there? Alright. Let's all read verse 7 out loud. Let's go. And the word of God increased. And the word of God increased.

And the word of God increased. Wow. The word of God increased. When the word of God increased. Watch this. The number of disciples multiplied.

[14:35] Now, look at verse 1. Look at verse 1. What does it say? In those days. When the number of disciples was multiplied. So, there was already multiplication.

But now, it says that it multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. Where they killed Jesus. Where they are trying to stop the church. Where they forbid them from preaching. That place.

When they put this system in place in the church. The number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. The first one.

They were just growing inside. But now, they are spread everywhere in the city. In Jerusalem. There's no corner you pass, you won't find them. To the extent, the Bible says that the priests. Acts chapter 4 verse 1. Acts chapter 4 verse 1. Priests went and the temple captain. To go and arrest them for preaching. It was there.

[15:32] And as they spoke to the people. The priests. And the captain of the temple. And the Sadducees came upon them. Those who were arresting them now became obedient to the faith.

I mean, think about this. This is not. It wasn't happening in Rome. In those times. So, that when people are outside of the Jerusalem territory. Priests.

When they go places. No one knows them. So, they can clandestinely join. This one in Jerusalem. The priests were also becoming obedient.

It didn't say the priests were joining. It said they actually joined to the. They became obedient to the faith. I mean, obedience is a big word.

They are not just joining. There are people who come and sit here and just watch. Okay. And they go. That's fine. Keep coming. But the target is that you become. Obedient.

[16:29] The priests becoming obedient. That means that they were not just half-hearted disciples. Full-on disciples. Those people who are telling them you cannot preach.

And they said, tell us who we should obey. God or you. Now, they themselves have now joined. At what point in time did they join? When the word of God increased. Oh, my goodness. When the word of God increased.

The disciples. The number of disciples. God greatly multiplied. And the priests. And it says that many of them. Not only a few. It's your text. And great company of priests were obedient to. Company. It's the activity. It said, guys. Today there's no synagogue. Let's go. Let's go and listen to it. Let's go. And you see your priest. Sorry. Don't be saying Judaism. I'm now with their people. How did they achieve this? Simple. The word of God increased. I see the word of God increasing in our church. And spilling over in our society.

[17:33] The word of God increased. Now. So how did they achieve that? Number one. You can see. Let's go back to the text. It says that. Then the twelve called the multitude. And said unto them. It is not reason that we should leave the word of God.

Did you see that? Did you see that? Did you see what was at stake? What was at stake? What was going to bring the priests to be obedient? What was going to increase the disciples? That was what was at stake.

The word of God. What was bringing the complaint was necessary. You can't leave it unattended. But as I said earlier on. They are not of equal priorities.

There was a challenge. But they didn't allow their challenge to overshadow their commitments.

They were complains. But they didn't allow their complaints to overshadow their priorities.

No. There was a fear. Something people will be. There was racial divide building in the church.

There was fear. That you know. The women will feel like this. Or the men will feel like this. The tall people will feel like this.

[18:37] The short people will feel like this. The dark people will feel like this. We have to handle it. But they didn't allow their fear. To overshadow their commitment. Their direction.

And what was important. And here we can see. They said it is not right. It is not reason. It is not suitable. It is not appropriate. To leave the word of God.

We. And then serve tables. Now as I told you. Why not serve tables? It wasn't because serving tables. Was a law of low quality. So. So. Some people.

When you give them a role in church. If they are not. They are not going to look like bosses. They don't like it. Yeah. They don't like it. There is no entitlement in titles.

There is no entitlement. That is why sometimes. Healthy churches must. Take it easy. In appointing people into positions. Or giving them titles. If you dish out titles easily.

[19:39] You will make people lose sight. Of what is important. I am going to be telling you. The qualities. Essential qualities. Of church. People who must be put in church leadership.

I started last week. I am going to show you. I will give you 10. Possibly 11. All from Acts chapter 6. All from Acts chapter 6. All.

And if you push me. I will give you 11. Yes. Secrets of Church Growth.

Two core important platforms. For every church to thrive. Godly church to do well. Number one. The word of God must increase. The word of.

That is just fundamental. It's not growth until the word is growing. Until the word is increasing. In the hearts of the congregation.

[20 : 37] In the core of the congregation. It's not church growth. So it can be a church swell. What sometimes people call church growth. It's a church swell. Church is just swelling.

So. Two fundamental principles. For church growth. Number one. The word from Acts chapter 6. Now listen. That's why I said it's fundamental.

It's historic. This text. Acts chapter 6. It's a game changer. There are different books. That have been written on church growth. No. None of them.

Is better than what. Acts chapter 6. That's good. Because that is Bible's prescription. For the first church growth. That was ever experienced. Other than that. A lot of priests.

Will not be obedient to the faith. Yes. Church growth. That doesn't affect the priests. It's not growing in that. It's not growing well. People who are avowed.

[21 : 34] Not to be part of it. Or who has fought against this thing. Would do a U-turn. And come and join. Without them having. Encounter in the night. A dream. Like soul of Tarsus. No. No. No. You don't need that.

How many people. Who have that kind of encounter. If they have that encounter. They want to take over the puppets then. Because they end up thinking. God speaks to them personally. So.

There's something. That is. Peter. And the rest. They said. It is not reason. It is not right. That we should leave. What should they leave?

The word of God. We can't leave the word of God. And serve tables. So there are two things. That must be in place. For the church to grow. Tables must be saved.

And the word of God must increase. Tables must be saved. You can never have. As soon as the church begins to see. Any form of increase.

[22 : 33] Any form of. If one more person is added to the church. Some kind of table serving system. Must be in place. To cater for that one. It's very important.

Everybody. So. It says that. For the church to grow. Number one. The word of God must increase. And number two. Tables must be saved.

The conditions under which tables must be saved. But let me talk about the two conditions. First.

The word of God must grow. Now look at the text. Something happened. That would take us to. Look at the verse. Verse three. Wherefore.

Look ye out amongst. You. Seven men of honest report. Full of the holy good. And wisdom. Whom we may appoint over this business. Verse four. Verse four. Do you have. Do you have your Bibles with you?

Are you looking into your Bible? Is it not so nice to look into your Bible? We are all going to read something. And then afterwards you underline it. Or if you have a marker. You mark it. All of verse four.

[23 : 29] Let's all read verse four together. Let's go please. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer. And to the ministry of the word. One more time. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer.

And to the ministry of the word. Verse two. They said it is not reason to leave prayer in a way. Is that what he said? What did he say?

So. It is a prayer increased. Is the word of God that increased? Yeah. In the verse six. And the word of God increased. Amongst them.

It's increased. So it's the word. So we are not leaving the word. But it says. What it takes. To stay focused on the word. To make the word increase. Is prayer. Watch this.

Can I take you at least into the text again? Look at the verse two again. It says that. It is not reason that. The 12th of Isaiah said. It's not reason that we should leave the word of God.

[24 : 31] And serve tables. Leave the word of God. Leave the word of God. Leave the word of God. It's like. Leave it. What are they supposed to do with the word of God?

It says that. First of all. To make sure we are not leaving the word of God. We have to give ourselves. Interestingly. Okay. Let me calm down. Just a second. I was trying not to calm down. You know. Interestingly. It says we have to give ourselves. Not to the word of God. Okay. Look at verse four. But we will continue.

Not sporadically. Not occasionally. Not when we feel like it. It must be a continuous thing. We will. Give ourselves. Give ourselves. Other translations. Devote. You have given yourself. In first Timothy chapter four. Verse 14 and 15. It says. Give yourself wholly.

[25 : 29] Entirely. Prayer. And the ministry didn't say. Prayer and the word of God. Their job is to. For the word of God to increase.

It doesn't happen. Spontaneously. It must be. Ministered. And the ministry of the word. Is at the mercy of the one.

Who ministers it. How much time is spending. With the word. Those of you. Who intend to be pastors. You young people. Young guys. We are all young anyway.

But. You want to be pastors. Is such a. Noble desire. Is the best desire. You can ever have in life. The best desire. You can ever have in life. Don't wait for titles. Start devoting yourself. To these two things. God doesn't make people pastors.

[26 : 27] Because their father is their pastor. Or because the pastor is their friend. No. God makes people pastors. Because he's saying. That they are already devoted.

To prayer. And the ministry of the word. We will give ourselves. And like. He said. Continually. Incessantly.

Prayer. And ministry of the word. Is not something that pastors do. It is the life of pastors. Yes. That's your life.

As a pastor. Your life. Should be buried. In. Prayer. And ministry of the word. Sad to say. Sometimes you are not careful.

You will be distracted. Because there are other things to attend to. Other important. Legitimate things to attend to. So when the church is growing. Things to attend to. Also begin to grow. When the church is growing.

[27 : 26] Very quickly. Those things escalate. So then. If systems are not put in place. To excuse. The minister of the word.

To give him or herself. Continually. To prayer. And ministry of the word. The whole system. Is about. To stall.

And that's one of Satan's. Easiest way. To slow down a church. To cap. To put the cap. On the growth. And the influence. Of a church.

In a community. And a society. Go for the pastor. Get him so busy. And can't be. With so many things. Go for the pastor. The one responsible.

For the feeding. And for the ministry of the word. Let them be encumbered. With so many things. So. Their attention. Should be divided. They have devotion.

[28 : 20] To prayer. And the word of God. It's easy to preach. And not be praying. Oh yes. Oh yes. Oh yes. It's easy to preach.

It's easy to go. On YouTube. Or Google. Google. And search for. Preaching titles. Seven points. To church growth. You don't even know.

What you are talking about. The thing you are talking about. Is older than you. Church GPT will give you. You. You don't have. A working relationship. With the word of God.

How can you feed people. With what you don't have. That's why I said. If you want to do ministry. If you want to be a pastor. By now. It's like someone. Who wants to be a doctor.

But you're not interested in school. If you want to be a medical doctor. You must go to medical school. Look for a medical school. Start. Look.

[29 : 14] Search online. Where can I find. I can enroll. I'll be accepted into the school. Stop doing something. Don't sit there. I know I'm gifted. I know I'm gifted. When my mother gave birth to me.

I know I'm gifted. I just know. When I see someone. Who is nowhere. I can tell. What they can do. Please. Please. Please. We must spend time. In the word. In the word. You must be somebody.

Who is familiar. With the word of God. You study the word of God. And you use other. Materials. To help you understand. The word of God.

God. What is the usefulness. Of a barber. Who doesn't cut a head. A pastor. Some of you. Are called pastors. Thank God. You are not a preaching pastor. There are difference.

When it comes to church administration. When it comes to church administration. Not every pastor. Is a preaching pastor. Not everybody. Is a teaching priest. But fundamentally. If you have that title. [30 : 10] You must be somebody. Who gives yourself. You are devoted. To the word of God. And for the word of God. To find a space in you. You must have a place of prayer. As I said. Robert Murray McShane.

Scottish preacher. Many years ago. Hundreds of years ago. He said that. Whatever a man is. On his knee before God. That's all he is. And nothing else. Whatever you are.

On your knees. Before God. That's what you really are. And nothing else. Wow. Yeah. There's nothing to you. Apart from who you are. On your knees. Before God.

In prayer. Your prayer life. Is a reflection. Of who you are. Oh. As I was preparing. I felt like. Oh. God is calling me. Back to. A deeper place of prayer.

Because. You can be so encumbered. As a pastor. Especially. In our modern days. You can be so encumbered. It breaks my heart. When pastors spend more time. On social media.

[31 : 09] Looking for how to train. How to be more relevant. What makes you more relevant. Is the word of God. He says. Let's go to him. The word of the Lord. Is in his mouth.

Second Kings chapter three. Is the word. In your mouth. And I'm not talking about. Matthew chapter eight. Verse seven. No.

No. No. No. hours of God's time.

Speak to 100 people for one hour. Without preparing, you've wasted 100 hours of God's time.

That's why God does not advance on people. Not just all of us are so busy to be seen.

Busy to trend on social media. Show pictures. Show how important we are. How high we are. And when people gather, we want to show the crowd. There's nothing wrong with it in itself. But I think if you can spend some time in prayer, oh man of God and in the word of God.

[32 : 39] What's the usefulness of a pastor pastoring a church who cannot preach or take us wait? Then you are not pastoring. Because the core essence of pastoring is feeding.

Feeding the flock. Let me say this again. The core essence of pastoring is not social work. That one others can do it.

Others can do it. But when it comes to feeding, you cannot feed if you are not giving yourself to the word. So that means that as we work together, there are a lot of things that these leaders, God has blessed us within this church, should not allow me to get involved with.

so I can give myself. So I can give myself. But the problem is, God will hold me responsible if they take on the tables and I don't give myself.

Did you understand that? So, when other leaders get involved in taking care of the tables, we, because it's such a private life, you will know whether I am praying or whether I am studying, you will know.

[33 : 48] But the work will know. It will show on the work because where it shows is not where it grows. Where the thing is growing is not where it shows.

That's the essence of it. This one is for, really, I think I will tone down when I go for pastors' conference. We can share these things. But I know some good pastors will be listening.

your job is to see how you can relieve the pastor of serving tables. And when he comes to speak, everybody might be like, Word!

We need a Word! Don't let him go free! Let him teach the Word! You understand what I'm saying? If you have relieved him of serving tables, then he better teach him the Word.

He better teach the Word properly. But it won't sink if he doesn't. How can you minister God's Word without giving yourself to prayer? You're giving yourself to prayer.

[34 : 49] I said last week that your prayer life is not what everybody sees. The part of your prayer life that everybody sees is just a tip. It's just like the ice bank. The greatest part of the ice bank is underwater.

The one you see. So, but some people, many, it's very easy. Many church leaders, many of us pastors, prayer life is the one you see in church. What is your church?

If your pastor is not devoted to prayer, it's not good for the church. It's not good for the church. It's risky for the congregants and it's risky for where God is taking the church.

Prayer must be woven into every fabric of the church's life. Every fabric. Those of us who don't like prayer, I really feel sorry for you.

You got to pray just to make it, you have to. Don't outsource your prayer life. Someone must pray for you. Tell us, every, when it comes to the kingdom, everybody is supposed to be a prayer warrior.

[36 : 05] We must all pray. So, it says that for the church to grow, we must give us, it says that we can't, we will leave the word of God. So, first of all, the word of God must increase and for the word of God to increase, listen, this is the point I'm saying.

Somebody must be steady. Amen. Somebody must be steady. That's what I'm saying. Somebody must be steady. Amen. Nowadays, I can't listen to a lot of preachers. not because they are not preaching, but because I've trained myself in a certain way so much that when I listen to some people, I feel like, you know what, you're great, you're done well, you're done well, but I'm not learning anything.

I'm not learning. It's like, you give me, is it that milk? S-M, S-M-E for my dinner. What is this? I'm not talking, watch this, I'm not talking about reasoning with me intellectually. I'm not talking about intellectual prowess or intellectual something that's, Paul said, I do not come to you with enticing words of man's wisdom, but I came to you in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost and with power so that your faith will not rest in the, watch this, in the 1 Corinthians chapter 2, your faith will not rest in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

[37 : 26] Then he said, how be it? We speak wisdom. We speak wisdom. He said, we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Verse 6 and 7. He said, this wisdom has been hidden for our glory, which the prince of this world did not know.

Had they known, the only have crucified the Lord of glory. He says that the wisdom of the prince of this world came to a north. So, clever, clever things. He said, that's not our focus.

But when we are speaking the wisdom of God, I can't wait to get to the teaching, the preaching of Stephen. Stephen spoke the wisdom of God. He explained what the Bible is about. Explained what God's economy and what God's program on earth is about from the days of Abraham, which the Jews didn't even know.

Somebody must give himself. I realized Stephen was a very studious person because he could never have taught that thing without studying. I grew up thinking that to be able to preach powerfully, it's purely based on inspiration.

No! No! No! It's not just inspiration. Inspiration plays a major role, but something must go into your content. You can't preach with an empty mind.

[38 : 38] You gotta know! You gotta know the Word of God! That's why every pastor, every church leader, every church leader must have a good, healthy relationship with your Bible.

And don't just read. Study! Say, when we are growing up as Christians, we are taught to study the Word of God. Nowadays, even for people to read is a big choice. Like you're pulling a strand of hair from their nose.

It's a battle to get people to read your Bibles, let alone to study. And some of you are looking at my face, you know I'm talking to you. What kind of Christian is this? You don't have any steady life.

You don't study the Bible, but you can spend hours on social media. Hours! What's up? When you work on the first thing, what's up? You are going to what's up. What's up?

What's up? What's up? You are up. You are up. What's up? You are up. Am I talking to a disciple? We might as well come to the place.

[39 : 38] Let's go back to where we spend time in God's Word. Some of us, some places, for instance, if your work, the nature of your work runs on those things.

Some of the things that we do as a church administratively, what's up, becomes necessary. You see what I'm talking about? Emails. Some things are necessary. So, but let's try and see how you can free yourself.

Oh, there may be time to just switch off your phone and set time for God. Why are you reading your Bible with your phone also on the side? You are doing prayer meeting.

You're waking up. You are praying during the day and then your phone. Every night, okay, what's up? Shalaba, Baba, Shalaba. That prayer is not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere. Switch off their phone.

I'm not talking to a believer. There must be phoneless or phone-free moments in your walk with God. Switch off their phone. Sometimes you don't want to, but you have to.

[40 : 37] It's a discipline that we all have to learn. Yes, you can grow. You will only be hearing preaching, but even that one, it will come and bounce off. It will come and the nice things, the funny things is what you remember.

Yeah. Be real Christians. After I was there, I want to talk to somebody. I put it to you. Tell me the quality of your devotion, personal devotion.

Bible study. Study in the Bible. Sometimes one verse, you check, and then you take another verse, you check. Now you take because of electronic, you can check other translations.

How did you put it? I'm trying to understand this. Before you phone someone, what does this mean? You yourself look for it and then you'll find it and ask Holy Spirit, talk to me. What kind of Christians are we raising now?

Because we, the pastors ourselves, have been distracted. It's a battle. It's a generation we live in and we have to take responsibilities.

[41 : 38] Give yourself continually to place a prayer. I realize every time I pray before preaching, it's better. It's better.

Every time I keep organizing things, I keep organizing things and I just get 15 minutes to get ready to preach. I'll end up saying things I never planned to. Because I have to fill the time.

Not consciously, but unconsciously. And you have people who will be laughing and enjoying, but it's not taking anybody anywhere. Prayer and preparation.

The job of the pastor is preparation and proclamation. You can't proclaim what you have not prepared. Quickly.

Seven tables. So number one, the word of God must increase. Number two, seven tables. Now, how do they select the people? Quickly. Number one, then I can't end. Is that okay? The response is very demure, but I think I know why.

[42 : 39] I know, I think I know why. Don't worry. Don't try and shout. I know that. If you shout more, I'll be very concerned because me too, it caught me in my track.

Even me, I'm more culpable. In other words, I have to work more. A pastor must be devoted to the word of God and prayer. As a pastor, there are some things when it happens to church members and individuals, I know it's because of my prayer life.

I know. I have to go back to the place of prayer. Some things, when they happen, I know it's prayer. Look at what is happening with your family. Look at what is happening with your health. Look at what is happening with your job. Look at what is happening with your ministry.

Please, go back to the pillars of personal prayer and stop outsourcing it to people. First of all, I don't know how to pray. You have to find out how to pray. You have to pray.

You have to pray. If you don't pray, sit down. You have to pray. The word of God. So, for the priorities must be the word of God followed by administration and structures.

[43 : 48] Church admin, administration. People say, yeah, the church is an organism. It's organism is a life that multiplies. But it also needs organizational structures.

Somebody say, I don't believe in organized religion. You like disorganized one? There must be a system. There must be some organization, something.

The word the world runs is organization. The difference between developed places and undeveloped places is how things are being organized. It's organization. No church will ever grow above the organization or the systems that are put in place.

So, the pastor asks what the leaders must do and they must take time to also try putting a system for others to do the work so they can focus on other things.

Administration. Any church without good administration will be filled with problems. Filled with problems. Even if not sinful problems, it will be filled with confusion. Confusion.

[44 : 50] Ten people come and stand on the stage. I'm leading praise and worship. But I'm leading. But who told you? No, I spoke to pastor. He said I should leave. But me too.

My voice is better. Key qualities for choosing church leaders. Number one, principles for choosing church leaders for effective church group. Quickly, I won't take too much time on this.

I told you I have ten. I'll stay with the ten. There must be congregational involvement. So, the twelve called the multitude of the disciples. They didn't say, okay, we are doing our own thing later.

We just hand them down to you. They engaged them. Engaged. If you want to do something in a church that must grow, the congregation must be involved. I'm not talking about democratic approach to appointing of leadership.

We are voting. No, that's not scripture. Democracy is not a scripture word. Because in your family, if it's a family of five, father and mother and three children, and you have to vote for what you eat for dinner, do you know you will always be eating ice cream?

[45 : 52] Because the children are more than the adults. You always end up eating ice cream, ice cream, the children will vote for. So, when it comes to church, the church is not run by democratic approach.

Majority carrying the vote. So, but there must be congregational involvement. And number two, from the text, when you look at the text, let's look at the verse three again. Acts chapter six. Acts chapter six. Wherefore, brethren, look ye, so brethren's congregation, look ye amongst you. Insight. I said it the other time. Insight. Don't let us be bringing people from outside.

One of the easiest way, can I talk to a certain pastor who might be listening to me? One of the easiest way to weaken the strength in the church is go and bring somebody who is already a pastor, who is doing his own thing, maybe it didn't work, or somebody ordained him and he has left the person.

Now he's coming to be, bringing his ordination certificate into your own. Maybe the one who ordained them is a specialist in peanut butter soup.

[46 : 57] Your own is jollof. Yo, you have a special deal. Come on, put peanut butter in your jollof. From, I ain't trying to say, so okay, if someone is a pastor and he's joined the church, he cannot.

You know, there are different types of church models. When you look at the discipleship-oriented churches, they always raise people from within. And even if you are going to be a leader, it doesn't matter where you have been trained, you come in, you are from within.

You submit within the system, they can, you can say, we can work with you. We are all singing from the same sheet, song sheet. Catch the culture of the house, the philosophy of the house, the ministry philosophy of the house.

Then with time, it's important. So that you don't bring somebody in your front line who doesn't even understand the things that are taught in the house. So it's very important.

And then, from amongst us, qualification, the person must be, there must be congregational involvement to the person must be from amongst us.

[48 : 07] Number three, it said, choose, look at verse three again. It said, well, for teaching, seven, seven, seven, not one person. It said teamwork. Those of you who don't like teamwork, I don't think we can travel far with you when it comes to church leadership.

You don't like teamwork. There are people who join a church like us and they like friendship with the pastor. There's nothing wrong. But don't use your friendship with the pastor as your authority in the work.

It don't work. If the pastor is God of God and he's wise, he knows that you are going to destroy the work. You are in charge of, let's say, admin. You are my friend. You have a good relation with you. And now you want me to add you to admin. Go and see the one in charge. What has that got to do with me? What has that got to do with me? People who go around using, but pastor said, but pastor said, but pastor said.

Meanwhile, there are people in charge of that area. And you don't want to work with anybody. So, when you grow up in life and in church, you realize that there are people who come and their sole aim is to befriend the pastor to wield authority in the work.

[49 : 18] And when it doesn't work, they leave. When it doesn't work, they leave. There are people who target to become friends. So, what have I caused to be the pastor's friend?

Through gifts, through liquid, what do you call it? Feet washy. You know what I mean?

Like, sorry. That's not what I meant, but you know what I mean. Yeah. Like, they behave like they are sycophants on the pastor. Everything, pastor, pastor, is because, why is it that they don't get on with others?

Why is it that they don't get on with others? They don't have friends. They don't have friends. They just target the, listen, a church doesn't grow like that. But what you might not know is people like us, we also notice you very fast.

Notice you very fast. Some people, because they don't like teamwork, they just want to work, they are like boxers. Even boxers will have a team. Boxers will have a team.

[50 : 27] That's why we'll wipe your face. But, it's, it's, it's, listen to me. That's a snake spirit. Snakes never walk in groups.

Even a baby snake, as soon as it is born, it's on its own. It's very strange. Yes. Snakes are wild creatures. Snakes don't do teamwork.

Yes. Snakes don't, how many of you have ever seen snakes walking in groups? You see, snakes never walk in groups. but when you see herds, when you see horses, zebras, when you see, even lions, sometimes in their pride, they are together.

Snakes, no! That's why Jesus said, you, brood of vipers, it's in every human being to demonstrate that nature of the viper.

So, teamwork. Number four, quick. Someone getting something. Number four. Hey, this one is like Bible school, isn't he? But we came to church to learn now. Number four, is, I mentioned last week, good reputation.

[51 : 39] Good reputation. There are some people, they have quarreled with seven people already. For the past three months, they joined the church. Yeah. Watch people who had a quarrel with this person, and then, they said, I didn't know why, but another person, the same person, the same person, listen, there's a problem with you.

There's a problem with you. There's a problem with you. You don't have good reputation. Timothy was asked to follow Paul, because everyone spoke well of him. Acts chapter 16, one and two. People spoke well of him. Good reputation. Let's all say good reputation. Good reputation. Say it again. Good reputation. And they told the people that you look, you know those who have good reputation now.

We won't, you bring them. You know them amongst you. Listen, if you have good reputation, people know. People know. They might not say it, but they know. Some of us, our close friends, know we don't have good reputation.

And they would not recommend us for some things. Yeah, for the sake of their integrity. Number five, spirit filled. In fact, this one, it says that, sickly amongst you seven men of good reputation, full.

[52 : 52] I've used the word spirit filled. I don't want to get a little bit technical, but there's a slightly different between filled with the spirit and full of the Holy Spirit. Yeah.

You can fill the bottle with water. Fill the bottle with water. And the bottle is full. You can be filling it until it gets full. When it's full, it overflows.

Filling it doesn't mean it's full. So you have to keep filling, filling. So people are filled with the Holy Spirit, but they are not full of the Holy Spirit. Here, it says that people to serve tables, to serve tables, it will shock you, it will surprise you to know that they knew this about Stephen.

Stephen was a powerful, he was the one who preached the longest message in the Bible, in the church, the church message. Stephen, meanwhile, was called to go and serve tables.

The people knew that about him already, but he had a good reputation, he didn't mind. If this is what will help the work of God, I will do it. Why not? Why not? Why not? Good reputation, full.

[53 : 59] No wonder he died like Jesus. I would say he was full. Bible says, when we read it recently, his face was like an angel. Acts chapter 6, verse 15, his face was shaggy.

People look at him and they were like, they gazed and his face was like an angel. This is a man full of the Holy Ghost. Acts chapter 7, when he was about to, the Bible said, but Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost. Full of the Holy Ghost.

To serve tables in church? Yes. Yes, because the church work is God's work. And to produce God's results, it doesn't come naturally.

You might use your common sense to do a lot of things and miss God's hands down because you are not full of the Holy Spirit. That's why prayer matters. Full of the Holy Spirit.

Somebody say, full of the Holy Spirit. And then wisdom. Okay. So he said, full of the Holy Spirit and then wisdom, full of wisdom, wisdom, wisdom, wisdom.

[54 : 58] You understand the subject matter. You know what we are dealing with and you are wise enough to apply it to bring solutions. Number seven, let's look at the text again.

Who we may appoint. Listen, for church to do well, people must be appointed. You don't just get up and start doing anything. Okay, today me, I'm the one in charge here.

No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. You must be appointed. If there's a problem you want to solve, try and do what you can do to solve it. But don't make yourself the one in charge if you have not been officially or actually appointed.

If you have not been appointed and you take authority, you are going to create problems in the work. Do you understand what I'm saying? You can offer solutions or you can get involved to do

whatever can bring solutions but don't take charge that I am the one in charge.
You can do usual. No, no, please. Do you understand? That's important. Who we may appoint.
These are administrative matters that if not attended to, the church can never grow or the word of God will never increase in the church.

[56 : 12] What you didn't realize is the first point is congregational involvement. Everybody must be on board. Everyone on deck. Get involved. We are all involved. Get involved.

Do the little you can do for God to see that you are devoted to him. Everybody. Everybody. All right. Number eight. So who we may appoint, what do they appoint you?

To serve the table. The specific task. Number eight is specification of tasks. Specification of tasks. This one is doing this.

This one is doing. And don't fight people. Okay. You are in charge of choir. And someone is in charge of sitting. And you say that normally when they put me on this seat, I can't function well as a choir.

Don't fight the one who is in charge of sitting. Does that make sense? Don't fight the one in charge of sitting.

[57 : 10] Yes. If you are an MP and the police stops you on the road, you have to stop. Of course. You might be in charge of that whole jurisdiction, but the police is in charge of the road.

That's right. Traffic. It can stop you. You have to stop. So, specification, specification of tasks. People must be clear.

You are doing this. You are. And anything you are asked to do, don't say you are too big to do it. Hmm. That is a sign that you are too small to be used by God.

Never say you are too big for anything. That brings solution in God's work. Check with Stephen.

Never say, no, no, no. I'll be belated. I'm a pastor. How can I be asked to sit at the back there?

Without proper systems in place, the church is not going anywhere. And the problem is that when people get positioned, then they are looking for seats. Because it's like, I have a seat in parliament. They are looking for seats.

[58 : 10] Quick. My time. You guys. Specific number, what? Let's look at the text again. Verse 5. And the same, please, the whole multitude. The same, please, the whole pleasant atmosphere comes into the church.

Without pleasant atmosphere, church wouldn't grow. So those who are sowing discord, they are spoiling the church. Pleasant atmosphere. Bible says that, and the same, please, the whole multitude.

We want to come to church and you can tell, I'm happy to follow. I'm happy to flow. Why are you telling me something somebody said about when that was dumping my spirit? Don't say it. Why are you, ushers, why are you fighting with somebody now they can't even flow in the service?

Someone came to me, what's that? They always, also say, all ushers are always making my life very difficult. When someone makes the statement like the person, there's a problem with the person, spirit of insubordination.

It's a snake spirit. Ushers are always, ushers, all the ushers are making, number 10, my goodness. Number 10 is, look at the text again.

[59 : 20] Number 10, let's look at that verse, verse 5. And the same place the whole mountain, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Paminas, sounds like Pamela, Paminas and Nicholas and Proselyte.

All these names are Greek names, seven, Greek. They chose Greek people. The problem was coming with the Grecians, the Hellenists. And the congregation chose Greek names.

The apostles didn't choose. The congregation brought, all these guys they brought, every one of them was Greeks. Why? Because the major problem was Greek related.

Just Greek related. So they chose, okay, let's get the Greeks to sort this out. Is it segregation and discrimination in the church? Not necessarily. This one, it brought social stability.

Social, people don't feel marginalized. people don't feel they are not accepted. So let's get the others who can help. Can everybody be part of it?

[60 : 26] They are full of the Holy Ghost first of them. Remember, they have wisdom. They must have wisdom and good reputation. Then you know they are not dodgy. So they will do it generally, but they are Christians.

So it made the, it's, no wonder, after that they did that, the word of God multiplied because there was so much peace for the word to increase. And then the congregation multiplied.

There's one more 11 that I just didn't want to add because of her. But I will leave that. No. I didn't mention on my 10. Grisha, yes, social, sorry, social suitability.

Sorry. Social. Suitable, you can tell that it's socially suitable. Why are you sending, um, okay, yeah, it can be very technical.

That's why I'm, it can, children's school, I mean, let's say, children's ministry. All the leaders are old men. If you come and you have your child, a toddler, ah, where's the Sunday school teacher?

[61 : 27] So that's, that's uncle over there. You understand what I'm saying? Yeah, it looks, it makes it look socially kind of unsuitable.

You should, you get what I'm talking about. Some, the areas I can go, that's one of my 11 I've really struggled to add it because some area, but remember I said choose seven men. Yeah, but let me leave that one because don't choose men to go and clean the ladies' toilets.

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