

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE
Or, The Forty Weeks of Purpose
A Sermon Series Based on the Book by Rick Warren
Week Twenty-One: Protecting Your Church
Dr. Greg Tyree, BBC, AM, September 26, 2004

INTRODUCTION: You have probably heard the story about the monk who joined a monastery that valued silence. As a matter of fact, you were only allowed to say two words a year and those were to be said to the monastic leader at an annual interview. The monk appeared before his leader and was asked how his first year was. "Food cold," the monk said.

The following year, when asked the same question, the monk simply replied, "Bed hard."

At the end of year three the monk told his senior, "I quit." "Good," said the monastic mentor, "because all you have done since you got here is complain!"

In a true story, a monk told his monastic leader, Poeman, "I am troubled in spirit, and I want to leave this place."

The old man said, "Why?"

He said, "I have heard unedifying stories about one of the brothers."

The old man said, "Are the stories true?"

He said, "Yes, Father. The brother who told me is a man of trust."

The old man answered, "The brother who told you is not a man of trust. For if he was so, he would not have told you these stories."

(Citation: *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, translated by Owen Chadwick, in *Western Asceticism* [(Westminster, 1983)])

- Key Text: Eph. 4:3

...endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

PROPOSITION: Today we shall explore six ways to protect Brookdale.

I. EMPHASIS: FOCUS ON WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON.

Rom. 14:19.

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

A. Our **Purpose**

BROOKDALE BAPTIST CHURCH EXISTS TO GLORIFY CHRIST BY LOVING GOD AND LOVING OTHERS.

B. Our **Passions**

BROOKDALE BAPTIST CHURCH IS A VIBRANT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY THAT IS COMMITTED TO MEANINGFUL **SERVICE**, DYNAMIC **WORSHIP**, STRATEGIC **OUTREACH**, NURTURING **RELATIONSHIPS**, AND INTENTIONAL **DISCIPLESHIP**

C. Our **Pillars**

- GOD'S WORD
- BIBLE DOCTRINE
- PRACTICAL PREACHING
- REAL WORSHIP
- PRAYER
- GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS
- WORLD EVANGELISM
- EVERY CHRISTIAN SERVING

II. EXPECTATIONS: BE REALISTIC IN YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

Eph. 4:2.

...with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love

Understand the gap between the *ideal* and the *real* regarding the...

- A. People.
- B. Property.
- C. Programs.
- D. Pastor.

III. ENCOURAGEMENT: CHOOSE TO ENCOURAGE RATHER THAN CRITICIZE. Rom. 14:10, 19.

¹⁰*But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹⁹Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*

- A. We Already Have an Accuser. Rev. 12:10.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

- B. You Have Enough to Do In Keeping Yourself In Line!

IV. EXTERMINATION: REFUSE TO LISTEN TO GOSSIP. Prov. 17:4, Jude 19.

Stop the gossip bug dead in his tracks! Let's exterminate gossip!

Prov. 17:4

An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue.

Jude 16-19:

¹⁶*These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. ¹⁷But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁸how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly*

lusts. ¹⁹*These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*

Here are three questions to consider when people come to you with gossip:

- A. Why do People Come to **You**?
- B. What Do You **Tell** the Gossiper?
- C. What Do You **Do** with the Gossip?

ILLUSTRATION:

A story is told of lady who apologized for how she had gossiped about the pastor. He forgave her, of course, but shared this bit of wisdom. He said:

If you were to fill a pillow case with goose feathers, ascend to the highest spire in town, and release the feathers to the air would be like the gossip you have spread. To attempt to romp about town and retrieve all the feathers would be like trying to undo the damage your careless talking as caused.

You see, we can be forgiven for gossip, but the consequences do not go away! Think before you speak.

V. EDIFICATION: PRACTICE GOD'S METHOD OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION. Matt. 18:15-17.

¹⁵*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶“But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷“And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

(Note: This entire point is supported by accompanying PowerPoint slides.)

- A. The 95% Theory: 95% of all serious problems in the church stem from a **power** struggle.
 - 1. Americans are enamored with power.
 - 2. This works two ways in the church.
 - a. Those who don't have power anywhere else can gain it in church.

b. Those who have power elsewhere expect to have it in church.

B. A **power struggle** which results in the losers **leaving**.

1. Range war between **pioneers** and **homesteaders**.
2. Senior pastor vs. **Associate**.
3. **Rippling** effect.

C. Church conflict is often due to the pressure of **bucket brigades**:

1. **Analyzer** brigade (Never done “studying” something).
2. **Tradition**-protection brigade (We’ve never done it that way before!).
3. **Pious** brigade (That just doesn’t sound “spiritual” to me!).
4. **Whining** brigade (I just don’t like the way...)

D. People are not against you, they are for **themselves**!

E. The 80-20 Rule: 20% of the People Cause 80% of the **Problems**

1. VDP- Very **Difficult** (*Draining*) People
2. VNP- Very **Nice** People

_____ **line** _____

3. VTP Very **Teachable** People
4. VIP- Very **Involved** (*Important*) People
5. Most People Spend Most of Their Time and Energy with People Above the Line.
6. 80% of Your Time Should Be Spent with Those Below the Line!

F. Why power struggles are fundamentally **irresolvable**:

1. They involve two issues:
 - a. What is the **direction** of our church?

- b. **Who** determines the direction of our church?

ILLUSTRATION:

Horse-pulled wagon (see PowerPoint slides)

- 2. Have you ever met these people?
 - a. They have been a member of a particular local church for 20 years or more.
 - b. They have not been pleased with or supportive of any of their pastors.
 - c. They have little respect for elected lay leaders.
 - d. Growth does not excite them.
 - e. They have never seen a building program they liked.
 - f. They detest new music.
 - g. They have a pained affect.
 - h. They express a love for *foreign* missions.
 - i. Their body language is defiant.
 - j. When on a concerted oppositional campaign, they will spend entire Sunday mornings floating in the foyer, patio or parking lot spreading discontent without so much as even attending the worship service.
 - k. They cannot comprehend why they are not considered for leadership in the church.
 - l. Whenever there is a problem arising in the church, they are not far away.
 - m. Though perpetually unhappy...*they cannot leave!*

ILLUSTRATION:

Joining the Health Club (see PowerPoint Slides)

G. Scriptural Facts

1. Satan is the great **counterfeiter** (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

¹³For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

2. Discord and strife are not of **God** (James 3:13-18).

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

3. Our battle is **spiritual** (Ephesians 6:12).

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

4. Pastors and elders are admonished to be diligent in opposing **dangerous** people (Acts 20:28-30).

²⁸“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

5. Jesus predicted **imposters** will always be part of our local churches (Matthew 13:24-30).

²⁴Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵“but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶“But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷“So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸“He

said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' ²⁹"But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "

**VI. ENGAGE:SUPPORT YOUR PASTOR AND LEADERS. Heb. 13:17;
1 Thes. 5:12, 13.**

¹²And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

- A. Understand **Who** the pastor works for.
- B. Follow his **leadership**.
- C. Support his **decisions**.
- D. Apply his **teachings**.
- E. Honor his **office**.
- F. Love his **family**.
- G. Be patient regarding his **flaws**.
- H. Help him accomplish his **ministry**.
- I. **Pray** for him.
- J. Be his **friend**.

APPLICATION: A young lady named Sally took a seminary class taught by Professor Smith, who was known for his elaborate object lessons. One day Sally walked into class to find a large target placed on the wall, with several darts resting on a nearby table. Professor Smith told the students to draw a picture of someone they disliked or someone who had made them angry—and he would allow them to throw darts at the person's picture.

Sally's friend (on her right), drew a picture of another woman who had stolen her boyfriend. Another friend (on her left), drew a

picture of his younger brother. Sally drew a picture of Professor Smith, putting a great deal of detail into her drawing, even drawing pimples on his face! She was quite pleased at the overall effect she'd achieved.

The class lined up and began throwing darts amidst much laughter. Some of the students threw with such force that they ripped apart their targets. But Sally, looking forward to her turn, was filled with disappointment when Professor Smith asked the students to return to their seats so he could begin his lecture. As Sally fumed about missing her chance to throw the darts, the professor began removing the target from the wall.

Underneath the target was a picture of Jesus. A hush fell over the room as each student viewed the mangled image of their Savior—holes and jagged marks covered his face. His eyes were virtually pierced out.

Professor Smith said only these words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" [Matthew 25:40, KJV].

(Citation: Lee Rhodes, Wheeler, Michigan)

Point to Ponder: It is my responsibility to protect the unity of my church.

Question to Consider: What am I personally doing to protect unity in my church family right now?