



Jared C. Wilson

GOSPEL ▶ DRIVEN MINISTRY

An Introduction
to the Calling and
Work of a Pastor

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN REFLECTIVE

Gospel-Driven Ministry

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CHAPTER 1

THE PASTOR

Who May Be a Pastor?

1 Timothy 3:1–7	Titus 1:5–9	1 Peter 5:1–3
above reproach	blameless, upright, holy	
faithful to his wife	faithful to his wife	
temperate	not quick-tempered	
self-controlled	self-controlled, disciplined	
respectable	loves what is good	
hospitable	hospitable	
able to teach	instruct in sound doctrine	
not given to drunkenness	not given to drunkenness	

1 Timothy 3:1–7	Titus 1:5–9	1 Peter 5:1–3
not violent but gentle	not violent	not lording it over others
not quarrelsome	not overbearing	
not a lover of money	not pursuing dishonest gain	not pursuing dishonest gain
manage family well	children believe and are not wild or disobedient	
not a recent convert		
good reputation		
	holds firmly to trustworthy message	
		willing

For Reflection

1. Describe your own sense of calling to the work of ministry. Have you experienced both an internal and an external call? Explain.
2. As you survey the list of qualifications for the pastorate, where do you think you are strongest? Weakest?
3. What is your plan to develop in your areas of weakness?
4. Whether you are currently in vocational ministry or not, in what ways are you currently demonstrating a shepherd's love for his flock?
5. How does the gospel inform your ongoing pursuit of the biblical qualifications for ministry?

For Further Study:

Bridges, Charles. *The Christian Ministry*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959.

This classic work from the early nineteenth-century English vicar is breathtaking in its exhaustive treatment of the ministerial office and pastoral tasks. Nearly two hundred years since its first printing, it is still largely unrivaled.

Gregory the Great, Saint. *The Book of Pastoral Rule*. Translated by George E. Demacopoulos. New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007.

This thorough examination of pastoral ministry from the patristic era is one of the church's earliest works on the subject. It is not without its challenges for Protestant readers in the modern era, but it is a rewarding read.

Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *Lectures to My Students*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2008.

Perhaps still the gold standard for a complete ministerial education in literary form, this work from the Victorian era's Prince of Preachers spends much of its time on homiletics but still offers invaluable insights for the pastor's character and disciplines.

THE POWER


For Reflection

1. How would you summarize the gospel in one sentence?
Explain why you include each part.
2. How would you summarize the gospel message in a paragraph (in three sentences)?
3. How would you define gospel-centrality, and what are its major implications for pastoral ministry?
4. Why do you think the concept of gospel-centrality sounds like a “foreign language” to some preachers or churches?
5. Is it possible to be legalistic about gospel-centrality? If so, what would this look like?

For Further Study:

Bridges, Jerry. *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God’s Unfailing Love*. 3rd ed. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2017.

Few authors in the modern era have been as fixated on the



gospel as power for sanctification as Bridges was. This work is a representative sample from his blessed fixation.

Owen, John. *The Glory of Christ*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994.

This Puritan masterpiece deliciously rehearses on every page the heart change that comes from beholding the power of the gospel.

Sproul, R. C. *Getting the Gospel Right: The Tie That Binds Evangelicals Together*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.

Largely a review of the Protestant view of justification by faith over and against the unbiblical soteriology of Roman Catholicism, this book is a helpful reminder of the crucial doctrine undergirding the true biblical gospel.

WORSHIPING

For Reflection

1. Do you struggle more with devotional study of the Bible or with intimate prayer with God? Why?
2. Why are both Bible study and solitary prayer crucial for the flourishing of a pastor and his congregation?
3. What is your plan to develop in the areas of personal devotion where you feel weak?
4. What does a worshipful study of the Scriptures look like?
5. How does the gospel inform your understanding of prayer?
How does the gospel *drive* prayer?

For Further Study:

Augustine. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Translated by John K. Ryan. New York: Image, 1960.

Not on pastoral ministry per se, this autobiography-slash-devotional-theology is the greatest example of a worshipful heart brought to the study of doctrine. Read *The Confessions* to discover what exulting in the gospel looks like.

Bunyan, John. *Prayer*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965.

The author of the classic *Pilgrim's Progress* here masterfully aids believers in approaching the throne of grace and "praying in the Spirit."

Peterson, Eugene. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Few voices in the contemporary field seem as skilled at pastoring pastors as the late Peterson. This work showcases the height of his powers.

PREACHING *Part 1*

For Reflection

1. How would you distinguish preaching from teaching?
2. What was the best sermon you ever heard? What made it so impressive to you?
3. In which of the “five Cs” of preaching do you think you need the most development? Why?
4. What can go wrong if we separate the practice of preaching from the context of *pastoring*?
5. What message must be included in every sermon? Why?

For Further Study:

Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*.

Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.

Few scholars have helped preachers see the logical necessity of preaching Christ from every text in order to have constructed a Christian sermon like Westminster's Clowney.

Fuller, Andrew. *Preaching*. Peterborough, Ontario: H&E, 2018.

The Baptist missionary Fuller is not exactly well-known today for his preaching ministry, but this book, built around letters of advice to a young minister, is outstanding for its repeated emphasis on gospel-centrality.

Grimké, Francis James. *Meditations on Preaching*. Madison, MS: Log College Press, 2018.

Organized as a series of "proverbial" excerpts, à la Pascal's *Pensées*, this short work from the rich mind of an African American preacher is full of gospel goodness.

PREACHING *Part 2*

For Reflection

1. What component of sermon preparation do you struggle with most? Why?
2. What is your plan for developing strength in that area of weakness?
3. What is your position on wedding ceremonies? Are there any you would not officiate? Explain.
4. How would you explain the Lord's Supper to an unbeliever?
5. What are some ways to communicate the gospel in a sermon that do not feel like an artificial "tack-on" at the end of your message?

For Further Study:

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers*. 40th anniversary ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

No study of gospel-centered preaching would be complete without wading into this classic work from perhaps the greatest Reformed preacher of the twentieth century. I recommend the 40th anniversary edition of the text, which also includes reflective essays from contemporary preachers like Mark Dever, Tim Keller, and John Piper.

Motyer, Alec. *Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013.


This book from a renowned biblical scholar provides a wonderful overview of the preacher's biblical aims and motivations with a focus on order and organization.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

Still the go-to textbook in countless preaching classes in seminaries today, *Biblical Preaching* is especially helpful in instructing on the translation of an exegetical outline into a homiletical outline, an art form mastered by still too few preachers today.

CARING

For Reflection

1. What characteristics in another make you feel most heard, understood, and cared for?
 2. What are some reasons pastors may underprioritize the work of pastoral care?
 3. How would home and hospital visits be received by those in your current ministry context?
 4. Why is prayer to God the most important aspect of giving care to others?
 5. Why is communicating the gospel essential to effective pastoral care (to those who already ostensibly believe it)?
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For Further Study:

Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1974.

Baxter, a Puritan, shares biblical thoughts on the "oversight" of a flock that are full of wisdom for those navigating the relational and spiritual challenges of pastoral care. Pay careful attention especially to his treatment of both the pastor's motives and the pastor's manner.

Powlison, David. *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2019.


A must-read for any pastor interested in the ins and outs and practicalities of gospel-centered counseling. If you want to know what it looks and sounds like in the room, how the heart work of grace is translated to actual encounters with needy people, this work is essential.

Sibbes, Richard. *The Bruised Reed*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1998.

This book, while not explicitly on the subject of pastoral care, is still one of the best sources of gracious encouragement and hope for those who suffer, and familiarity with its comforts will serve any pastor exceptionally well.

LEADING

For Reflection

1. Think of a time from your past when you felt you were really growing in extraordinary ways. Who was most influential in your discipleship at that time? How did they influence you?
 2. What are some barriers to your own practice of personal discipleship?
 3. What strengths and weaknesses characterize your own sense of leadership? What is your plan to develop in the areas of your weakness?
 4. Describe your own pastoral plan to nurture a culture of discipleship and leadership development in your church.
 5. In what specific ways does the gospel keep a pastor from having to be his church's all-knowing messiah? What does it say to the pastor in this regard? To the flock?
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For Further Study:

Miller, C. John. *The Heart of a Servant Leader: Letters from Jack Miller*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004.

This collection of letters was assembled after Jack Miller's death and reflects the depths of grace he is known for and provides ample evidence as to why he's considered the spiritual father of many influential ministers today. Miller's insights into the heart of leadership reveal the very heart of Christ.

Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer*. 4th ed. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007.


While not intended solely for ministers, this biblical treatment of leadership from the former director of the China Inland Mission is still (rightly) considered an essential work on the subject.

Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *The Soul Winner: How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

This surprisingly lengthy treatise on evangelism is actually full of insightful thoughts on beginning and leading a culture of discipleship in a church.

FIGHTING (AND MAKING PEACE)

For Reflection

1. Is it your tendency to rush into conflict or to avoid it? Why do you think that is?
 2. How can you discern the difference between protecting a church from one person and protecting one person from the church?
 3. How do you know the difference between a valid criticism and someone who is critically divisive?
 4. Why do you think too few churches today still neglect to practice biblical church discipline?
 5. What are some ways the gospel informs a pastor's approach to conflict and peace in a church?
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For Further Study:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954.

Outside the Scriptures, no book has been more formative in my own thinking and feeling about the church. There is no better book on how the gospel of grace ought to shape and sustain the experience of Christian community.

Powlison, David. *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2019.


What begins as an enlightening survey of the nature of spiritual warfare (through Ephesians 6) eventually becomes a reliable guide to counseling others through the various kinds of conflicts and afflictions faced by Christians.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *True Spirituality: How to Live for Jesus Moment by Moment*. 30th anniversary ed. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2001.

Perhaps the spiritual heir of Bonhoeffer as it pertains to Christian spirituality in the life of the church, Schaeffer situates the experience of fruitful relationship with Christ in its proper context of fruitful relationships within the church. His chapter on healing in personal relationships is especially pertinent for the navigation and resolution of conflict.

LIVING

For Reflection

1. How can you discern when to tell your wife sensitive information regarding church business and when it would be more appropriate to keep things confidential?
 2. How can you plan your week in such a way that you can build and maintain a good reputation with outsiders?
 3. What are some potential difficulties in maintaining close friendships with members of your congregation?
 4. Do you struggle to engage in personal evangelism? Why or why not?
 5. What does friendship with Jesus look like for you? How do you daily cultivate your relationship with him?
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For Further Study:

Cooley, Timothy Mather. *Sketches of the Life and Character of the Reverend Lemuel Haynes*. New York: Harper, 1837.

This biography of Haynes, the first African American pastor of an all-white congregation (Vermont, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), was published shortly after Haynes's death but is still available in reprints and electronic editions. It is worth the read not just as an important historical study of an oft-neglected portion of American church history but as a revealing and edifying study of a pastor devoted amply to his family and his wider community.

Edwards, Jonathan. *Heaven: A World of Love*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2015.

This sermon from Edwards is readily available online but also published in book form individually and in collected works. Few short works can stir the heart to enjoy the gospel more than this wondrous plunge into "the fountain of love."

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. New York: Harper, 1998.

The aim of the Christian life is discipleship of Christ, becoming more like him every day through close apprenticeship and friendship with him. Willard's book is thick with wisdom toward this end, and it is a challenging resource for embracing the gospel of the kingdom in your everyday life.

DYING

For Reflection

1. When all is said and done, what do you want your “pastoral legacy” to be?
2. In what way(s) is “dying” the normal course of pastoral ministry?
3. What does helping people die look like for the gospel-centered pastor?
4. Describe a time in your life of difficulty or even suffering. What did God teach you about himself—and yourself—in those moments?
5. What are some gospel promises related to the prospect of death?

For Further Study:

Baxter, Richard. *Dying Thoughts*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2004.

This meditation on Baxter's own fears and doubts—and a theological appraisal of them—is a valuable devotional read for any pastor interested in coming to gracious terms with his own mortality.

Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. New York: HarperOne, 1961.

Compiled from Lewis's private diaries of bereavement after the passing of his wife Joy, this book has comforted thousands upon thousands today with its poignant insights into the transience of life and the power of grace.

Owen, John. *The Mortification of Sin*. Abridged version. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2004.

"Be killing sin or sin will be killing you." That is the driving force behind Owen's classic work, which is still the best guide to dying before you die.

Wells, John D. *The Pastor in the Sick Room: Ministering the Gospel to Those on the Brink of Eternity*. Port St. Lucie, FL: Solid Ground, 2004.

Helping people die is a nonnegotiable for gospel-driven pastoral ministry, and this short resource assembled from three Princeton Seminary addresses delivered by an early nineteenth century Presbyterian minister offers encouraging instruction for that work. It is both theological and practical.



CONTEMPORARY READINGS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Pastor

Allen, Jason K. *Discerning Your Call to Ministry: How to Know for Sure and What to Do about It*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016.

Charles, H. B., Jr. *On Pastoring: A Short Guide to Living, Leading, and Ministering as a Pastor*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016.

Harvey, Dave. *Am I Called? The Summons to Pastoral Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Rinne, Jeramie. *Church Elders: How to Shepherd God's People like Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

Strauch, Alexander. *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995.

Thune, Robert H. *Gospel Eldership: Equipping a New Generation of Servant Leaders*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016.

Wilson, Jared C. *The Pastor's Justification: Applying the Work of Christ in Your Life and Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

The Power

Chandler, Matt, with Jared Wilson. *The Explicit Gospel*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Keller, Timothy. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

Ortlund, Ray. *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

Wilson, Jared C. *Gospel Wakefulness*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Worshiping

Bridges, Jerry, and Bob Bevington. *The Bookends of the Christian Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009.

Croft, Brian, and Jim Savastio. *The Pastor's Soul: The Call and Care of an Undershepherd*. Darlington, CO: Evangelical, 2018.

Dodson, Jonathan K. *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Miller, Paul E. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009.

Preaching

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.

Charles, H. B., Jr. *On Preaching: Personal & Pastoral Insights for the Preparation & Practice of Preaching*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Eswine, Zack. *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Helm, David. *Expositional Preaching: How We Speak God's Word Today*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

Keller, Timothy. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Viking, 2015.

Piper, John. *Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Smith, Robert, Jr. *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008.

Wax, Trevin. *Gospel-Centered Teaching: Showing Christ in All the Scripture*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013.

Caring

- Eclov, Lee. *Pastoral Graces: Reflections on the Care of Souls*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012.
- Fernando, Ajith. *Jesus Driven Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002.
- Furman, Dave. *Being There: How to Love Those Who Are Hurting*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.
- Kellemen, Robert W. *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Senkbeil, Harold L. *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019.

Leading

- Ayers, Mike. *Power to Lead: Five Essentials for the Practice of Biblical Leadership*. 2nd ed. Spring, TX: RBK, 2018.
- Carson, D. A. *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Geiger, Eric, and Kevin Peck. *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development*. Nashville: B&H, 2016.
- Sanchez, Juan. *The Leadership Formula: Develop the Next Generation of Leaders in the Church*. Nashville: B&H, 2020.
- Thomas, Scott, and Tom Wood. *Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Wilson, Jared C. *The Gospel-Driven Church: Uniting Church Growth Dreams with the Metrics of Grace*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Fighting (and Making Peace)

- Croft, Brian, and James B. Carroll. *Facing Snarls and Scowls: Preaching through Hostility, Apathy, and Adversity in Church Revitalization*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2019.
- Heffelfinger, Curtis. *The Peacemaking Church: 8 Biblical Keys to Resolve Conflict and Preserve Unity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018.
- Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Poirier, Alfred. *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

Strauch, Alexander. *If You Bite and Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict*. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 2011.

Living

Croft, Brian and Cara. *The Pastor's Family: Shepherding Your Family through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Eswine, Zack. *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations through a Daily Apprenticeship with Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

Ortlund, Dane C. *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.

Packer, J. I. *Weakness Is the Way: Life with Christ Our Strength*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Wilson, Jared C. *Supernatural Power for Everyday People: Experiencing God's Extraordinary Spirit in Your Ordinary Life*. Nashville: Nelson, 2018.

Dying

Alcorn, Randy. *Heaven*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2004.

McCullough, Matthew. *Remember Death: The Surprising Path to Living Hope*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Prime, Derek. *A Good Old Age: An A to Z of Loving and Following the Lord Jesus in Later Years*. Leyland, UK: 10Publishing, 2017.

Tripp, Paul David. *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Vroegop, Mark. *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019.