

Ethics of Pastoral Ministry - The Pastor's Children

Dr. Richard Bargas - Executive Director, IFCA International

Summary:

What are some of the ethical challenges a pastor encounters as he leads his family in the 21st Century? When dealing with sexual purity, rebellion, the LGBTQ+ movement, and cultural compromise, where can we go for biblically informed answers? As always, Scripture is sufficient.

Importance of Discussing Ethics in Pastoral Ministry

1. PM must be driven by our faith above all else.

*"Biblical maturity is never just about what you know; it's always about how grace has employed what you have come to know to transform the way you live."*¹

2. Christian ethics puts biblical truth into actual practice. PM without ethics is hypocrisy of the highest order.

*"Christian ethics is any study that answers the question, 'What does God require us to do and what attitudes does he require us to have today?' with regard to any given situation."*²

3. To function in PM without Christian ethics disqualifies one from the pastoral office and adversely affects the testimony of Christ in the world (1Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).

"An overseer, then, must be above reproach..." (1Tim 3:2, LSB); *"And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, ..."* (1Tim 3:7, LSB); *"... so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to reprove those who contradict."* (Titus 1:9, LSB).

4. Ignoring PM in one's home and marriage invites disaster as our enemy seeks a foothold to destroy.

*"...The war of the pastorate is a deeply personal war. It is fought on the ground of the pastor's heart. It is a war of values, allegiances, and motivations. It is about subtle desires and foundational dreams. This war is the greatest threat to every pastor. Yet it is a war that we often naively ignore or quickly forget in the busyness of local church ministry."*³

¹ Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 26.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 21.

³ Tripp, 98.

Biblical Qualifications of a Pastor as It Relates to His Family and Parenting

Child-Rearing (1Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6)

Challenges:

1. Teaching/ Forming Their Conscience (Prov 22:6; 2Tim 4:2; Mk 7:21; Lk 6:45)
2. Evangelism/ Baptism/ Worship (Matt 28:19-20; Eph 6:4; Jn 4:23; 2Tim 1:5)
3. Discipline/ Training (Matt 28:19-20; 1Tim 4:7-8; Jas 5:7-8)
4. Protection and Provision (Physical and Spiritual) (1Tim 5:8; Prov 4:23)

Opportunities:

Shepherding Adult Children (Job 1:4-5; 1Sam 2:22-36)

Challenges:

1. In-home vs. out-of-home responsibilities (Titus 1:6)
2. Rebellion/Living As an Unbeliever (Gal 5:19-21; 1Cor 6:9-11; Phil 3:3-8)
3. Sexual Immorality (Gal 5:19-21; 1Cor 6:9-11; Phil 3:3-8)
4. Mental Health/ Suicide (Pss 34:18; 42:5; 147:3; Isa 61:1; Ex 20:13)
5. Apostasy/ Deconstruction (Ps 14:1; 1Jn 2:19; Heb 6:4-8; 1Cor 1:22-25)
6. "Progressive" Christianity (2Tim 3:5; Jude 3-4, 17-23)

Opportunities:

Issues to Further Consider from the Scriptures

1. Desiring Regeneration vs. "Going to Church"
2. Prayerfulness and Hope
3. Resist Capitulation to the Culture
4. Reject Adjusting Your Theology