

# Ethics of Pastoral Ministry - The Pastor's Marriage

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## Summary:

What are some of the ethical challenges a pastor encounters as he leads his family in the 21st Century? When dealing with issues such as the appropriate boundaries with the opposite sex, marital faithfulness, and how to have a flourishing marriage, 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."*<sup>1</sup>

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."*<sup>2</sup>

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."*<sup>3</sup>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Tripp, 98.

## **Biblical Qualifications of a Pastor as It Relates to His Family and Marriage**

### ***Faithfulness: A One Woman Man (1Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)***

Challenges:

1. Counseling women (Jer 17:9; Prov 4:23)
2. Sexual immorality, including pornography (Matt 5:27-28; 15:19; Jas 1:14-15)
3. Busyness/Laziness (Ex 23:12; Eccl 5:19; Col 3:23)
4. Loving Your Wife (1Pet 3:7; Eph 5:25-26, 28-29)

Opportunities:

### ***Leadership: Head of the House (1Tim 3:4)***

Challenges:

1. Indecision/Unwilling to Lead (Eph 5:22-24)
2. Harshness/Dictatorial Spirit (Eph 5:25-26, 28-29)
3. Guard your Home (Ezek 34:1-11; Eph 6:4; 1Thess 5:14)

Opportunities:

### ***Child Rearing: Raising Godly Children (Eph 6:4; 1Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6)***

Challenges:

1. Unwilling to Discipline/ Leaving to Mom (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 23:13)
2. Not Leading in Prayer & Discipleship (Deut 6; 2Tim 1:5)
3. Not Pointing Family to God (1Sam 12:23; Deut 6:20; Ex 13:8, 14)

Opportunities: