I. Introduction
   A. Acts 20:28—*Take heed to yourselves—and the flock.* (Balance: *elders* are *overseers*—but *among* the flock, not *over* the flock.)
   B. 1 Tim. 4:16—*Take heed to yourself—and to the teaching.* In each case, “yourself” comes first. Motivation: not from selfishness, but because the further we can go in God, the further we can lead others. Carries tremendous responsibility.

Keys to success in walking as God’s people:

II. Cultivate Hearing God’s Voice
   A. We recognize God’s voice by *getting to know Him.* Every voice is individual.
      1. Examples: Safe that only opens to one voice.
      2. The sheep know the Shepherd’s voice.
   B. Ex. 15:26—“I am the Lord who heals you.”
      1. It was God’s initiative to reveal Himself as His people’s doctor.
      2. Four conditions:
         a. *Diligently heed* the voice of the Lord (Heb.: “listen listening”)
         b. *Do* that which is *right*
         c. *Give ear* to His commandments
         d. *Keep* all His statutes
   C. Ex. 19:5–6—To keep the covenant we must *hear His voice.*
   D. Deut. 28:1–2; 15—Blessings and *curses:* hearing God’s voice determines which of these will overtake us.
   E. Ps. 95—Verses 7–11 are quoted in Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:7
      Key theme is rest. The way into rest is *hearing God’s voice.*
   F. Jer. 7:22–23—Offering *sacrifice* is only acceptable if it springs from hearing God’s voice.
      “Obey me and I will be your God . . .” A central theme of the Bible.
   G. John 10:27—*Relationship* based on *hearing* and *following* the Lord’s voice.
      1. Requires sensitivity and having *right priorities.*
      2. One key: be *relaxed.*
   H. 2 Cor. 3:2–3—God’s words have the quality of *permanence.* The only person who can write on the hearts of God’s people is the Holy Spirit. To exercise *faith,* be prepared to *take risks.* Personal example of buying a home.

III. Pray Things through before They Happen
   A. Phil. 4:6–7—“. . . in *everything,* by prayer.”
      1. John Wesley: “I am persuaded that God does everything by prayer and nothing without it.”
      2. Prayer produces *confidence* in life’s situations.
      3. When we pray according to God’s will, our words are charged with *divine*
B. Two examples of personal prayer for Israel:
   1. Ps. 125:3—“The scepter of the wicked will not remain over land allotted to the righteous.”
   2. Ps. 129:5–6—Anything that opposes the purposes of God will wither before it comes to fruition.
C. Job. 22:27—It is possible to make divine decrees in our prayers.
D. Jer. 23:29—God’s Word is a hammer. The hammer is guaranteed; the rock must break.
E. Exhortation to cultivate harmonious husband-wife prayer.

IV. Walk in Our Calling
   A. God wants us to succeed where He has called us.
   B. 2 Tim. 1:8–9—When God saves us, He also calls us.
      1. Not based on what we can do, but according to God’s own purpose and grace.
      2. Our calling is from eternity.
   C. 1 Thess. 5:24—The One who calls is faithful. God accepts responsibility for what He has called us to do.
   D. 2 Peter 1:10–11—Course of Christian development. Be diligent in what God has called us to do.
   E. Ex. 23:31—God fixes our boundaries.

Four More Keys

Acts 20:28—Pattern and challenge presented to the elders of the church at Ephesus

Keys to success (continued):

V. Practice Being Thankful
   A. Problem is often not the situation, but the attitude
   B. Eph. 5:17–21—Marks of being filled with the Spirit
      1. Speaking and singing (praise, worship)
      2. Giving thanks to God
      3. Submitting to one another
   C. 1 Thess. 5:16–22—Rejoice, pray, give thanks. Greek: “giving thanks” (eucharisto) related to “grace” (charis). The grace of God is expressed in thankfulness
   D. 2 Tim. 3:1–5—Progressive degeneration of human character—includes unthankfulness
   E. Thankfulness must be cultivated—it is a decision

VI. Let God Choose for You
   A. John 3:26–27—We can receive only what is given
   B. John 10:29—“What the Father has given me is greater than all”
      1. Provides rest and security
      2. Insecurity hinders successful ministry. We cannot find ultimate security in
“horizontal” relationships—true security must be found in relationship with the Lord.

C. Ps. 23:1—The most complete statement of security: “I shall not lack”

D. Marks of insecurity:
   1. Frightened by challenges
   2. Looking for approval on horizontal level
   3. Easily “flies off the handle”

E. Matt. 5:5—We win by yielding
   Example of Abraham and Lot: Abraham allowed Lot to choose first, knowing God’s promise (his inheritance) could not fall

F. Ps. 37:1—Do not fret because of the wicked

VII. Rest in Inheritance
   B. Key theme: High priesthood of Jesus
   C. Key thrust: Forward
   D. Deut. 12:9—There is no rest for the people of God outside of their inheritance
   E. Deut. 25:19—The rest is only in the inheritance. If we are restless, we need to find our inheritance.
   F. Heb. 4:9—The devil may delay God’s purposes but not ultimately frustrate them. God patiently continues to say His people will enter their rest.
   G. How do we take a Sabbath rest?
      Communal—example of Sabbath in Jerusalem
   H. Benefits of rest:
      Historically, keeping the Sabbath has kept the Jews a separate people more distinctively than any other single ordinance
   I. Num. 23:9—Balaam’s blessing: the Jewish people are not “reckoned among the nations”
   J. Jer. 1:12—The Word of God rules history. God watches over His word to see it fulfilled
   K. Tithes/Sabbaths
      1. Tithes are 1/10 of our money
      2. The sabbath is 1/7 of our time
      3. The principle: God wants more of our time than of our material wealth
   L. Time must be sanctified. The root concept of sanctification is setting something apart exclusively to God”
   M. Benefits of our inheritance:
      1. Living in health—we must deal with the “fifth column”
      2. Moving in rhythm with God
   N. 1 Thess. 1:9–10—God’s people are a waiting people
   O. Two important aspects of the Christian life:
      1. Serving God
      2. Waiting for His Son from heaven

VIII. Do Not Sell Your Birthright
   A. Heb. 12:14–17—Difference between Jacob and Esau: Jacob wanted God’s blessing; Esau did not value his inheritance
   B. If we have Jacob’s motivation, God can deal with our character. Jacob limped
back into his inheritance—but Esau lost his completely.

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