

Is Your Ministry from God?

Colossians 1:24-2:5

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church **25** of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, **2** that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4** I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. **5** For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

I. **Authentic, biblical ministry takes place where God's Word is made fully known (v. 25)**

People have a tendency to read the parts of Scripture that are their favorites, or more applicable to their lives, or easier, but one way to determine that our ministry is authentic and biblical is to be certain that the WHOLE counsel of God is taught. We need to be careful not to trade devotion to the Word of God for Christian literature or men's opinions of the Word or to only stay in our favorite passages.

II. **Authentic biblical ministry produces maturity in Christ (v. 28)**

We can know that we are in the midst of an authentic and biblical ministry when our ministry produces maturity in Christ, which can be defined as a wholehearted devotion to Christ, seen in obedience to Him. Many Christians make the mistake of focusing on teaching behavior rather than teaching Christ. But, as our ministries focus on Christ and motivate people to continue to love and obey Him, behaviors will change. It is a gift of living in community to lovingly and humbly warn one another of spiritual dangers and to teach the truth from God's word.

III. **Authentic biblical ministry results in encouragement, unity, and assurance (2:2)**

Community with one another is an essential piece in reaching "all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ." A biblical ministry involves the hard work of community. We need to show up faithfully and commit to love one another. We cannot attain "encouragement, unity, and assurance" alone.

IV. **Biblical authentic ministry produces faithfulness. (v. 5)**

Those who have obtained "firmness of their faith" are not swayed by plausible arguments. Even an immature believer recognizes overtly wrong things, but it takes a mature believer to see through plausible arguments. They know the whole counsel of God and have grown in devotion to Him and in community with one another. These things lead to a firmness of faith that can withstand much.

Paul tells us that the key is Christ! A biblical, authentic ministry proclaims Christ and produces mature and faithful disciples.

Discussion Questions

1. How do we determine if our ministry in our church or homes is from God? What is the definition of a biblical, authentic ministry?
2. How does one treat their ministry if they are viewing it as a gift from God?
3. What does it mean to make God's word "fully known"?
4. What does a person who is mature in Christ look like?
5. Discuss the idea of "loving Jesus, but hating the church." Is this possible?
6. How do we achieve firmness of faith in Christ?

Going Deeper

1. How can you tweak the ministry you currently have in your home or CC or church to make it more closely match the definition of a biblical, authentic ministry?
2. Is there currently a relationship in your life that needs reconciliation? If so, how can you prepare for that in a way that pleases God?
3. How can you avoid being captured and distracted by "plausible arguments"?