

Do You Want to Be Pastored or Pacified?

I have been concerned over the years that what is often looked at as pastoring is not always true pastoring. A pastor is a shepherd, who watches over and bring nurture to the life of the sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, so He certainly is the greatest model of pastoring.

I am not sure Jesus would pastor people in the way modern pastors are being pushed to. Today's culture seems to look at pastoring as something that actually looks more like pacifying.

"Meet my needs, keep me happy, scratch my itch, don't tell me anything I don't want to hear."

Because churches have to run budgets and keep finances in order, making decisions is more affected by finances than principle. In addition, I am concerned we have created a codependent culture, where the pastor has to jump at every demand, every need and every complaint.

Because of this, pacifying people becomes more of a driving force than truly feeding the sheep with what God is saying. Certainly there are many pastors that misuse their authority, but are the people of God ready to be nurtured into being overcomers, or are we just wanting to be pacified?

I think Paul nailed it when he warned his spiritual son Timothy:

"For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but they will gather to themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:3, MEV).

So, are you positioned to be pastored into your destiny or are you just seeking to be pacified? The following are seven signs you want to be pacified more than truly shepherded.

1. They do not have an enduring spirit. If you notice, sound doctrine needs to be endured. Why? It's because the solid truth of God often hurts at first. It challenges us and makes us uncomfortable. Not in an accusing way, but in a manner that calls awakening to a higher level. Those who want to be pacified don't have endurance. Once the church life gets a little challenging or they have to deal with relational conflict, they often bail—blaming the church for everything.

Those that want to be pacified will make big statements, but have no follow through, because they have not learned to count the cost and build an endurance to plow through seasons of resistance. Tough times always cause them to bail.

2. They do not like truth that makes them uncomfortable. This is probably the biggest sign, because all truth requires us to change. But most people do not want to change. Those that are pacified have no interest in changing, but you don't always see it up front. It takes a time where truth requires a response. Their inactivity becomes manifest at times where the Word of God demands a response.

Pacifiers want to blame their circumstances. They do not want to address the things within themselves that are a part of the problem, because that would mean taking responsibility. The pacified want the binky or the bottle, but not the strong meat that requires them to make a change.

When God's truth comes to us, a good shepherd will lovingly equip the saints to deal with their personal issues, offenses and brokenness.

But if we are not willing to deal with them, how can a pastor truly fulfill his calling in our midst?

3. They see compassionate challenges as unloving. The moment a pastor stops validating the woundedness and makes a call to step out of brokenness, resistance rises up. Now the pastor we once thought was so loving and caring is now the meanest person on the planet. I have watched so many friends in ministry get blasted by people in the body who claimed the pastor was being so mean and unloving, when all they were doing was bringing to the table a call to step out of victim-land and into victory.

Yes, there is a time to weep, grieve and address brokenness. But do we resist the new chapter where God is saying, "Rise up and walk!"

4. They carry unchecked lust. I am not just talking about sexual lust, although that is included. Those who are pacified are driven more by their changing emotions and unguarded passions than they are by grounded heart relationship with God. So during the week, they spend all their time investing in pleasures and addictions. Then they walk into church expecting the pastor and leadership to serve their every need.

The moment you make them accountable for their lusts, they step back and refuse to hear. They have chosen to live a life that lacks any accountability for their lifestyle and actions. They just want you to stand up and teach what they want. They are not interested in being accountable.

Many pastors are left not wanting to even know what the sheep in the house are doing, because no one wants to be accountable for their life.

I ran into this early on when I brought a heavy revelation regarding the Father's love. People would come in from all over seeking to gain healing and change from the blessing the love of the Father brings. But then after some time, when it got to the point where they needed to take responsibility for their life, people went scurrying. Many were more interested

in blaming their life on their parents, leaders and circumstances. "What Mark? You want me to take responsibility for my life? You mean I can't just blame it anymore on the fact that I have not been loved by people?"

The apostle Paul said, *"You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained by your own affections"* (2 Cor. 6:12, MEV).

5. They need "911 answers" frequently. *They have itching ears.* Ever seen a dog that has a really bad itch? It moves its hind legs in turbo, rubbing to help alleviate that nagging itch. When you live by your emotional ups and downs, your immaturity manifests in needing answers "now." Whenever there is a problem, the pacified calls with a demand to be addressed right away.

I think it's completely ungodly how pastors are driven to have an "on call" kind of posture in the church; where they have to sit by the phone and be at everyone's beck and call. This keeps them from being able to raise their family in a healthy way and prevents them from the agenda God has placed over their day. Most pastors just jump to the call of whatever needs come up. Is this really of God?

Pacifiers just want a quick baba to get them through the moment. They are not interested in taking the time to grow, so they can they learn, mature and truly walk free of what is binding them.

Their problems did not originate overnight, so neither will their freedom. A true overcomer will work with their shepherd to improve their personal decisions and break free from dangerous blind spots.

Sadly, I have had to tell people at times, if you truly have a 911 issue, then call 911. To a pacifier, that sounds unloving.

6. Their inner circle just tells them what they want to hear.

Notice none of their friends and family tell them the truth. They dance around the person in fear, or they are compliant to their dysfunction also.

One of the hardest things to do in life is to receive a corrective word from a covenant friend or from an overseer that is invested in your life. (Notice I did not mention someone who has no invested relationship in you, does not know you or does not have any oversight in your life?) I have experienced this a number of times. It stings at first, but does a massive healing work in my life if I hang in there and don't get defensive.

Receiving correction at first can be really awkward, because our instinctive training from the enemy is to defend our strongholds and behaviors rooted in ungodly ways. Those who want to be pacified live with a chronic fear of being exposed and shamed, so they do whatever they can to ignore the issues of their heart so they can just feel good about their life.

They often ignore the pastors and teachers who know them and find a big name person who doesn't to rescue them. They will run from conference to conference, meeting to meeting. But they ignore the counsel of their own pastors, friends and loved ones, who actually have a vested interest in their life.

7. They are high maintenance. It is my conviction through years of observation that those who take the most energy from a church are the ones who are the least invested.

Hebrews 12:7 talks about living before authorities in such a way that you bring them joy. Pacifiers drain the resources, energy and joy out of leadership. This is mostly because they don't take responsibility for their own life. They see the church as a place to meet their needs, rather than an equipping station for them to walk out their transformation at home.

Unfortunately, you cannot be yourself around them. If you are

a little off one day, they will make it personally. The moment you “fail” their expectation, out comes the anger and neediness.

Until we walk through some repentance, we will continue to make our pastors people who need to meet our every need, instead of seeing them as overseers designed to equip us to be overcomers ourselves.

In what other ways do we live as people who want to be pacified?

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