

Pastor, What's On the Plate You're Passing?

The Apostle Paul said, "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

Christians are the most overweight people group in America. Have you wondered why this is true? I believe everything rises and falls on leadership, and I believe the main reason people are overweight in the pews is because so many pastors are overweight behind the pulpit.

Like most pastors, for years I chose to ignore the problem, shift blame elsewhere and not make my congregation aware of the importance of being healthy—but not anymore. Now that I'm doing something about my weight and my lifestyle, I no longer have a difficult time speaking to my congregation about this problem.

And they appreciate it because it is part of the whole counsel of God. Listen, in Acts 20:26-27, Paul is saying, "My hands are clean. Your blood is not on my hands. I'm not responsible for your bad behavior. You can't blame me, because I preached to you all the counsel of God."

You see, the word *body* is used 179 times in the Bible. God tells us in His Word how to manage our bodies. That's part of the "whole counsel of God," and it's the part that has been neglected. Do you know what God says to the pastors?

He commands pastors, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (v. 28). We are to feed the flock, but that doesn't mean to feed the church of God potluck dinners.

We've done a good job of feeding the stomachs of the people in our congregations. This verse, however, is talking about feeding their souls with the Word of God.

Once again, my answer as to why so many Christians are overweight is because so many pastors are overweight and have neglected this portion of the Word of God. The good news is that if the problem stands in the pulpit, perhaps the answer stands in the pulpit as well.

If God will allow me, and I'm praying that He will, I'm going to create a movement throughout this country and throughout the world that will get pastors and spiritual leaders on board with honoring God—with their bodies first and then with preaching and teaching this truth to their congregations.

I want to communicate with any pastor needing help in this area: Please feel free to contact me. For more information go to www.bod4god.com or email me at sreynolds@bod4god.com.

Steve Reynolds is lead pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, Va. He is the author of the books *Bod4God* and *Get Off the Couch*. He is also the creator of the *Losing to Live* weight-loss competition. He has lost more than 120 pounds and has led his church to lose more than eight tons of weight.