

# Leadership & the Doctrines of the Nicolaitans

by Philip Powell

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*Philip Powell discusses the dangers of Nicolaitanism in church leadership and the critical importance of doctrine for true living.*

**Duration:** 57:55

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 5:19-25

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Spiritual Accountability"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of leaders in the church and the need for believers to have a proper attitude towards them. He emphasizes that our attitude towards leaders should be based on their lifestyle and conduct. The speaker also criticizes the idea of a personality cult and the excessive financial benefits some leaders receive. He then references 1 Timothy 5:17-25 to discuss the support and accountability of leaders in the church.

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## Transcript

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us now as we look at your word. We thank you that your word is life and your word is light. And you have said that it will never return to void, but it will accomplish that to which you have sent it.

We pray, Lord, as we prayed earlier, that you will guard our mind and guard our lips, that we may say what you want us to say, and that we may refrain from saying what you don't want us to say. And Lord, we pray as this tape goes out to various people, that it will cause an awareness of your presence and an awakening to the truth of the word of God. We thank you, Lord.

The psalmist said, Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you. And Lord, we know that if your word is not hidden in our hearts, then there is every possibility of us sinning against you. We pray that you will, Lord, just help us to keep that word in focus in our lives, in the name of Jesus, for the glory of your great name.

And all the people said, Amen. Okay, well, we're on our, what is it, the fourth meeting. The first message was on the topic of when God calls for a drought in the church, and that's available on tape.

The other one was, Will the real bride please step forward? Four signs of the emerging church in today's world. And we gave notes with that. And then last week, we looked at it.

It's clean-up time in the church. Christ is coming back for a pure bride. Do we believe that? He's coming back for a pure bride.

Then the third, in the series on the bride, which is the fourth actual in the meetings that we've held so far, and we're giving notes with all of this, is leadership and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. And we've suggested that leaders should always be open to examination and open to challenge. I want to direct your thoughts to a few verses.

Revelation 2, verses 6 and 15. Now, these are the only two occasions in the Scriptures where we have reference to this business of the Nicolaitans. And you notice in the first instance, it warns us about the deeds of the Nicolaitans.

And in the second, it warns us about the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Now, I find that basically with false living, it starts in a practical way, and then ultimately, it becomes a doctrinal thing. With regard to true living, it works the other way.

You have to have your doctrine right, and out of your doctrine flows correct living. Now, we'll be saying more about that next week when we look at the topic of perverted Christianity, Satan's ultimate weapon. I think it was Billy Graham who said on one occasion, the problem with today's church is that we've been inoculated with a small dose of Christianity, which makes us immune to the real thing.

And that's true. But there is, and of course we have to recognize it in the light of the prophetic scriptures, that there is going to become a great dissection. So much so, it says that if it were possible, even the elect should be deceived.

Now, I've heard people misquote that, and they say the elect will be deceived, but it doesn't say that. It says if it were possible, the elect will be deceived, but the elect cannot be deceived. They are elected not to be deceived.

And so we've got to be among the elected not to be deceived. Do you agree with that? So, that's important. We'll come back to this a little later in the message where we see that wrong doctrine flows out of wrong living, but right living flows out of right doctrine.

It's the reverse of the cycle, really. And people say doctrine doesn't matter. But it does matter.

If you don't know how to live right, how can you live right? And true doctrine tells us how to live right. Is that right? So, doctrine is vitally important. Revelation 2, verse 6 says, But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Verse 15, Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine. So, the deeds have now become the doctrine. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which things I hate.

Very quickly, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the idea comes from the word Nicolaitan. It comes from two aspects of that word when it's broken down. Nicao, which means to conquer, plus Raos, means the people.

So, in the idea of the Nicolaitan doctrine, you have the idea of the conquest of the people. Now, there are two things which flow on from this, which we'll look at a bit later in the study. One is the idea of the domination, control of others.

I would like to suggest to you that the leadership thing which has been set up in the church today is not biblical. Now, leaders, the idea of leaders is biblical. But the expression leadership is not biblical.

Leadership really, in its formation, has the idea of method or activity. But we have applied it to a group. We talk about the leadership.

And in so doing, we're applying it to people. We're applying it to a group of people. And what we're doing, actually, in that, we are establishing again the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

We are establishing an elitism. And the Bible doesn't know anything about it. It is contrary to the Scripture.

So, I would question the idea that is used very much today in charismatic Pentecostal circles of the leadership concept. Then, ultimately, you will find, and it's hard to determine which comes first, but always they run together. There is domination or control of others, and there will ultimately be immorality expressed in the midst of it.

It's unavoidable. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans always links up with the doctrine of Balaam throughout church history. And the doctrine of Balaam led into immorality.

Now, sometimes it comes from leadership, not by precept, but by practice. And the thing flows through the church of Jesus Christ, and it becomes corrupt. So, there are two things.

Now, the first thing is what we have suggested to you, this domination or control of others. Ironside says Nicolaitanism is really clerisy. The subjugation of those who were contemptuously styled the laity by a hierarchical order who lorded it over them as their own possession, forgetting that it is written, one is your master, even Christ, and all you are brethren.

Okay? Now, that is really fundamental. Now, the Bible lists 15 things that God hates. Psalm 5.5, he hates workers of iniquity.

Psalm, these are in your notes, 45 verse 7, he hates wickedness. Then Proverbs 6, 16 to 19, lists seven things that God hates. It says, these six things that the Lord hates, yea, seven are an abomination unto him.

And the seven things are, one, a proud look, two, a lying tongue, three, hands that shed innocent blood, and the greatest expression of that in modern society is abortion. God hates it. A heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, the sixth, a false witness that speaketh lies, and the seventh, he that soweth discord among brethren.

Now, there would be those who would suggest that Philip Powell sows discord among brethren, but I don't think you can do that if you stand for the truth. It's the other side that is sowing discord by allowing falsity to come into the midst. There have been a lot of innovative things, and I stood against them in Australia, and I tried to speak, for example, I tried to speak to Frank Houston on one occasion about some of the modern art expressions that have come into the church.

He wouldn't have a discussion, but that sort of thing has expressed itself in all sorts of seduction, all sorts of seduction. I tried to stand against it for years, way back, way back, but it has. And now certain modern art expressions, now, I'm not against modern art, but I am against it in the church.

It is not for the church to practice that. Modern art is all right outside in the secular world, or whatever, but that is not our job. That's not our job.

And when we get into that, all sorts of corruption comes in. It happened throughout history. Martin Luther took a stand for righteousness on justification by faith.

In his wake, there came the Renaissance. And you had all of these art things that came into the church. The Renaissance introduced a period of darkness into the church history like we have never, ever had before.

The same thing, the devil plays the same trick. If you don't know history, then what you do is you repeat the mistakes of history. So we've got to know our church history.

And there are many good brothers, you know, with great intentions to save the world, but they have never studied church history. That's the thing that I like about Jacob Price. He's a man who has studied church history, and he can see the failures that have happened in the past are recurring again.

And we've got to stand against it. And we've got to listen to those who have done a bit of research and a bit of study. Otherwise, we'll take the church down the path that the devil wants it to go.

And so these are the things that we've got to stand against. The tenth thing is God hates robbery. Isaiah 61, verse 8, robbery for burnt offering.

In other words, if you're going to offer something to God, don't go and steal it from somebody else. You're going to offer it to Him. God hates that.

God hates, in Jeremiah 44, 44 to 46, it says He hates the abominable thing. What was the abominable thing? Go down a line and you'll see what it is. To burn no incense unto other gods.

God hates idolatry. Then 12, God hates hypocritical religion. He hates your feast days, and He hates your solemn assemblies, Amos 5.21 says.

He hates hypocritical religion. The 13th thing that God hates is the residence of hypocrites. He says to Jacob, I hate your palaces now because you are living as hypocrites in regard to my cause and your very places.

I hate the place where you live. God hates false oaths. Zechariah 8, 17.

And then the 15th thing, which is the only thing listed in the New Testament that God hates, relates to the Nicolaitans. I suppose we ought to say 15 and 16 because it says He hates the deeds and He hates the doctrine. Now apart from that, in the New Testament, there is no other reference to God actually hating anything except in Romans 9.13 where it says, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.

Now that is a quote from the Old Testament and so really, for the purpose of this study, you can ignore it from the New Testament point of view. So the only thing that God really hates, the Bible lists in the New Testament is the deeds and the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. So the big question is, what is this business? What are the deeds and what are the doctrines of the Nicolaitans? But before we do, I want to have a look at the scriptural attitude to leaders.

Now the Bible lists that God establishes certain people as leaders. He does it by His calling. He doesn't do it by an educational process.

He doesn't do it by a training process. He does it by putting His hand upon people and He calls them to be His ministers. That principle in Matthew 16 is wider than most of us understand where Jesus said to Peter, you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.

He not only says that He is the rock of the church, but He's saying that Peter is the rock but as a representative man, not as an individual. You've got to see that. He is a rock in the way that the revelation has come to Him.

For here's the setting. Here's Jesus and His disciples, a beautiful picture of a church. A church is a group of people surrounding Jesus and Jesus is there in a place called Caesarea Philippi right away from Jury, right away from the religious establishment and He challenges them and He says, who do men say that I am? And they said, Lord, there's a lot of conjecture about you.

Some say that you're John the Baptist, some say you're Elijah, some say you're that prophet and so it will be and so it has always been. There's a lot of conjecture about the identity of Jesus Christ. But He said then, who do you say that I am? And now the issue rests with them and Peter is the one that speaks up first.

He says, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God and Jesus said, you're a happy man, Peter, because flesh and blood is not revealed to you, but my Father who is in heaven and I say to you that you're Peter and upon this rock I will build my church. The rock of what He has just said. Yes, absolutely.

That's the foundation. It must be. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, but also the rock of how it has come.

How did it come? It didn't come by information. It didn't come by education. It came by revelation.

Right? And so Jesus says, nobody's going to get into my kingdom, nobody's going to get into my church unless they come in by revelation. Now when we try and whip people up into enthusiasm and get them by hype and pressure, we're cutting across the whole idea of the revelation. See? They've got to come in on the basis of what God does, not what we do.

We can't, we can't compel people into the kingdom. We'd like to, wouldn't we? But we can't because it's on the basis of revelation. So Jesus is saying to Peter, Peter, this is the way I'm going to build my church.

But there's another truth here, you see. Peter has entered into the revelation and now he shares it with the group. And so Jesus says, that's the way I'm going to build my church.

When a man gets a revelation from me and shares it with a group and they enter it, that's the way I'm going to build my church. The problem now, in most of our pulpits, we have no revelation. We have people who are sharing messages that they got from somebody else.

That's what happens. They get hold of a message and everybody's saying, the Holy Spirit is saying one thing. No, He's not.

What has happened is one man who we consider to be up at the top has said one thing and all these little voices have echoed what he said. And, you know, we get confused. Unless a man gets a revelation from

God, my sermons may not be very good but I don't get them from anybody else.

Never. I get them from the Lord. I must.

When I, you know, this is a bit different, this type of thing. But even here, I mean this is my own stuff, nobody else's. But I recognize that this is not so much inspirational type preaching which we, you know, we can get into.

But it's more information because we're doing it for a particular purpose. But that is what Jesus is saying here. So leaders, and leaders come out and they all come out on the basis of revelation.

The five ministry gifts, or some people like to say four. I've always felt there's five. I don't think it's a big issue.

But there's the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher. Some put those two together and say it's one pastor teacher. Well I think a pastor must always teach, of course.

But there are some teachers who don't necessarily pastor. But anyway, that's neither here nor there. But the basic thing, there are two elements in all true ministry.

The first is revelation. It's got to be in any area. And the second is honesty and truth.

Now I've had so many discussions with some of my colleagues and one in particular said to me on one occasion, Phil, he said, you know, you sit in a congregation and being a teacher, he said you immediately you detect whether it's truth or not. He said, I am a pastor and he said, I'm not committed to truth, I'm committed to people. Well that's utter nonsense.

To me that is utter nonsense. If you're not committed to truth, ultimately you can't be committed to people. And what's more, if you're not committed to truth, ultimately you'll lose everything you've got.

Because all ministry has to be committed to truth. So there are two passages which I want to consider with regard to this scriptural attitude to leaders. The first is 1 Timothy 5 verses 17 to 25.

And you might feel that some of the things we say are pertinent to what has happened in New Zealand and in the situation. I believe God sent us here for a particular purpose and it's quite interesting that we find ourselves in Hamilton where there was a disclosure which was very disturbing not so very long ago. But this passage of Scripture featured quite a lot in what happened with regard to that.

And again I would suggest to you that in fact it was misunderstood and the truth of it was very much misapplied in regard to the way that the thing was handled. 1 Timothy chapter 5. And verse 17. Let me read it to you from 17 to 25.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour especially those who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says you shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain and the labourer is worthy of his hire or his wages. Do not receive now this is a pertinent passage do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

That is what the new King James says and it's not right it's wrong. The old King James is right here. Somebody got an old King James will you read it please? Pardon? Verse 19.

OK. Before two or three witnesses the new King James changes it and says except from two or three witnesses. I'll come back to that and explain why the new King James is wrong and the old King James is right.

And why the whole thing of this is so very very important in regard to dealing with leadership sins. OK we'll read on just for the present time. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all that the rest also may fear.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice doing nothing with partiality. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily nor share in other people's sins. Keep yourself pure.

No longer drink only water but use a little wine notice that little wine not a lot little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. Some men's sins are clearly evident preceding them to judgment for those of some men follow later. Likewise the good works of some are clearly evident and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

I read through the epistles to Timothy the other day again and you cannot help but realize what's happening here. Here is the older apostle giving instruction to a younger pastor and he touches on many many things on what to do how to carry on and the verses 1 Timothy let me see where verses chapter 3 verses 15 and 16 are key verses. There, somebody read it to us.

Read verses 15 and 16 of 1 Timothy chapter 3. Thanks Trish. Chapter 3 1 Timothy 3 chapters 15 and 16 these are the key verses to the whole of the epistle that's what I'm trying to say here. Ok, if you could just read that out really good and loud.

Right. Now you see what you're going to see here is that Paul is telling Timothy how he should behave himself in the church of the living God. In many churches today you can just behave yourself how you like.

You can come in how you like. People come in you know in a sort of a lackadaisical sort of manner and as if it's not God's house at all. It doesn't matter this is our place sort of thing.

But that's right they haven't been taught it. That's the basic thing. But Paul taught Timothy taught Timothy how to behave in the church of God and he said you have to teach others because the church is different from anything else.

The church is the pillar and the ground of the truth. Right. If the church does not exist in society there is no foundation for truth and truth falls by the wayside.

That is what has happened in modern society because the church has become weak then all sorts of weaknesses come into society. When the church is strong then a strength comes back into society and Paul says that you may know how to behave and then in verse 16 which is the key he says because there is a mysterious force at work that we cannot analyze that we cannot understand it is the work of godliness. Now out in that world there is a work of iniquity going on and the only thing that can counter it is not education or information or ability musical ability or anything else but it is the truth which comes through the church of Jesus Christ.

The only thing. And he says great is that mystery of godliness. And he says Timothy you can't fully understand it.

So this is what I'm telling you how you should behave yourself and how you should tell others to behave themselves. And so he deals with this whole thing. Now in the passage before us he is dealing with a matter of leaders.

Not leadership please because we suggest that that is not a biblical concept anyway when it is applied to a group of people but he is just talking about leaders. Have you noticed now we don't have ministers we have ministries. Have you noticed that? You know we are going to have a ministry come through.

Sounds a lot better doesn't it? Grandiose. But all he is is a minister. That's all he is.

Right? A minister and a minister is a servant. Okay? Right? We are servants for Jesus Christ. There is only one great one in the world hallelujah and his name is Jesus.

And it is only as we get away from this personality cult and this payment of enormous amounts of money to some guys who want to stay in five star hotels and drive big limousines and all the rest of it. Now I am not if God gives it to you from a different perspective okay. But I am with Jacob Prask.

If you are pinching that sort of money from widows and orphans and some of these guys are then they are nothing more than hirelings and they will have to give an answer to God. And yes and so we yes we have got to bring the message back into the church of Jesus Christ and we have to address this issue in regard to leaders and first of all he deals with it in respect of their support verses one and two. He says let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor.

Now he is talking about money he is talking about payment. And there was a time when pastors were so underpaid that you know my dad would bear me out here they were treated disgustingly by the congregation so that and sister your husband was in the ministry disgustingly so that they could hardly live each had a living.

I came into the situation well when I started off it was it was bad and now it is even worse but that is ok we are you know we are going along a particular way at the moment but you know during the most of my ministry I have been reasonably well provided for and the Lord is wonderfully undertaken at all times God is good but the attitude Lord you keep him we will keep him poor Lord if you keep him humble is not on is not on and so the workman Paul says ok he is worthy of his hire but there are two requirements please notice these one that he has got to rule well ok now a man who is committing adultery when he is holding an office in the pulpit he is not ruling well ok and really I cannot understand I can understand a fall I can understand a failure but I cannot understand a man preaching

and continuing to see a build up he is a hypocrite he is not only an immoral man he is a hypocrite now the world will tolerate immorality you have heard and I am not saying it is right I recognize it is wrong and I reckon it is wrong but they will even tolerate immorality in royalty what just happened with Charles it is a sad thing it is a sad reflection on society admittedly but even the world will not tolerate immorality in ministry in clergy why because they recognize that it is hypocrisy as well because we are holding forth a message and we are doing the opposite that is hypocrisy now so the requirements are for proper payment it has to be he has to rule well and then there is the other thing he has got to labour in the word now I I am sorry I don't want to well I don't mind offending

people but I don't deliberately want to do that but I do want to sound a message which will bring us back to basics there are some guys who occupy a pulpit who can't preach they cannot minister the word they put a

text together and they string a little joke or what have you and you have got nothing you get nothing they cannot minister the minister who is worthy of double honour has to rule well and he has to labour in the word ok notice that so in respect of their support Paul addresses that and then in respect of their sins and there are five considerations verses 19 to 25 this first one let's address it tells them how to handle an accusation we have suggested to you that the new king James is wrong and the authorised version is correct why because Paul's instruction here is to protect

the young pastor not the accused or the accuser he is not addressing that issue he is addressing the issue of protecting Timothy and he says to Timothy Timothy don't receive an accusation against an elder a leader unless it is in front of two or three witnesses in other words if somebody comes to you and accuses you about wrong living by another man the thing you have got to do is get two or three people there to hear what that man has said that's all he is saying he is not saying get two people to witness to the same thing that's ridiculous you could never have that in a case of adultery could you I mean if a woman comes and accuses a pastor of adultery you are not expecting somebody to be there to witness it are you I mean it is ridiculous Timothy says Paul says to Timothy if that type

of thing happens make sure you have got two or three why well I mean I don't know if it is even necessary to that extent today because we have got tape recorders we could have somebody there he is really saying protect yourself Timothy protect yourself that's what he is saying now this is in line with Matthew 18 verse 16 now in the notable case here the thing was held up for six months simply because they couldn't find a witness if one person is accused another man of that sort of thing and usually it is a woman that accuses a man of that sort of thing because the situation has happened and the leadership sat on it for six months that is disgusting that is wrong that is fundamentally wrong because the corruption then spreads and when it came to us and I got involved I certainly did they

had gone on for between six and four months and I took action to ensure that the cover up that happened in the 1970's bought my words happened in the 1970's didn't happen again now I will I will be challenged about that I don't mind but that is what I did because the man was still preaching after four months in a big church in Australia handling accusations what does he say he says when that sort of thing happens Timothy get on to it but make sure you have got two or three witnesses that is all he is saying some people point to Deuteronomy 6.17.6 and Deuteronomy 19.15 but those passages apply to judgment generally they do not apply to investigating they apply to judgment about judgment it is entirely different the principle is Matthew 18.16 where it talks about the principle of witnessing

say if a brother offends you Matthew 18 it says ok go and see him on his own you go and see him and then it says if he doesn't listen to you take two or three witnesses with you that is the principle that Paul is addressing here he is telling him how to handle accusations then he is talking about public rebuke verse 20 he says those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all that the rest also may fear now the context again is quite clear if a person is going to be rebuked publicly he has got to be there present cannot be rebuked if he is absent can only be done if he is present and the aim is that the people will fear fear fear when proper discipline is instituted in the way that God intends it to be instituted there is a fear that comes upon the church of Jesus Christ and that is a

wholesome thing it brings the fear of God back into the situation and brothers and sisters if anything is lacking today it is the fear of God I was listening last night to a video tape of my uncle actually my dad's brother and he quoted he quoted Martin Lloyd Jones the great preacher of Westminster Chapel days who was asked what ministry is he said can you tell us Mr.

Jones in a word what is true ministry and he said true ministry brings the sense of the presence of God that is what it is all about that is what it is all about and when things are done properly in the house of God there comes a fear of God almighty into the situation after my my articles in the Omega Times on rock music and all that sort of thing I had a phone call from a brother in Ashurst and he said to me he said we are finding he said when rock music comes into the church there comes a disrespect for the house of God he said we have men coming in wearing caps and all sorts of things into the house of God why? because the fear of God has gone out of the place and you can address it and try and address it as much as you like but what you need is somebody to come in with a prophetic

voice and thunder the fear of God back into the place so that we can realize that we are not a social club anymore that runs a sort of an outreach of help to needing people that is what the church is largely becoming and friends we need to help people I am not against that but that is not our fundamental work our fundamental work is to bring the awesome sense of the presence of God into the house of God and unless that happens I tell you in New Zealand in the churches that I have been to and I have been to a lot of them there is going to be a great dearth in the next generation of wholesome godly men and women because what will happen we will just become a social club and it is spreading like a cancer right through so he tells us how to handle this thing and he talks about public rebuke

that others also may fear and then he talks about absolute impartiality verse 21 I charge you and notice the solemn charge I charge you before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect or holy angels that you do not treat anybody differently from another the thing that has appalled me in my association with the hierarchy of a movement that I have been associated with for years is the way that partiality comes in and because a man has a big name he is treated differently from a man who has a small name that is contrary to the word of God that is against the epistle of James we ought to treat each other without partiality cronyism has invaded the church of Jesus Christ and God has to shake the thing again to bring us back notice the solemn charge before the father before the son

and before the holy angels that you don't treat anybody differently from anybody else because when you start doing that justice is shaken at its very foundation and the whole thing begins to shake and the church of Jesus Christ no longer is the pillar and ground of the truth God has to bring it back again then verse 22 and this is an awesome thing there is the thought of the transference of sin that comes from leaders who themselves have sinned verse 22 do not lay hands on anyone hastily nor share in other people's sins keep yourself pure what is he talking about he is talking about the appointment to office primarily but he is also talking about the fact that there can be a transference from person to person I was in a big conference in Australia where the minister asked people to go and

lay hands on each other now I am not totally against that but I think it is dangerous but in that place it has its dangers let's put it that way in that place the person that came to me immediately I assessed there was something wrong with him and I found out quickly that he was a transvestite now there was no way I was going to let him lay his hands on me I laid my hands on him okay but I wasn't going to let him lay his hands on me because there is something that is transference there is a transference of sins and men that have lived immorally and are hypocritical in the midst of their immorality they transfer something and it becomes corruption right the way through and it needs the very word of God the sharp two-edged sword of God to come into the situation and cut the thing open and

deal with the cancer otherwise it will perpetuate itself there are men in ministry who should never ever be in ministry they've never been ordained by God they've been ordained by men and there have been some

of them ordained by men who are wrong in themselves and as a result there will be a transference a transference of sins denominations and men frequently frequently have failed to move leaders out of responsibility spiritual responsibility because of cronyism because they're their friend and because they have failed they say keep it quiet we'll shift you somewhere else I've heard about it in America all over the place listen now I know a man can fail and he can recover himself I believe that I believe he can recover himself I believe that but it depends on his position that he's held

the position he held and the measure of you know saying that he engaged in cover up and the hypocrisy and everything but it is highly dangerous when a man has failed morally knowingly to move into another situation you will usually find that he failed again and what happens is that the last case becomes worse than the first it's got to be dealt with and the problem with us in leadership over and over again and if there are leaders that hear my voice I pray God that you will heed what I say is that we protect the leadership without realizing the implication to the sheep and our commitment should first and foremostly be to the people not to our leaders but to the people we are shepherds of sheep and we should be committed to the people that are concerned with sin and then Paul says in all

of this Timothy even with all of this there are going to be injustices absolutely but he says you keep eternity in view some men since verse 24 are clearly evident proceeding them to judgment but those that some men follow later likewise the good works of some are clearly evident and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden now we know that we recognize that principle but we got to deal with the things that we know and we have to leave the rest to God almighty ok keep eternity in view Ecclesiastes 3.11 God has put eternity in our hearts like we said last week now the other thing is Hebrews chapter 13 verses 7-17 here we have the attitude towards leaders and we notice that it is predicated upon their lifestyle considering the outcome of their conduct that is let's have a look at it

Hebrews chapter 13 verses 7-17 ok let me see if I can find it quickly here Hebrews chapter 13 verses 7-17 remember those who rule over you who have spoken the word of God to you whose faith follows considering the outcome of their conduct verse 17 obey those who rule over you and be submissive for they watch out for your souls verse 18 now here the important thing is to remember that our attitude to our leaders is based upon their lifestyle it says considering the outcome of their conduct or considering the end of their conversation the end of their lives in other words we don't just listen and remember and obey blindly but we do it on the basis of what their life is like the Bible never says just follow me Paul never said follow me he only said follow me as I follow Christ right follow

me as I follow Christ if then I'm not following Christ you must not follow me if I stop following Christ you must stop following me we can follow men who we respect and women who we respect that is the word follow simply means that we pattern our lives on their lives no problem with that so long as they are following Christ but that must be the examination getting cold is it ok alright I'll try and get through it very quickly I want to deal with it but considering the end of their conduct verse 7 and also considering their ultimate accountability obey those verse 17 says who rule over you and be submissive for they watch for your souls as those who will have to give account they have to give account there is their eventual accountability that we must keep in mind so the third thing I want

to say about our attitude to leaders in respect of their support in respect of their sins is now in respect of their self and it's not verses 19 to 25 in the notes it should be verses 17 to 19 verse 7 to 19 rather verse 7 to 19 you can blame my computer ok there are two commands with the above provisos that is that we respect their support if they rule well if they labour in the word of God if their conduct is right and if they are

always living so that they are going to be accountable to God then those people we should remember and we should obey now the word remember actually conveys the idea of doing two things bearing in mind bringing them to mind and then talking about them now that's interesting isn't it because today what leaders are often saying is don't you talk about pastors

right is that right that's what they say don't have the pastor for lunch heard it so many times why not why not why not we should be under examination there is nothing wrong with being under examination and in actual fact the idea of remembering means to talk about so you see it helps us to talk about and to understand I would hope that when you sit down for lunch you will talk about what I said here today you may not agree with what I say well talk about it and come to a conclusion and approach me I've got no problem with that but we should talk about it we should remember our spiritual leaders that means to make mention and then it's based upon the idea of also the leader being the person who goes in front who goes before and who is accountable we have to remember that the second thing

is that we are to obey our spiritual leaders now the word obey here is not mindless obedience again it has the idea of being persuaded so the idea is also that of trust or having confidence or being confident in so the word obeying so many pastors say you've got to obey me they say I am pastor here I've never ever said that by God's grace never ever said it ever said it because if I cannot command respect then I cannot it's impossible to demand it my ministry my conduct my life the word of God brings that sense of respect always but for me to say hey you've got to obey me because I'm pastor that means my authority is under question very much ok so quickly I wonder I've got too much to say I always say too much so what about the deeds of the Nicolaitans let me run down it very very quickly

what are these deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitans the deeds of the Nicolaitans is a leadership control of people it's first mentioned in connection with the church at Ephesus that's interesting because Paul warned them that it was going to happen in Acts chapter 20 he called the elders together and he said take care of the flock of God because after my departure there will come those who will try to draw people after themselves now there he is highlighting the very practice of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans trying to get people to follow them that's what it is that's what the teaching of the Nicolaitans is now the church at Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2 having been alerted by Paul now you can imagine what happened the elders go back and they say well Paul has shared with us a

revelation of what is going to happen in the future and we have got to be very very careful and so being careful when these types came along who tried to get people to follow them right they turned against them and they hated the Bible says the deeds of the Nicolaitans which also I hate now there are those who believe and we don't have to go into it fully today it's quite a topic in itself that the seven churches of Asia represent the seven successive periods of church history and we are probably in the later C.N.H now I've never been able to accept that in its extreme form but I do accept it in degree I believe they were literal churches and they faced those problems as literal problems I also believe that we are literal churches and we will face the same problems we might face the

problem that the church of Ephesus faced where they lost their love or we might face the problem that the church of Laodicea faced which was being lukewarm and so at any church age you can have all of these things happening at the same time but there is a sense in which there is a measure of truth of this successive ages so the first failure the first attempt was the deeds of the Nicolaitans into the early church represented by the Ephesian church the next church that comes along is the church of Smyrna which is the persecuted church and incidentally there is no condemnation mentioned against them because usually

the persecuted church is the purified church but the third church that comes along is the church of Pergamum and now not only do they have the deeds of the Nicolaitans but they

also have the doctrine of the Nicolaitans now the church of Pergamum was the first church that compromised and it goes down on record as being the compromising church it faced a particular period of church history they had their persecution as well but in fact so great was their persecution because they existed in you'll see it there in Revelation chapter 2 from verses 11 to 15 or there about where they existed where Satan's seat was you see it was a place of the authority of imperial Rome and it was the most expressed there was the worship of the emperor and so John says by Revelation from the Holy Spirit he says you exist where Satan's seat is right there in the midst of imperial Roman authority and the worship of the emperor and he says you have suffered persecution in fact one guy

called Antipas who was a doctor and a medical man so stood firm for Christianity they accused him of bringing corruption into society and they took him and they put him in a brazen or copper bull that had been hollowed out and they heated it until it was red hot and he died inside this copper bull and John talks about him he says you exist where Satan's seat is and he says my martyr Antipas laid down his life there in the midst he says well I've got something against you why? he says because you've got two things that have come in the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans the two will always go hand in hand Balaam taught the Israelites to commit adultery and fornication and as a result they lost their heritage and lost their lives 24,000 were killed in a day well what had

happened? he learnt a leader had learnt a method of corrupting the people now he did it deliberately did it deliberately and so now Balaamism and Nicolaitanism has come together you will find that whenever Nicolaitanism expresses itself there will be Jezebel and there will be Balaam present you'll have the Jezebel spirit you'll have the Jezebel church and you'll have the Balaam representing the Antichrist and it will corrupt for Satan I agree with what Jacob Press says that Satan has got the world he doesn't need to get the world what he's after now he's after deceiving the church and destroying the Jew what he's after to deceive the church and to destroy the Jew and you'll find that throughout church history these sort of things run parallel all the time in the church wherever there is

Nicolaitanism and I submit to you that it is rearing its head very very strongly in charismatic Pentecostal circles it needs to be addressed we are no different a leadership bracket is no different from the ordinary people we are all one in Christ I have a different function to perform but I am no better no higher no greater no more to be obeyed than anybody else and that has to be addressed otherwise the whole thing will become corrupted OK there's just a few things that we haven't been able to mention particularly let me just highlight the second point about the deeds the adoption of the Nicolaitans the deeds of the Nicolaitans is a leadership control of people in my Amiga Times article some while ago which is attached to your notes I highlighted seven things and I was really quoting

from a paper perhaps I'll conclude by just extending the quotations that are in the Amiga Times because there wasn't space to put them at all but you will find in an abusive spiritually abusive system there are seven signs I'm indebted to a couple of guys here for an article a very good article that they wrote some time ago originally in Charisma magazine and then it appeared in a magazine here in New Zealand and it was actually sent to me by a chap a pastor with whom I was corresponding at the time down in Lower Hutt his name is Hudson Fulbright and he sent me this article and I thought it was very very good but there are seven things the first thing is what we call power posturing power posturing occurs when leaders spend a lot of time focused on their own authority and reminding

others of it as well this is necessary because their spiritual authority isn't real it's an empty claim based on something other than genuinely godly character which is the real biblical basis for authority being hired or elected this article says to a position of spiritual leadership talking the loudest or giving the most does not give someone authority God gives authority to leaders so that they can build up people serve them equip them and set them free to do God's agenda which may or may not coincide with a personal agenda of the people in leadership that's interesting isn't it? the second thing is performance preoccupation abusive spiritual systems are preoccupied with the performance of their members obedience and submission are two important words often used obey your leaders yes

but remember that the apostles said of the religious leaders that they were disobeying they said we must obey God rather than men out of context obedience to leaders looks like good theology add the larger context and you'll see that it's not only appropriate to that it's not only appropriate to obey and submit to leadership when their authority is from God and their stance is consistent with his true submission isn't following orders to avoid being shamed to gain someone's approval or to keep spiritual status or church position intact that's only compliant self-seeking true obedience can't simply be behavior legislated from the outside and then unspoken rules there's it says for instance no one of the church gathering would ever say aloud you know we must never disagree with your pastor

or his sermon and if you do you'll never be trusted and never be allowed to minister in any capacity in this church in this case the unspoken rule is do not disagree with the church authorities especially the pastor or your loyalty will be suspect well that's very often the case the real problem cannot be exposed because then it would have to be dealt with and things would have to change so it must be protected behind walls of silence neglect or by assault legalistic attack if you speak about the problem aloud you are the problem in some way you must be silenced or eliminated don't we know all about that and then the fourth thing lack of balance this article is quite a long one there's paranoia where the idea is the outsiders won't understand what's going on here we're a leadership group

and we can't expose what's happening out there because they won't understand well the article says that really what's hidden usually is not appropriate it's usually inappropriate and we must remember that and then misplaced loyalty where loyalty to the church they say you've got to be loyal you've got to be loyal you've got to be loyal to the past you've got to be loyal now listen our loyalty and I faced this and there was a situation developing and a person said well you've always said that you should be loyal I said listen my loyalty is well defined my loyalty first and foremostly is to God secondly I have a loyalty to my family thirdly I have a loyalty to my friends or well I didn't put it in that order I said my first and foremost loyalty is to God my second loyalty is to truth my

third loyalty is to my family I have then a loyalty to my friends and I have a loyalty to my fellowship but that will never precede the other it must not it cannot and if it does then we're on the slippery slope the seventh thing that this article talks about and if any of you want it I can photostat it I guess is secretiveness when you see people in a religious system being secretive it says watch out people don't hide what's appropriate they hide what's inappropriate and I found out and got hold of a tape in which there was a disclosure of a moral failure I went to see the leader and I said look I got hold of this he was horrified he said how did you get it I said why I said surely it's public I said you made a statement before eight or nine hundred people why do you say I shouldn't

have a copy he said it cannot be both in house and public at the same time you have to face the issue I was shown the door but that's the fact that's the fact and they will hide things hide things and God almighty

is the only one who's going to expose it it has to come out in the open otherwise it will eat like a cancer within the framework God will help us the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is at the heart of the whole thing let's bow for a moment in prayer Lord Jesus you know our heart you know our desire you know what makes us tick we cannot hide anything from you you said if your eye is single then your whole body is full of light if your eye is evil then your body is full of darkness and we pray Lord our heart our longing our desire is for revival that there may be an exposure of the

false so that the true may come in and we may see a revival in our dying that we may see your name honored and glorified that we may see a manifestation of your power Lord if we have been harsh in anything I pray you'll forgive us but Lord as far as we know our hearts are clean before you and we want to see a manifestation of your power we pray that you will ensure that the things that we have said the message Lord will get into the right hands and that Lord there will be a sort of a facing of issues we thank you for the people who have come to help us we pray that you will bless all these people we pray Lord that you will just confirm your intention for this small group what you want us to do we want to be a message we want to be a voice we want to do what you want us to do we don't want

to do our own thing and we pray to this end that you will help us and you will guide us and Lord you will help us through each other we believe that you have set us alongside one another so that we can help each other in this great life we pray for the various churches that we have either referred to indirectly or directly and we pray that there will be a manifestation of your power upon them and we pray Lord that there will be a cleansing that will take place and we pray that these places Lord some of them have become places of entertainment some of them have become places of self seeking some of them have just been places of empire building we pray that they will become again expressions of the kingdom of God in the name of the Lord Jesus and that there will be many people who will

resort there and find life in Jesus oh Lord we long for this we long for this more than anything else and we pray to this end that you will help us bless all from the youngest to the oldest here today thank you in Jesus name Amen

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