

***Back to the Basics***  
***Sermon 2***

***Our Lifestyle and Structure of  
Our Church***

**Introduction:**

I was eating breakfast with some good Christian Baptist fellows this last week and a man by the name of Kenny said “Dan, you need to open the service with this question to your people, What kind of lights were on the ark during the flood?”

And I said, “Kenny, what kind of lights were they?”

And he replied, “Flood lights.”

My mother told this story to me this past week that her pastor told to the church.

He remembered several years ago there was a baseball pitcher from the New York Yankees whose name I don’t know was pitching to the opposing team.

The first hitter came to the plate and he walked him in four pitches.

The second hitter came to the plate and he walked him too, and the third and the fourth.

He had walked five straight hitters and now was facing the sixth hitter when the pitching coach came out and took him out of the game.

The pitcher went to the dug out all exasperated and said, “I can’t believe he took me out of the game, I had a no hitter going.”

Now – I don’t know what that says to you, it doesn’t even relate to my sermon, but it says to me that some times life can look the opposite of what you think.

Last week I preached to you the first sermon in our series on Getting Back to the Basics of Christian living.

**Let me take you back to the little church I grew up in called the Erie Community Church.**

While we were what you would call an interdenominational church, we had affiliation with the Churches of Christ in Christian Union.

I recall Pastor Joe and his family coming to our church when Joe was probably around 15 years old. They came to sing for us and I recall how blessed our church was to have them come.

But that little church had Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. Worship service at 10:30 and the evening service was at 7:30.

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The thing I remember about the church was the pastor and his family was strictly conservative. He had a conviction of not wearing ties.

We weren't permitted to have a TV and of course you could never drink soda pop out of a bottle.

But the structure of the church was simple. You just did things the same way every Sunday and every year.

And we would have two revivals every year. One in the Spring and one in the Fall.

But that little church loved each other and people got saved in the little community of Erie. Not a lot of people lived there, but it's still alive today.

Let me read to you a couple of Scriptures in preparation for this sermon:

The first one is found in Ephesians 5:1 where it reads, ***“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly beloved children.”***

And the second one comes from I Thessalonians 4:7 where it reads, ***“God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”***

Now Church, we are as a denomination and as a local church a Holiness denomination and a Holiness church.

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In Class 101, we teach what we refer to as

## **I. Christian Conduct.**

**There are four things we teach on Christian Conduct that I would like to bring to you:**

### **1) First, Our Conduct reveals our true response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

In Philippians 1:27 Paul said, ***“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”***

In looking at this verse I want you to notice the first word ***“ONLY”***.

Paul states that whether he lives or dies, whether he remains captive or free, whether he is able to come see them or not,

***“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Jesus.”***

Paul is saying that no matter what happens to him, they must have one desire, one aim, and that is to

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live like Christians. To not bring any unworthiness upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

Their conduct should not be depending on circumstances.

Regardless of what happened to Paul, of what happened to them, "**ONLY**" ***let their conduct be worthy of Christ.***

And that is how it needs to be with us.

Did you know there are so many in our community who are watching this church?

There are a lot of people in this community who know the history of this church probably as well as we do.

People may see us do certain things and say, "Boy, that's not how Christian's should act," in other words, that conduct is not worthy of Christ.

While we may be wrong in our actions and our talking, they do not take away from the worth of Christ.

So I encourage you as Paul does, **let your conduct be worthy of Christ.**

## **2) Belief is not enough when it affects our Actions.**

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The Apostle James gives us the Scriptural basis for this when he says, "***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.***"

We know how to receive the Word of God, so how should we respond to the Word of God?

This verse tell us to respond by continuing,

by walking,  
by talking,  
by loving and  
by living.

- Continue by doing the things the Bible instructs you to do.
- Continue by living the life God has called you to live, a genuine life of holiness.
- Continue by not ignoring the truths that God shows you in His Word, but by allowing them to change you.

**Respond by continuing and by walking.**

**Walking means doing.**

- Walking means putting into action the words that you hear.
- Walking is theology with legs.

- Walking is making progress.

It's becoming more like Jesus today than you were yesterday.

### **Respond to the Word of God by continuing, by walking and next**

#### **By talking.**

You can go to church all the time.

You can carry the biggest Bible around with you.

You can wear a big cross around your neck and a WWJD bracelet on you wrist.

But if you can't control your tongue, it's all in vain.

- Godly talking isn't sounding religious.
- Godly talking is measuring your words instead of speaking your mind.
- It's converting angry words into kind ones.

It's following Paul's words in Ephesians 4:29: ***“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”***

- Godly talking is speaking encouragement not biting criticism or sarcasm
- Imparting grace not harm.
- Lifting up not tearing down.
- Loving means giving of yourself to those around you.

Loving the unloved.

And loving the unlovable.

Not just loving those who are like you – everyone can do that.

But loving those who can never repay you.

#### **Story:**

I had a friend who owed me \$4,000.00.

He always said he would pay me back, but he never could.

And he still remained my friend.

I will never be paid by this friend of mine, but I loved him as a brother any way.

You see – loving means at times loving those who never repay you.

Loving those who need it most - Just like Christ loves you even though you don't deserve it.

Even though you can't do anything for Him.

Even though, in your sin, you are unlovable.

Even though you can never do anything to repay Him - He loves you!

And you and I respond to His Word by loving others the same way.

### **And then we Respond to the Word of God by living.**

- By living unspotted from the world.
- By living out the gospel in every part of your life.
- By living in the light of God's love for you.
- By living in such a way that you won't be embarrassed when Jesus returns.

Jim Elliot, that great missionary who gave his life in martyrdom once said, "When it comes time to die, make sure all you have to do is die."

You respond to God's Word by living like today is your last day on earth and you're going to meet Jesus in the morning.

### **3) Third, each believer must seek the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit in establishing a code of conduct.**

Jesus said in recorded in John 14:26 ***"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will***

***send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."***

The role of the Holy Spirit is to remind you of the words of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever tried to decide if you could do something, and then a verse of Scripture came to mind and you knew exactly what to do or not to do?

That is the Holy Spirit alive in you.

In fact, the Holy Spirit has an advantage over Jesus when He was on Earth.

It is better that we have the Holy Spirit today with us, than to have Jesus on earth.

Now, I know that this sounds strange, but this is from Jesus' mouth. ***"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."*** John 16:7

While Jesus could be with a limited number of people at a time when He was in the flesh, the Holy Spirit can be with each of us, at all times.

But His work is a continuation of the work of Jesus Christ.

### **4) No catalog can be written that includes all forms of evil throughout the world.**

I want to read to you a part of the manual from the Church of the Nazarene in Special Rules 33.2

“The Historical ethical standards of the church ... should be followed carefully and conscientiously as guides and helps to holy living.”

In Class 101, it covers these ethical standards towards holiness based on biblical principles.

**Very quickly let me come to the end of Point 1 in Christian Conduct:**

- **We teach that we are to share our faith with the unsaved and unchurched.**
- **We teach that we are to treat other people with respect.**
- **We teach we are help our fellow believers**

**We are to help the needy as opportunities and our ability to give to them. Jesus told us,**

***“In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done unto me.”***

**Now – let me transition to the second part of this teaching:**

**The Church board has been working on what we have called Restructure of the Church board.**

We have felt for a long time that the way the board was organized has not been as effective as it should be and so we have spent quality time in the presentation of this for you.

## **II. Our Structure. Ephesians 2:10**

***“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.”***

Here are the 7 things we Value as a Church: You’ll find these listed on several plaques around the church.

- 1) We value the souls of the lost.
- 2) We value personal integrity
- 3) We value corporate worship
- 4) We value the Word of God
- 5) We value the spiritual gifts of God’s people
- 6) We value wholesome fellowship
- 7) We value the family of God

In the last several weeks the Official Board, our Staff and Department heads have worked hard in what we call a Church Board Restructure.

The purpose of this Restructure has come about at the request of the Church to help me as a Senior Pastor in the leadership of this church.

I want you to know that I am thrilled about the direction we are going.

At this time the ushers are going to pass out a handout that will give you what the board, the staff and the departments have worked on and approved to put into action.

As you see – every board member has been assigned and accepted the area of ministry within the local church.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time here other than to say that every board member has been assigned a certain area of ministry in this local church.

This does not mean the board member has authority over this, but is working with staff and department heads as a helper in that ministry.

There will be Ministry teams put together to make our ministries more effective in the future.

You can take these home and study them and if you have any questions, you can call the board member and they will be glad to try to answer your questions.

If you want to get involved in any of these areas, and that is our hope and desire, please go ahead and get involved in these areas of ministry.

**In Class 101 we teach how important it is the honor the Lord with the first fruits of what He gives to us in our tithes and offerings.**

### **III. Thirdly, I want to talk to you about your faith - tithes and offerings.**

Let me talk to our church family for a moment.

In almost every church there are times when a church experiences trauma that in a sense - if I can use the medical term – they are sent to the emergency room.

In the recent past our church experienced trauma that in a sense sent us to the emergency room.

One of the goals of every good hospital is to treat that patient and get them well so they can live a quality life.

#### **Story:**

On Friday morning I went to Mt. Carmel Hospital to visit Pastor Derek and Amy and to see little Emy.

The goal of Mt. Carmel Hospital and the Baby Nursery nurses is to see Emy go home with Derek and Amy and to be normal and grow.

I was there when Derek told the nurse Kathleen, “We’ve been through before with Benjamin, we know what to expect and what to do.”

#### **Spiritual Application:**

When a church experiences trauma the goal of those who want to get well in the church must have a positive mental frame of mind and seeking a

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positive relationship with Christ, to want to get out of the emergency room so to speak.

Whatever negative the enemy tries to throw at us, some of the veteran believers know what to expect and we must rebound to stand up against him and be victorious!

That's where the Word of God tells us ***“To tear the strongholds and not allow the enemy a territory in Christ's Church.”***

I believe most everyone here today understands what I am trying to say.

When I have taught Class 101 in the past I have endeavored to cast a Vision to the new people who became members of this church.

Many of you here this morning sat through those classes with my wife, Pastor Joe and me.

The Bible tells us point blank that ***“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6***

Within 20 minutes of the Pataskala Church of the Nazarene there are nearly 1 million people to the North, South, East and West.

Most of these people do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

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Now Satan doesn't want us to get our attention on lost people, and neither does He want us to get close to God, but that is our command from our Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ.

As a church we must share some of the responsibility along with other churches to reach these lost people for Christ within the 20 to 30 or more minutes from this church.

As I shared with you last Sunday, our Mission Statement listed on the back of your bulletin tells us we are to bring the lost and unchurched to Jesus and then disciple them. That is our calling!

There are some people who would not be responsive to us at all because of our style of ministry, but I estimate there are at least 50,000 people who are unchurched who would.

Doesn't that figure blow your mind, but it's true – that's how big our vision should be right here at PCN

One of my dreams for this church is that we begin to have an outreach for Christ that would reach a multitude of unsaved people for His Church.

They would worship here every Sunday morning, Saturday night and Sunday night.

If we really believe this then we have to prayerfully seek God for Him to show us how to do this.

I am asking you as a Church family to commit yourself to Christ Jesus and to one another for this glorious ministry.

You see – now listen to me - Nice, decent people will never reach heaven just because they are nice and decent citizens, neighbors, and friends.

Only those of us who are totally given to Christ and to this Body of believers will witness and go into action to grab people away from Satan and hell.

**A Fresh commitment to Christ is the first thing we must do, and afterward we must work together to love and sharpen each other for discipleship growth together.**

According to Hebrews 11:1, ***“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”***

**My vision of faith – the things I hope for and the evidence of things not seen is still on the horizon.**

As I preached my Vision Sermon to you a few months ago, I still believe with every in me that this Church family has a destiny with God.

- It’s time for us to come out of the emergency room It’s time for us to focus on the wellness that is now present in our Church body.

- It’s time for us to focus on the Word of God and not disappointments in the past and look forward to the amazing things God wants to do for us.

Paul said, ***“This one thing I do, forgetting what is in the past, I press on toward the mark/the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Phil 3:13-14***

I personally believe that this is the kind of faith that God wants from each of us.

Do you remember when the disciples came to Jesus and ask Him why He could do it and they could not do it?

Jesus said it was **“Because of your unbelief.”**

Now listen - Jesus said ***“If you have faith as a mustard seed ... nothing will be impossible for you.” Matt. 17:20***

Faith, a little bit of Faith – the size of a mustard seed involves setting goals in terms of things hoped for and things unseen.

I want to talk to you about one area that I feel is pivotal to us fulfilling the Great Commission, an area that I teach in Class 101.

If this church is going to succeed in fulfilling the Great Commission then we must have our Church

family and membership realizing how important it is to follow the Word of God in its teaching on tithing and the giving of our offerings.

Let me read to you some Scriptures from God's Word:

Proverbs 3:9-10 reads, ***“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”***

**Honor means you come with gifts of your best – your first.**

**And The Word says – your barns will be full.**

Now I don't know about you, but I take that literally.

Look at what you have.

The poorest of us today are rich according to the world's population.

Philippians 4:19, ***“And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”***

Do you believe that that God will meet your needs?

Luke 12:48 ***“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”***

Luke 6:38 ***“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together***

***and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”***

II Corinthians 9:6 ***“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”***

I went to a Conference this last Thursday just North of Cincinnati where Stan Toler and some other men challenged us pastors in this area.

One man said, ***“If you want to change what you're getting, change what you're giving.”***

I am convinced many believers are missing blessings because they are not giving to God like ought to.

**Giving is more of a blessing than a burden.**  
Jesus taught us ***“Give and it will be given to you ...”***

And yet I believe we struggle in this area to give.

There are all kinds of things that convince us that we can't give to the Church and Kingdom work because of the economy, gas prices.

Some people say, “Well, the price of gasoline has gone up, we can't give our tithe.” “The price of bread has gone up, so we can't give to the Church.”

I did a calculation of this and suppose you have a 20 gallon gas tank on your vehicle like mine and gas went us from \$2.80 to \$3.20. To fill up that gas tank it will cost you and I \$8.00 more.

Now, I don't know how to say this in a positive way, but \$4.00 is the price of a McDonalds children's meal.

I really doubt there would be one person in this crowd this morning who would express any kind of regret for having obeyed the principles of God's Word in giving.

However, you and I will find believers who regret that they didn't begin earlier in their lives of giving their tithes and offerings in full to God.

Now – I've said and will say it again, because this has helped some in our church. If you can't give your full tithe all at once, then start somewhere giving to God and build yourself up systematically to the Full tithe.

Now when I say "In Full", this is what I mean. I learned on Thursday that the percentage of believers in the American church today who give follow and obey the principles of God's Word in giving their tithes and offerings has dropped instead of growing.

To our dismay we were told by George Barna a new statistic is out that says only 5% to 35% are consistently committed to give and the number is closer to the 5% than it is to the 35% as we previously had thought.

Now let me ask you a question: **Would you agree with me that every act of alignment with the Father's will results in ultimate blessings?**

Now, if we believe this and we believe the Word of God here's what it's going to take to obey in this area of stewardship.

- 1. It will take discipline on all our parts.**
- 2. In some cases it might even mean sacrifice,** but the end result is always worth the effort.

The Apostle Paul wrote, ***"I urge you brothers and sisters, therefore, to reaffirm your love for Him."***  
***II Cor 2:8***

Our giving to God simply underscores our gratitude for God's lavish gifts to us.

Of course, His greatest gift was His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures tell us ***"From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another."*** ***Jn 1:16***

Let me talk about God's blessings for a moment here:

God's benefits aren't given so that we may store them in a Swiss bank account, far out of sight.

They're given to us as a part of God's great cycle of giving.

He gave so that we might give. It all starts with Him.

He is the giver of wealth. ***Every good and perfect gift is from above,*** (that means your paycheck every week is a gift that God has helped you to receive.) ***coming down from the Father above, who does not change like the shifting shadows.***” ***James 1:17***

God gives to us unceasingly. And those who love Him in return will reflect that same spirit.

Here's a poem:

I counted all my dollars while God counted crosses  
 I counted gains while He counted losses;  
 I counted my worth by the things gained in store,  
 But He sized me up by the scars that I bore.  
 I coveted honors and sought for degrees;  
 He wept as He counted the hours on my knees.  
 I never knew till one day by a grave  
 How vain are the things that we spend life to save.  
 I didn't know till a friend went above

That richest is he who is rich in God's love.

Let me share another poem:

Oh, God –  
 The bumper sticker says smile if you love Jesus;  
 So I smiled all day long  
 And the people thought I worked for Jimmy Carter.  
 The bumper sticker said honk if you love Jesus;  
 So I honked ... and a policeman arrested me  
 For disturbing the peace in a hospital zone.  
 The bumper sticker said wave if you love Jesus;  
 So I waved both hands and lost control of the car  
 And crashed into the back of a Baptist bus.  
 Oh, God -  
 If I cannot smile .... Or honk .... Or wave ...  
 How will Jesus know I love Him?  
 If you love Jesus, tithe ... honking is too easy.

You've heard the old saying, "Raising the Bar"

It really refers to someone's actions that have set a standard.

Say for example 65% to 95% of all believers in American churches are not committed to faithful and consistent giving to God's work than a bar has been established that is wrong according to the Word of God.

You see – what is happening to the Church of Jesus Christ today in America is a direct result of the actions of people who are not following the

Word of God, therefore as a result the church becomes weak because of this.

You Pastor – What do you mean?

What is at stake here is staff positions, ministry, and future growth at this church.

Let me explain like this – In the conference I learned again that when newcomers come to a church and decides to make it their home church they don't start giving their tithe and offerings until 6 months later.

If people decide to leave a church because of something they don't like about the church, they stop their giving 6 months before they leave.

So we can't blame the shortfall of giving on people who have left this church or any other church, that's dwelling in the past, we have to step up ourselves to being faithful and committed to be obedient to His Word.

One thing we cannot afford to do as a Church family here is to allow our Church to become weak because of our lack of giving.

Every Christian member and attender of this church must see how crucial it is to be faithful in their giving of their tithe, offerings and Faith Promise to His Church.

If you are a new family in our church, we need you to step up and commit yourself to the overall ministry of this church now.

Do you know when you give, it's because of your giving that people get saved here.

When you give your tithe each time you get your paycheck, someone is benefited spiritually and someone gets saved in this church.

So in a fact, you are investing in eternal things.

### **Questions to Stewardship Solutions:**

**Question: Who should give?**

**Answer: I Corinthians 16:2 “*Each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.*”**

The very first thing that happens at our house is we write a tithe check along with our offerings to this church.

**Question: When should we give?**

**Answer: I Cor. 16:2 “*On the first day of every week.*”**

**Question: Where should I give?**

**Answer: Mal. 3:10 “Bring the whole tithe into My storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this says the Lord Almighty and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”**

This is the only place in the entire Bible where God tells us to Prove Him – or – Test Him.

God is so wanting us to give our whole tithe to Him at this local church that He says He will open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much a blessing that we won't be able to contain it.

Now, folks, listen this does not necessarily mean he will make you monetarily rich. I'm not preaching that.

But you will receive blessings beyond your understanding.

**And the last Question: How can I be a Happy Giver?**

**Answer: II Corinthians 9:7 “Each man and each woman should give what they have decided in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”**

Closing Prayer