

Coach's Corner

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“‘Kissing’ On The Elder Board”

Right now you are probably taken back, to say the least. “This pastor is weird,” you have concluded. Yet, hopefully the next thought is that something else is going on and that this article isn’t really about kissing.

There is an old adage which says, “Keep it simple stupid,” remembered by its acrostic, KISS. This modern-day proverb is an oft and much needed reminder that when we make things very complicated, it is an impediment to success.

No where is this more evident than when it comes to following Jesus Christ. With the Bible comprised of sixty-six books, including 1,189 chapters or 31,103 verses, there is an extraordinary amount of material for us to get our heads and hearts around. The decades of debates within the Church do not surprise us. This is why it is easy for saints to oscillate back and forth between the Bible-truth *du jour* at best and sheer confusion at worst. “What is Christianity all about?” “What is the essence of our faith?” “With all the different opinions people in our church have, how are we supposed to lead?” These are some questions which can haunt us. I would venture to say that until we can put in a few words or sentences what following Christ is about, we will struggle for direction, balance, and how to lead a church.

Where in the Bible do we discover the simplicity, a brief summary, of our faith? The answer is found in Matthew 22:36-40:

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Our Lord was very clear: the Christian faith can be summarized by loving God with all we have and loving others. When this is our direction, the ultimate result is that we glorify God (1 Cor. 10:23-33; Philippians 1:9-11). This is why our church mission statement, “We exist to glorify God by surrendering to His commands and commission,” is right on target! This is a wonderful and simple summation of our purpose. To be about this mission, it means we should value worship, prayer, and faith (at the heart of **H**onoring God); taking in and obeying His Word—including Christian education (summarized by **O**beying God); building community, unity, and equipping others (summarized by **P**reparing others); and finally **E**xpressing Christ’s love and glory effectively to the world through evangelism, missions, and compassion ministries.

Where this simple overview of the Christian faith is particularly helpful for the elder board is that it should inform and direct every discussion we have about whether or not we start a new

ministry or what decisions we make. In fact, the more aspects of this overview a particular decision or new ministry meets, the more we know we are on target.

Our elder board discussions are not first and foremost about how to keep everyone happy. Instead, they should be driven by our desire to glorify God through His commands and commission—which will be done if we follow the H.O.P.E. specifics outlined above. In other words, some things we should be asking in the course of each decision we make are: How will this help us put God on display? How will it further faith? How will it further prayer? Will it grow our love for God and others? Will this help us grow in our knowledge of God and His Word? Will it further Christian education and discipleship? How can this help us win people to Christ or display His love and grace through service?

I know we occasionally have some hard decisions to make in the course of a monthly meeting. However, if we can K.I.S.S. the subject, keeping it simple by coming back to these basics, this approach will go a long way toward helping us stay on track and leading our congregation in a God-honoring, fruitful manner.

Joyfully pastoring the flock with you in simplicity,

Tom