

**General Topics :: Should pastors be schooled?****Should pastors be schooled? - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 15:04**

I have a question for everyone. I have going back and forth on the matter of Bible college and want people's opinion. I have a desire to teach/preach, but I don't have a degree in anything. I hear from a lot of different people that you have to have a degree in order to start a church or preach in other churches. While I see some validity in maybe gaining some extra knowledge through school... is school really necessary. Out of the 12 Disciples, Paul was the only "learned" one, and we know where that got him before he was converted. I just listened to Zac Poonen's message: GOD'S DWELLING PLACE: THE FIRST FLOOR, and I must say that I agree with everything he is saying. School isn't necessary when it comes to preaching the Word of God. Spending time in the Word, studying it daily on one's own time (outside of school) and prayer should be good enough, especially if the person is a willing vessel to God. Right? I mean, look how many unschooled people Christ used throughout Scripture.

Thoughts?

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/15 15:18

schools are good if they are good schools :-), but but i don't believe they are necessary, lets say you spend 3-4 years in a school, if you get on your knees that same amount of time, and in the word, whit the holy spirit as your teacher.... i believe you will do just great. One of the problems today i believe many know what they was thought in school, but don't know him who they was thought about... hours and hours on your knees, hours hours in the book... get a burden for souls...

know God, know his word.... fire in your heart for winning souls.... there you have a recipe for a good preacher :-) you can go to any school in the world, you don't have that you still going to miss it

but i do also believe God can send you to a school to equip you for ministry, but the best way i believe you go find an older holy man of God, follow him, pray whit him,

just some thoughts....

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 15:27

Yes, that is the conclusion I'm coming to. I've been thinking, that maybe a little school would be good, but soooo many schools today don't really truly focus on what matters Scripturally... at least the several dozen schools I've looked into. I think spending time on one's face in earnest prayer, reading Scripture, and learning from a Godly generationally older gentleman would suit me well.

:-)

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/3/15 15:27

Any who says Bible College is absolutely necessary has not read the Bible.

It seems to me you already know this.

What are you asking?

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 15:29

I've also looked in the "Christian Classified's just to see what churches are searching for, and they pretty much all want a pastor with a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

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Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 15:34

Quote:

tjservant wrote:

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It seems to me you already know this.

What are you asking?

I think I'm asking what the majority of those on here think is necessary to preach the Word of God today in church. I see and hear so many pastors say proudly that they have a Bachelor's or Master's degree, so they "know what they are talking about." I've also seen churches so hung up on being schooled "because it looks good." Why must a church require a pastor to spend thousands and thousands of dollars to get schooled on something you can do for free?

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by jordanamo, on: 2007/3/15 15:53

"Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God." --Luke 16:15

Collegiate education is esteemed by the World (including Christendom) highly. Stay away from it as a rule of thumb.

Jordan

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/3/15 16:05

There's currently open enrollment at Moses' Bush University -classes administered by the Holy Spirit and taught by the Word. Practical studies in service, healing and feeding the hungry. Advanced courses in prayer, and intercession and weeping between the porch and the altar.

Brother Andrew and Leonard Ravenhill (graduate of Bush University) are two of my favorite preachers who never finished college.

William Carey made shoes, DL moody sold them. Mary Slessor worked in a mill and read the bible as she did her work all day... some of the greatest men and women of God never had a university education.

Now unfortunately there are very many churches and denominations today that require a college degree to lead a congregation as a pastor -but that doesn't mean that you can't be a preacher on the streets, or in prisons, or among the homeless... or even to start your own church.

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 16:38

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Jordan

Thank you, both. I appreciate your perspectives on the matter... and also the Scriptural reference. :-D

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/3/15 16:59

Now that I said that, I should also say that I have a college education and it was one of the best points in my life for learning about God.

For the ones without college education we could quite easily find just as many great men of God that have college degrees.

My point is to say that it is not necessary, not that it is unwise -I think that Jordan might have taken it to the extreme.

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 17:02

For some reason I could not find the school for which you mentioned...

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/3/15 17:06

Ben, it's an allegory -Leonard Ravenhill used to answer 'Bush University' when asked his alma mater -he did however attend Cliff College (Samuel Chadwick's school) but never graduated.

He would then say that the founder of 'Bush University' was Moses... he's talking about the experience that Moses had when he saw God as the burning bush.

Leonard Ravenhill also lamented that christian colleges didn't teach classes on prayer, intercession or weeping.

Leonard Ravenhill also quipped that he had never attended 'cemetery *cough* I mean seminary'

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/15 17:08

Oh, yes... I recall that now... thank you iansmith. Ravenhill mentioned that a few times.

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by orchardkeeper (), on: 2007/3/16 3:03

Well brothers, as I've read through this thread, I have seen a lot of various comments as to the necessity of "school". I guess I have to look at what Paul wrote to Timothy to shed some more "light" on this subject. Paul tells Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Now what does this word "study" really mean? Well, it comes from the Greek word spoudazo. Spoudazo (spoo-dad'-zo) means to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest.

But that isn't really how we interpret it in English, is it? We think about "study" like in school, right? Is that what Paul really meant when he told Timothy to "study"? If I translate II Timothy 2:15 direct from the Greek, it actually reads, "Be eager to present yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."

So, do we really need to go to school to be a pastor? I don't know, but that's how I learned all this!!

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Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/16 3:29

well i know D.L Moody never went to bible school. As what i know he didn't go much in "regular" school either...but he w on millions for Christ...

schools useful? yes...
necessary? no....

Re:, on: 2007/3/16 6:55

Most Christian colleges in the US are becoming very liberal and not so "christian" anymore. There are still some really good, conservative Bible colleges out there, and I dont see anything wrong with availing ones self of their services if you're able to... **however** if God has called someone to preach, He will enable them to preach.

There are a lot of people out there with PhD's that I wouldnt give you 10 cents for. I hired one a couple years ago... he had a PhD in electrical engineering and had been a professor at UNC. I needed his services on several projects I had going. I also fired him 6 months later because he was worthless when it came to the practical application of what he had been teaching for 20 years. I think in a lot of cases this is true of pastors who have all their schooling and degrees.

The gospel is very simple. Simple enough that I have seen 10 yr olds do a better job of explaining salvation than an adult with a Bible school education.

1Co 1:25-29 *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: **That no flesh should glory in his presence.*****

Krispy

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/3/16 7:34

Quote:
-----Brother Andrew and Leonard Ravenhill (graduate of Bush University) are two of my favorite preachers who never finished college.

Leonard Ravenhill was a 'graduate' of Cliff College, Calver, Derbyshire and studied under men like Thomas Cook. (New Testament Holiness)

Re: - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/16 15:04

Thank you all for taking some time to impart your thoughts and wisdom on my question. :-D

Re: - posted by JaySaved, on: 2007/3/16 15:36

Schooling is not a requirement to be a pastor but it is beneficial.

Re:, on: 2007/3/16 15:51

This is a tough question, because it can't be answered using yes or a no.

Every man must hear what God would have him to do. Some men need schooling, some don't, it's that simple.

Some men need schooling not for education purposes, but to learn to submit. Very very few others are so humble that they pass the college and head right into the ministry.

But it's important to hear the voice of God for yourself.

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Re: - posted by JaySaved, on: 2007/3/16 15:52

by Compliments on 2007/3/16 14:51:17

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But it's important to hear the voice of God for yourself.

Very well said!

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by Pilgrimsway (), on: 2007/3/17 15:59

Let me put a different spin on this, since I have come from both camps.

It is not REQUIRED that anyone have a degree to preach the gospel. Its actually not a requirement to have degrees to be a pastor (this is an artificial requirement invented by organizations). You can start your own church without a degree.

While I acknowledge that the work of God can be done without a formal education, I am fairly leery of those without one. Why? Because it has been my practical experience that it will be those without the formal training in hermeneutics and exegetis that will make the most mistakes. I have heard the most horrendous things come out of people's mouths in pul pits and on the radio. Strange doctrines that are invented based on one or two verses.

If these individuals knew how to rightly divide the word these pronouncements and doctrines would never exist. No one is entitled to interpret or make pronouncements from Scripture just anything that they imagine. There are rules for interp retation. Unfortunately, the odds of you learning these rules at your church or on your own are very low.

When people point out those like Moody, Ravenhill, etc etc, they are omitting something very important. These men spe nt hours in study and prayer. They were ardent readers, and devoured the Word, as well as made practical application of it. I haven't found too many modern people willing or able to do that. These men also had other men who mentored t hem.

I also have a problem with those who broadly sweep all bible colleges and seminaries together and call them "apostate." I served under a pastor when I first was called to the ministry who was a high school drop out and had no formal educati on past that. He discouraged me from seeking formal education, saying it would "ruin me" because of the false teaching s I would be introduced to. As it ends up, it was HE who ruined me. I listened to him and I didn't go to school. Years lat er, when I did go to bible college, I found out that it was that church that had false teachings. (Lack of education on the part of the congregation is also a way to have control over them.) That pastor later lost his ministry and his marriage ove r his strange ideas.

If you have the discipline, drive and the proper mentors to train you up in the ministry, then by all means, you can skip fo rmal education. But if you don't have those three things, then it doesn't hurt to sit at the feet of someone else.

The church, almost has a whole, has failed to educate those in the pews. If the church was doing its job, there would be no need to have bible colleges/seminaries. You would be mentored at your home church by your pastor (which is the N T example). However, since expectations at most churches are very low, if you want to learn more in depth, you have to go somewhere else.

That's my take on it anyway.

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Re:, on: 2007/3/17 17:27

As for me...

I have only been a Christian for a short time (5 years) and have very little biblical knowledge. This is not to sell myself short or fail to realize that more prayer and reading my Bible will undoubtedly help me and that God gives me all that I need, but I feel that in my case, divinity college would assist me in areas which PilgrimsWay mentioned.

The 12 disciples learned from Jesus for a good 3.5 years before they 'went out into the world'. That was intense study, unlike my meandering walk when I first started off. I received Jesus, but my purpose was not as clear or I was not fully surrendered to what I had to do.

At the end of May, I will be finished my English teaching contract and will be more 'free' to make decisions. Three years of intense study, along with study and prayer will help me immeasurably.

This is not cast in stone, because I am willing to go wherever God needs me, but with my experiences and my situation, I see bible college as another step in the right direction (somewhat like teaching in Korea has been...experience to prepare for my purpose).

Packing a small bag and heading to India or Africa seems like a good option as well, but I also feel deep within that 'my testimony', however, good it may be, may be not enough for what I am called to do.

Anyway...I just would like to serve the best way possible. I really do not care about a 'masters' degree, I just need more solid foundation and understanding. How can reading books, talking to people, logging onto SI, going to bible college, meditating on the Bible, and spending more time in prayer be harmful. The key is balance.

I am always open to suggestions though.

God Bless those that do YOUR will,
BrianMira

Re:, on: 2007/3/18 7:14

Quote:

Compliments wrote:

This is a tough question, because it can't be answered using yes or a no.

Every man must hear what God would have him to do. Some men need schooling, some don't, it's that simple.

Some men need schooling not for education purposes, but to learn to submit. Very very few others are so humble that they bypass the college and head right into the ministry.

But it's important to hear the voice of God for yourself.

Wow, Compliments, I agree with you! :-D That's been quite a rare thing so far, so it feels good!

Well said

Jeannette

Re: Biblical examples, on: 2007/3/18 7:45

Some really good thoughts recently, from PilgrimsWay and Brian M, nothing to add there.

There is a huge variety in the age that Biblical prophets etc started their "ministry", and the amount of "theological training" they had. Almost all would have had at least some teaching in the Scriptures, from childhood.

The youngest was Samuel, who had his first prophetic word when he was just a child.

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Jeremiah protested that he was only a youth when God called him (he was of a priestly family so he probably meant that he was below the priestly "starting" age of 30). In general 30 was the age when a man was considered mature enough to be a spiritual leader - he could join the Army at 20.

Ezekiel (also of a priestly family) had his call when he was exactly 30. John the Baptist and Jesus Himself began their public ministries at 30.

Saul of Tarsus (later Paul the apostle) was a young man, (I don't think we know his exact age) and a brilliant scholar. He was highly trained in the OT Scriptures, under Gamaliel, one of the greatest Hebrew theologians of his day. He was also familiar with Greek learning and customs.

These days he would have had at least a doctorate in Theology and Classics!

After his conversion the Lord mightily used Paul's learning and zeal, but he had to be "tamed" first. His whole understanding of the Scriptures had to be turned upside down before God could use him.

Moses would have been trained as a prince, in the wisdom of the Egyptians, though his mother was his nurse probably told him something of his heritage and the law of the true God when he was little. He was 40 years old when he *thought* he could begin his ministry. Or so I interpret it. He attacked an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Hebrew and killed him. And had to flee to the wilderness for another 40 years!

Only then was he ready, when he was 80, to begin his true calling.

Personally I have a lot of sympathy with Moses. I too thought I was ready to serve the Lord "full time", only to realise, years later, that I still wasn't "ready"!

in Christ

Jeannette

Re: Should pastors be schooled? - posted by Goldminer (), on: 2007/3/18 10:31

Each believer needs to do what God puts in their heart to do. There are wonderful examples of excellent preacher/pastors in both camps. Led of the Lord, that's the ticket.

I am blessed by the amount of wisdom shared on this thread. It is quite good.

David Wilkerson has a bible school, you might check that out.

God bless.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/3/18 17:04

This issue reminds of what an old professor at a Seminary one time told our pastor who was educated at Harvard, Princeton. He told him how he is amazed that a person with no more than 8th grade education, who studies the Scriptures intently, has an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, will come to the same conclusions about what the Bible teaches as one who has spent years in college/seminary.

ginnyrose

Re: Do we have to go to school to be a pastor? - posted by orchardkeeper (), on: 2007/3/18 19:51

A.W.Tozer is quoted in the Revival Hymn video as follows:

"He that is from above is above all.

I want to say dear Christians don't go around apologizing for Him.

Don't go around worried because you can't make His doctrines fit in with what you learned in school.

All you learned in school was one fallen head instructing another fallen head.

And you don't have to apologize for Him."

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I have gone to school for a total of about 10 years, beginning in 1972 and I still take courses from time to time. I did get a degree in Biblical Literature and another in Christian Education. I went to school because I heard God tell me, "Dennis, I want you to go to school!" So I packed up my bags in North Carolina and went to Indiana to school. Then one day while I was at school I met this beautiful girl and fell madly in love. She was from Illinois and I was from North Carolina. We both went to Indiana because we both heard God telling us to go to school. Well, we got married and now we live in Illinois.

So I say if you think God is telling you to go to school...by all means go to school! He may very well have a plan for you that you have no idea even exists. Just watch out for the "fallen heads" while you are there!

Re: - posted by hisremnant, on: 2007/3/18 21:27

Praise Jesus!! Lion of Judah!!

By far the most important requisite for serving Christ is knowing HIM and sitting at HIS feet and letting HIS Holy Spirit teach each. Unless I abide in HIM and HIM in me the greatest of educations is rubbish.

blessings His servant rich

Matthew 4:17

Re: - posted by kerrylou (), on: 2007/3/19 5:14

Dear Pilgrim'sway,

I agree with you that the Church as a whole is failing to teach believers in the way they should, but I also find just as many who are unwilling to be taught. My dad was my pastor and he never went to Bible College. He did do some correspondence later but, when he found too many disagreeable things like, who wrote the book of Acts and when? And, who wrote the first five books of the Bible (Jesus said Moses did) he told us it would only serve to confuse us.

I went to Bible College because I believe God told me to. I did not want to because I had been preaching from a little child and applying myself to learning and I knew I would argue with the teachers (and I did). I came up against the teaching of inner healing and generational curses - neither of which I believe to be correct. I recall our principal (who did most of the teaching in this little Bible College) telling us we should "put God first; our family second; our health third; and our ministry last". I told him I could not agree with that because I could not separate my ministry from God - nor did I see an hour's devotion first thing in the morning as putting God first. At that moment he told me my marriage would end in divorce but, later he returned to say he had thought about it some and agreed that you could not separate your ministry from God but he described it as a circle (actually, I didn't buy into that one either).

I challenged him so often that, at the end of our diploma year (that's as far as the Bible College went), when we were asked if we felt the Bible College had been helpful, everyone expected me to say no and grumble. However, when I thought it over I quickly answered yes for I felt I had got what God had intended.

However, the principles that were laid out to me from my childhood are still the ones I preach today. I did not learn these at a Bible College, but in Church. Anyone who is willing to learn and listen will find a place where God can instruct them.

God uses people who go to Bible College, and He uses people who don't. Paul instructed Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved." If you need Bible College to enforce that discipline upon you then, by all means go.

Love,

Kerry.

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Re:, on: 2007/3/19 5:19

Quote:

ginnyrose wrote:

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ginnyrose

Not always! I did a diploma course in a semi-liberal Theological College. When there I came across a book on Revelation written by some professor or other who didn't seem to have a clue! For example, he thought that the "sea of glass" = the bottomless pit!

He obviously hadn't read Exodus 24:9

9﻿9﻿ Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ﻿10﻿ and they ﻿saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of ﻿sapphire stone, and it was like the ﻿l﻿very ﻿heavens in its clarity.

At least some of the lecturers there did know the Lord, and I'd been a Christian long enough to be able to cope with the liberal aspects of the teaching - which is a shock when you first come across it. I can say that I grew spiritually as a result of going to college, and learned a lot through some aspects of the studies. Though that may have been because it was the Lord's idea to take the course, not mine.

The main problem was in "unlearning" the over-intellectual analytical approach afterwards, (not quite there yet!), which can stifle the spiritual - apart from the grace of God.

Anyway, the conclusion from everybody here is "Do what the Lord is telling you to do"!

Blessings

Jeannette

Re: Should Pastors go to Bible school - posted by joyinjesus8 (), on: 2007/3/19 6:05

Whatever the Lord lays on your heart - but as long as it IS the voice of the Lord. My husband tried 5 times to go to Bible School. The Lord closed the door each time. His calling is Evangelist, and he holds meetings as the Lord's plan for him. He does not sit for hours each week writing sermons for the Lord gives him the words to speak. The Spirit is the best teacher!

I know of some Bible Colleges here that teach any religion you like as long as you have the fees. Others won't pass you unless you abide by their particular doctrine. Maybe a true Bible College is rare these days.

The thing would be to seek clear direction from the Lord as if and where one should go.

Re: Should Pastors go to Bible school - posted by BenBrockway, on: 2007/3/19 11:08

Thank you all so much for your input. It certainly has given me some insight, and even a little clarity. Thank you to those who also gave examples of personal experience in either of the camps. I appreciate that BOTH camps have been willing to share their views, experience, and knowledge concerning my question. My utmost desire is to do the will of our Lord.

Until the moment of His return, may our lives be a reflection of Him, and may Truth always be proclaimed,

Ben