

## HOW WE RESPOND TO REPEATED REQUESTS FOR MONEY

Let me try and reply to what you are saying in your e-mail. You are having trouble with **so-called "pastors"** asking you for a salary and not taking "Sorry, I cannot do this" for an answer, and they keep on asking and asking. I also have the same problem, in fact people tell me that Internet shops all over Africa and India are filled with so-called "pastors" who spend their time and their money to write to churches and people all over the world asking for money.

Let me tell you how I handle this problem.

1. I often use the phrase, **"There is only one God, and I am not He."** I ask these men to apply to the One who alone can meet their needs, whose grace is always sufficient.

2. I ask these men if they should really be in the ministry, **who appointed them and why they don't support them ?** I ask if they should be a follower of Jesus and a church member with a job, but not a leader or pastor. I point them towards John 10.11-13:

A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep but a hired hand abandons the flock and runs away when the wolf comes and life gets too hard. He runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. These are not my words, these are the words of Jesus. For the hired hand being the "pastor" is **just a job**. In my opinion such a man should be honest and leave.

3. I point out the model of the great hero of the New Testament, Paul. Paul worked with his hands to make a living.

In Acts 20, he says, "these hands of mine have provided for (1) **my own needs**, (2) for the needs of **my companions** and also (3) to provide **money to give** to the poor. That is the three-fold standard for ministry. I always ask these men if they are helping their companions to make a start and how much they are giving to the poor. I suggest that they follow the New Testament model which brings the help and the anointing of God and not follow the Western model which only brings frustration and resignation because the developing world, just like the New Testament world of the first century, does not have the resources to pay the pastors a salary of kings.

4. I point out that from Genesis to Revelation that **giving in obedience to Jesus is the trigger that releases an explosion** of God's prosperity. I point out the promises in 2 Corinthians 9.8 which are for a generous giver, even if what he or she gives is the widow's mite. Meanness triggers poverty, generosity triggers prosperity. That is the way forward and they must choose which way they will go. In only one place in the Bible does the Lord say, "Prove me, test me." That is in Malachi 3.10 and those promises of blessing are only for the people who are generous and give. The Lord says "test me" but if people are keepers and not givers they cannot test the Lord and receive his faithfulness. They stay in poverty.

5. I point out that in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16.19, verse 22 says: "**The time came when the beggar died.**" The beggar needs to die in all of us and especially in these so-called "pastors" who are always presenting an image of a God who cannot provide for his leaders or his church, showing a poor Saviour holding his arms out begging for money instead of a glorious, compassionate and powerful Saviour with His arms raised in blessing and giving His all to us.

6. I tell these men to switch off all those Christian TV programs hosted by rich preachers who like to be called "pastor." These are men who dress like kings, live like lords, fly their own jet planes and ask for an offering every five minutes from the poor to maintain their lifestyle and ministry. The trouble is that people watch these programs then want to have the same lifestyle as their right. **It is in fact a wrong.** Let us do what these TV preachers say because they often preach well, but as Jesus says, "do not do what they do."

7. If "pastors" still keep asking me for a salary after I have said all this as gently as I can, then I simply say to them that I will not speak to them again about this for six months. This gives them time to think and pray about the issues. **I tell them not to write**, not to phone and not to come because I will not reply. After six months have passed they have often received revelation from the Lord and have started looking to Jesus not to a man. I pray for them.

I hope that this few words give you the courage to make the right decisions and to speak with love to these men who are bothering you. **For the right man, a man with humble heart and a love for God not a love for money, I know that you will give your all, as we also try to do.**

When people want to affiliate to DCI I usually ask them what they are able and willing to **bring** to the community. If they only want to join to ask for money this usually stops them. I tell them that no-one in DCI, not even me, receives any kind of salary or expenses. For thirty years we have trusted the Lord together, we pray for each other and we live well in the grace that God provides, often through the provision of a good job.

You have a lot to think about here, the Lord give you wisdom, discernment and courage to follow Him and to teach the ways of the Lord to many others.

God be with you, to bless your nation through your life and example.

**Les Norman.**

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