

17. The adjective “orthodox” comes from the Greek word *orthós*: “correct” and *dóxa*: “opinion.” This combination forms the word “orthodox” in English and defined as follows:

Conforming to the usual beliefs or established doctrines, especially in religion; proper, correct, or conventional; conforming to the Christian faith as formulated in the early ecumenical creeds and confessions.¹

18. Most Protestant dominations still insist on male pastors and deacons, but some have deviated, allowing women to fill these positions. Marriage is still a union to be occupied by strictly by one man with one woman. Christian marriage requires that both are believers in Jesus Christ.²
19. Some denominations do not authorize one man to teach their congregations but rather a collection of men who alternate their duties over a period of time, often referred to as “elders.” The Greek word is **πρεσβύτερος (*presbúteros*)**: a man who has authority over the administration of a church; a synonym for deacon.
20. It is the man with the gift of pastor-teacher who has the teaching authority in a local church. His church may support one or more missionaries who function on foreign fields or evangelists whose functions occur outside the walls of the local church.
21. It is appropriate for them to give periodic reports on their ministries with an overview of how they communicate doctrine to their audiences.
22. Here are some principles and guidelines on the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher and the prohibitions against the several ways this teaching authority can be challenged, and his message contradicted:
- (1) To communicate to fellow parishioners criticism of the pastor’s message and asserting himself as a valuable critic of his ministry.
 - (2) One of the tactics in this process is telling the pastor what to teach or how to teach. This reveals a lack of spiritual maturity resulting in biting off more than he is able to chew.

¹ *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary: Unabridged*, 2d ed. (1962), s.v. “orthodox.”

² “No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs” (Justice Hugo L. Black, Majority Opinion in *Everson v. Board of Education* (330 U.S. 1 [1947])).

- (3) The mental attitude behind such a critic is the reality that he is a narcissist in love with the mistaken idea he has the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher.
- (4) There is even the possibility he actually has the gift but does not have the requisite humility to respect the office of pastor-teacher which he, at this point, has not yet attained.
- (5) Should that be the case, he needs to work on the humility required to respect the Word of God before he responds to the emotional desire to communicate it to those over whom he has no authority.
- (6) In doing so, he usurps the authority of a man who holds the office while he does not.
- (7) One of the issues many believers new to doctrine confront is that their assumed spiritual advance is the result of learning a lot of doctrine academically. Assuming a little is a lot, their tendency is to go beyond their present capacities.
- (8) The pastor may teach a set of principles that are spot on, but within an area of doctrine about which this new believer is presently ignorant.
- (9) Ignorance of going where angels fear to tread results in divine discipline which is often misunderstood as “suffering for Jesus” rather than “suffering from Jesus.”
- (10) When assuming the authority of pastor and criticizing him or his message results in double discipline for him and double blessing for the pastor.
- (11) The writer of Hebrews gives some excellent advice on this situation.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

v. 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (NASB)



Principles:

1. Receiving judgment from God is bad enough but taking on a more severe execution of judgment occurs when God doubles down on those who challenge His prerogatives related to spiritual gifts and most especially those who fraudulently communicate His Word.
2. This has to do with the divine system of authority. The pastor-teacher has been confirmed by God to have the gift. The pastor's duty is to prepare himself to faithfully communicate divine truth to his parishioners with the authority granted to him.
3. No one is perfect. Occasionally, the pastor will get something wrong, misspeak, or allow human viewpoint to cloud the message. The real test of the pastor is the validity of his message over the long haul.
4. If these deviations are rare, then such instances should not warrant criticism of his overall message to fellow members of the church.
5. If a man concludes he has a communication gift, his duty is to prepare himself for the office by pursuing the proper academic education.
6. This can be accomplished by studying under the ministry of his local pastor, or he can enroll in a seminary.
7. However, that man is in danger if he propagandizes members of the congregation against the pastor, removes himself from the auditorium while continuing to attend the church's programs.
8. It is in these peripheral areas that he may spread his opposition to the pastor's teachings: Sunday School classes where he volunteers to teach and in doing so communicates false doctrine.
9. When questioned, he responds with reasons why the pastor is wrong, gives his own theological opinions, and then asserts them as proof of the pastor's error.
10. In twentieth-century America there was an electronic contrivance that communicated a person's opposition to a pastor and his theology, but to a limited audience of one or two with landline telephones.
11. With twenty-first-century technology outreach can be easily expanded by joining up with Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, and numerous other sites that enable a person to bloviate his opinions to thousands of fellow bloggers.
12. At first, this venom was restricted to e-mails and texts; but not anymore. Now various Web sites provide numerous options for the spreading of propaganda.

