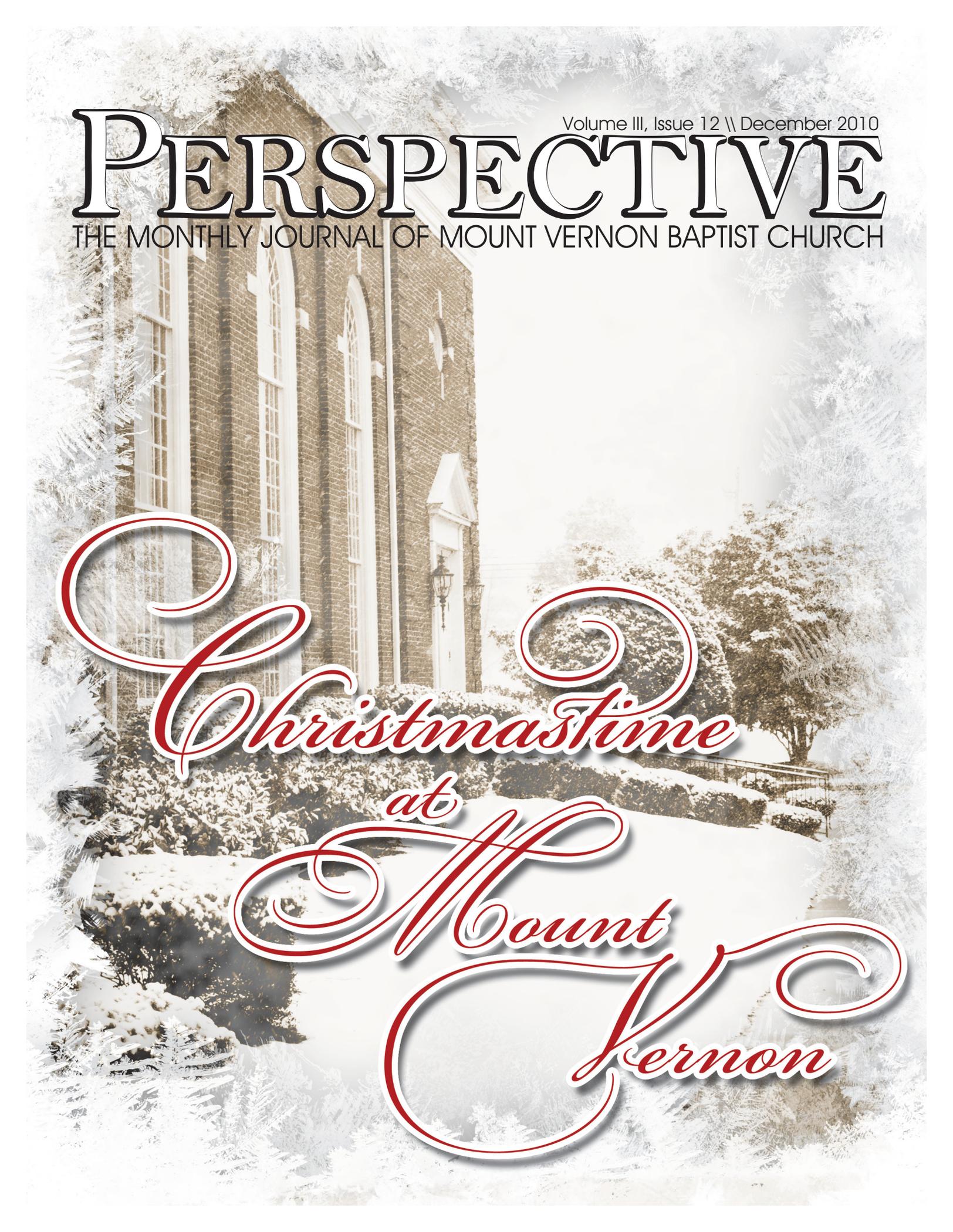


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PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH



Christmastime
at
Mount
Vernon



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STAFF ▶ **SERMON SCHEDULE**

- December 5 Be Faithful**
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
- December 12 Be Ready**
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- December 19 Be Together**
1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
- December 26 The Christmas Sermon**
Matthew 1:22

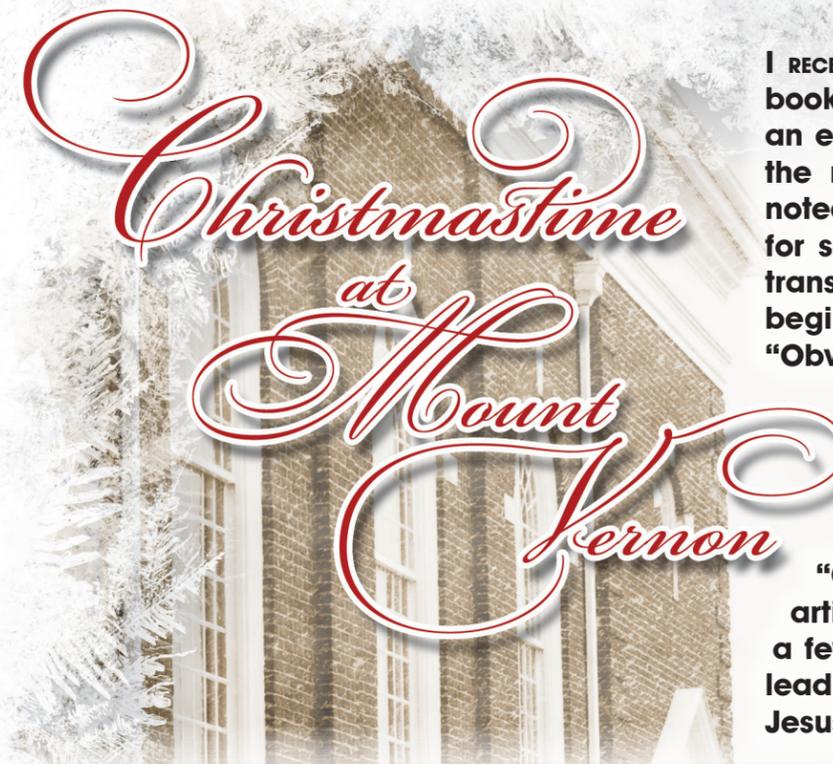
▶ **FIGHTER VERSE (Sept. - Dec.)**

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:4-11

▶ **INSIDE THIS EDITION**

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An announcement about an opportunity to eliminate our Foundations debt. page 7



I RECENTLY HEARD NPR INTERVIEW THE AUTHOR of a new book on the history of Hanukkah in America, an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the temple. The author noted that the Jewish community was looking for some clear identity in the midst of much transition and holiday celebration at the beginning of the nineteenth century. She said, "Obviously, they couldn't celebrate Christmas because Christmas is Christian." As a Christian church in the midst of all the decorations and festivities that overcome us with nostalgia, we will do well to remember that simple truth—"Christmas is Christian." In this cover article, I want to take the time to highlight a few of our special church-wide events that lead us in extended worship of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

"Jesus...Messiah...Lord"
Sunday, December 5 @ 6:00 pm
Led by Children's Ministry

When children were shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David," the chief priests and teachers of the law became indignant at such praise. Jesus then rebuked them with this simple truth: "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise" (Mt. 21:15-16). This is what we will experience on Sunday, December 5, as the children's ministry presents their Christmas program called "Jesus...Messiah...Lord." This will include performances from the preschool choir under the direction of Lisa Kubes, and the program is directed by Bob Neal.

Christmas at Mount Vernon
Sunday, December 12 @ 7:00 pm
Led by MVBC Adult Choir

When Christ was born, Luke records an amazing historical event: "A great company of heavenly host appeared...praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests'" (Lk. 2:13-14). We want you to join us in such praise on Sunday, December 12. We will celebrate with many musical styles as we honor God's faithfulness to His people in sending His Son to fulfill his promise of salvation made centuries prior. Pianist David Carnes and the Mount Vernon Worship Choir will be joined by Dr. Becky Lombard and other members of the Mount Vernon's music ministry to present *Christmas at Mt. Vernon...a promise fulfilled*. Invite friends and others from the community to be a part of this time of worship and presentation of the Gospel in word and song.

Carols & Cocoa
Wednesday, December 15 @ 6:15 pm
Participation of All Ages

The fact that "Christmas is Christian" is evident in the fact that nearly all Christmas songs that have transcended generations are specifically Christian. On Wednesday, December 15, we want to spend extended time worship God through song in our annual Carols and Cocoa. This is a time when we gather in the Fellowship Hall immediately following dinner and sing Christmas carols around the piano led by David Carnes. Children and adults are encouraged to join voices.

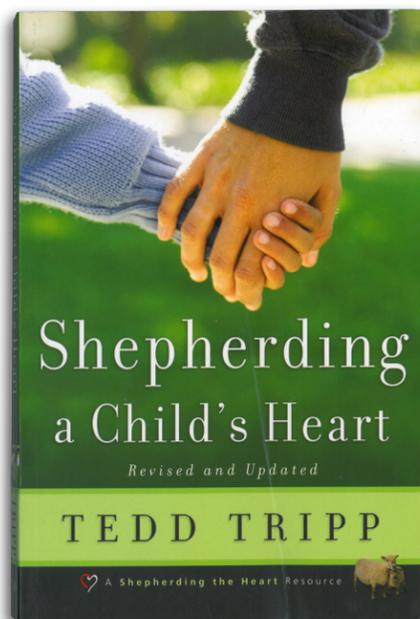
Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
Friday, December 24 @ 5:00 pm
Participation of All Ages

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). On the eve of Christmas day, we want to spend time reflecting on the fact that when Jesus was born the light of God was entering into a dark, sinful world. God actually came in human flesh to live the life we couldn't and die the death we deserved. That is the glorious truth we want to reflect on in our Christmas Eve Candle Light Service on Friday, December 24. This is an hour-long service with Scripture reading, song, and a brief devotional. We encourage you to invite friends and family.

"The Christmas Sermon" by Pastor Aaron
Sunday, December 26 @ 10:30 am

The message of Christmas is more than baby Jesus "wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Lk. 2:12). It is one of the events that forever revolutionized human history. The God who spoke all of life into existence found in Genesis one entered time and space in the person of Jesus Christ. The promise that God would forever dwell with His people and that the nation of Israel longed for was fulfilled when Jesus was born and named "Immanuel"—which means, "God with us" (Mt. 1:23). This is the message Pastor Aaron will be preaching on Sunday, December 26. Come with anticipation to experience "God with us" as we seek to worship Him in Spirit and truth.

— Brad Thayer



Shepherding a Child's Heart

by Tedd Tripp

Reviewed by Brad Thayer

"To be honest, I don't know what I'm doing." I'll never forget when I heard a Christian mother utter those words as she talked about parenting her teenage daughter. It was one of those moments of great clarity, and she spoke with brutal, albeit embarrassing, honesty about her difficulties as a parent. She knew she had a responsibility for the physical and spiritual well-being of her daughter, and yet she was aimless. During that conversation, I felt as though I was watching a great adventurer set out on a lifetime exploration with gritty determination and optimism but no compass, no map, and no destination. She was just going.

Anyone who has ever been responsible for child rearing can sympathize with this mother and her sense of aimlessness. After all, when you leave the hospital, you have just enough information to keep your newborn alive. But the nice diaper bag and all the little samples and flyers are of no value when your two-year-old throws him or herself on the ground in a fit of frustration. And though you may have never voiced it, you may have thought in that moment, "I don't know what I'm doing."

It is this type of aimless parenting that Tedd Tripp addresses in *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. As the title clearly states, Tripp is most concerned that parents understand their need to address and tend to that which affects everything in their child's life—their heart. Why should parents be most concerned with the child's heart? Because "God is concerned with the heart—the well-spring of life (Prov. 4:23)" (xi).

Instead of summarizing the book, I want to give three reasons why this is a "must read" for parents, four counter-cultural claims Tripp makes related to parenting, and two ways to use this book at Mount Vernon.

Three Reasons It's a "Must-Read"

First, Tripp rightly understands what is most central to child rearing—shepherding the heart. Correcting behavior simply for the sake of behavior misses the point of parenting. All behavior is an outflow of the heart. That is Jesus' very own teaching in Mark

7:20-23. Parenting involves not less but more than instructing and correcting behavior. It "involves being a kind authority, shepherding your children to understand themselves in God's world, and keeping the gospel in clear view so your children can internalize the good news and someday live in mutuality with you as people under God" (xix). Thus, is the multifaceted task of parenting—exercising authority, shepherding, and having gospel-centrality—with the heart being the central focus.

Parents, Tripp is a friend offering good counsel and guidance in the midst of aimlessness. Whether your child is two, twelve, or twenty, all of your instruction and correction are to be aimed at their heart. A "new heart" and not a new attitude or behavior is, after all, the great promise of the new covenant (Ezek. 36:26). Tripp wrote, "Learn to work back from behavior to the heart... Help your child see that they were made for a relationship with God. The thirst of the heart can be satisfied in truly knowing God" (122).

The other day my three-year old (nearly four) daughter woke up with a very sweet disposition. It was clear from her fresh face and bright smile that she had a good night's rest. As I was getting ready for work, she was telling me all that she was going to do for the day. Then she paused, looked up at me, and said, "Daddy, I'm going to obey you today." Those were sweet words of resolve to me as a father. It was a moment to enjoy the labors of my wife's parenting and mine. Then I thought to myself, "Oh, sweet daughter. Don't underestimate the power of sin in your heart." Then in a very loving and tender way I sought to instruct her by saying, "Let's pray that the Lord will give you a happy heart to obey mommy, daddy, and God." I felt a bit like Joshua rebuking Israel when they sought to resolve to never forsake the Lord to serve other gods (Joshua 24:16-27). Solomon was right when he wrote, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Second and in light of the first point, Tripp helps parents reorient their goals. Every parent has goals for their children. You will

be hard pressed, even in the most destitute of circumstances, to find a parent that does not want their children to "do well" in life (however "do well" may be defined according to their cultural standards). Many goals for "doing well" are even commendable—developing special skills, being psychologically adjusted, well behaved, and more (40-44). Yet, none of these are ultimate in life. Instruction aimed at the heart will seek to lead the child to understand that all of life is to be lived for the glory of God (45).

Parents, do you want your child to be successful in the private sector, commendable in leadership, and exemplary in moral character? Then teach them to be men and women with a heart that lives for the glory of God in all that they do. Otherwise, all their success and moral uprightness will be for naught when they will stand before the Lord on that last day. Tripp is a helpful guide in evaluating and reorienting your goals in parenting.

Lastly and most practically, Tripp gives "training objectives" and "training procedures" for infancy, childhood, and teenage years. The second half of the book is basically the "how-to" section. Tripp is well balanced by giving good, biblical principles for parenting (first half) and then showing parents how to apply them (second half). This includes advice on when and when not to spank (a topic I'll discuss in a minute), how to spank, how to communicate so as to instruct the heart and appeal to the conscience, and more.

Parents, if you are convinced that your primary responsibility is to shepherd your child's heart so they will live for the glory of God then you will be helped by Tripp's "how-to's," stories of illustration, and application found throughout this book.

Four Counter-cultural Claims about Parenting

First, Tripp gives *biblical* counseling on parenting. There is a trend in Christian counseling to synthesize modern theories of psychology with Christian values and call it "Christian counseling." That is not Tripp's method. He is unashamed in fully relying on the Bible's authority and sufficiency for guiding parents. He wrote, "The only safe guide is the Bible... It presents an accurate and comprehensive picture of children, parents, family life, values, training, nurture, and discipline—all you need to be equipped for the task of parenting" (xix, emphasis added).

Second, Tripp rightly notes that children are not born morally neutral. They have a "Godward orientation" (18-25). They are experiencing all of life through a "religious grid." Reflecting on Romans 1, Tripp concludes that children are, by nature, worshippers of idols. They are born sinners (Ps. 51:5; 58:3). This is very instructive for child rearing because it means that children are not just the product of what we pour into them. Parenting is not primarily about providing the right environment. Nor should parents conclude that a child's problem is simply a matter of maturity. Think about your own life. Have you outgrown or matured beyond selfishness, rebellion against authority, and petty forms of idolatry? No, and nor will your children. They are not morally neutral creatures waiting to be formed by the right circumstances and influences. They are sinners made in the image of God that need to be reconciled to their Creator by the righteousness of Christ through faith.

Third, parents are the authority in the home. So much of this point runs against the grain of our culture. So much confusion and animosity toward authority exist in the home. People call male headship and patriarchal leadership oppressive chauvinism. Exercise parental authority and people may say you're stifling

a child's self-expression. Tripp simply and correctly shows from Ephesians 6:1-4 that the command for children to "obey" and for parents to raise their children in the "training and instruction of the Lord" establishes an authority structure. Parents are over the children and both are under God as their one Master (29). Authority rightly understood and applied is a good thing for children.

Fourth, child rearing involves communication and the use of the "rod." These are the two biblical methods of child rearing. Though it may not be practiced well in our culture, most parents would agree that communication is essential to raising children. The use of the "rod", i.e., spanking, however, is of a bygone era many would say. You can even find Christian authors suggesting that parents should not spank. And though space is not available in this review to explain all the qualifications for the proper use of spanking, Tripp properly frames his discussion on spanking with biblical principles and Scriptural support. He wrote, "All earthly punishment *presupposes* the great day when destinies are eternally fixed" (99, emphasis added).

Furthermore, since children are not born morally neutral their greatest need is not direction but discipline. This is why Solomon wrote, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). The "rod" is actually a means of divine rescue for a child. "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod, and save his soul from death" (Prov. 23:13-14). Discipline, though painful, is a loving thing to exercise. It mirrors the very character of God (Heb. 12:7-11). Tripp summarized this point well when he wrote, "The use of the rod signifies a faithful parent recognizing his child's dangerous state and employing a God-given remedy" (103).

There is much more that could be said about this point. I would simply encourage parents to read Tripp's chapters on communication and discipline because you will find many of your "how-to" questions, concerns, and reservations addressed.

Two Ways to Use the Book at Mount Vernon

First and most simply, fathers take the lead to read this book with your wife. This will be both an exercise of your leadership of your wife and it will be good for both of you to discuss these topics together. I can honestly say that my wife has read more books on parenting than me. She is the one with our children nearly 24/7, so she wants to be well equipped to parent (though at times the books are simply a means of survival). Yet, it is my responsibility as the husband and father to lead in parenting. Fathers, if you are delegating your parental responsibilities to your wife then start taking the initiative to shepherd your children by reading this book together. (Note that Paul writes to "fathers" in Ephesians 6:4.)

Second, I would encourage parents to form small groups to read and discuss this book. It is short; only nineteen chapters long. You could cover it in six to eight sessions. There are teacher and parent guides available. Each chapter has application questions at the end. Little preparation would need to be done in advance. Groups could be divided by your child's developmental stage—preschoolers, childhood, and teenagers. The application of these biblical principles will look different from child to child even in the same home and different from home to home. But there is so much we can learn from each other's experience as we meet to discuss how we can shepherd the hearts of the children God has given us to steward for His glory. ■

An Elder's Life at Mount Vernon

Sometimes I tire of talking about church leadership. Why talk about human leaders when we fall so far short of God himself? Of what human leader could it ever be said, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted"? This is how Job spoke to the Lord of Lords—humbly, carefully, wisely. Job knew that God is wise, wiser than anyone. Job knew God is powerful, more powerful than raging seas or hurricanes. God is amazing. Speaking about human leadership in light of our invincible God can seem like eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich when a steak and lobster platter is ready to be consumed!

Yet Scripture teaches that God ordains church leaders in general and elders in particular to bless the people of God. Here is how Peter expressed it in 1 Peter 5:1-3:

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Elders have the weighty responsibility of "being examples to the flock." Believers should be able to look at the elders and say to themselves, "That's how I should live!" It doesn't mean we all have to root for the same teams or like the same music. It does mean that elders should publicly model Jesus for a congregation that needs to see what it practically looks like to be a Christian.

Because of this weighty responsibility, the Apostle Paul provided specific instructions about the type of men a congregation should recognize as elders. In just a few days, the members of Mount Vernon Baptist Church are going to be asked to nominate men they believe should serve us as elders. Whom should these members nominate? I'm writing this article to highlight the qualifications of an elder found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. My prayer is that those texts will be the basis of much prayer as Mount Vernon chooses elders in the days ahead.

In his book, *Why Elders?*, Ben Merkle helpfully divides up the qualifications of elders into three categories: situational, family, and moral. I'm going to use Merkle's divisions to work through 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Situational Qualifications

Paul wants the church to elect men to the office of elder who are well-situated to serve. They have the necessary desire and ability. These particular qualifications don't have to do with their spirituality—we'll get to that later.

First, it is important that an elder have a desire to serve. In 1 Timothy 3:1 we are told that "if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." This is the verse that precedes a long list of qualifications. It is safe to assume that the men who are qualified to serve are men who are willing to serve. We should nominate men to the office of elder that we think would see it as a noble calling. We must guard against those who want to be elders for the honor of being an elder!

Second, an elder must be able to teach. This is clear in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9. This is what mainly distinguishes an elder from a deacon. An elder must be able to teach. This does not mean the elder has to be able to deliver a sermon on Sunday morning. It does mean the elder must be able to clearly communicate God's Word, understand and love sound doctrine, and correct those who oppose sound doctrine. These verses don't require that potential elders must have official teaching responsibilities in the church (preacher, Sunday school teacher, small group leader). It does however require that an elder be the type of man that others come to for biblical counsel and wisdom.

Third, an elder must not be a recent convert. Paul makes clear in 1 Timothy 3:6 that a new believer elevated to the office of elder may be tempted to become proud. He should be spared such temptation. The temptation, of course, exists for every man who becomes an elder. Nonetheless, there is a unique danger to the new believer and, therefore, we should be careful not to recognize men who are new to the faith.

Fourth, an elder must be well thought of by outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7). The people at work may disagree with this man, but do they respect him? The world is watching the church, and the world will judge the church on the basis of her leaders.

Family Qualifications

Family issues are of great importance to Paul. He understood that the measure of a man is often most clear at home. Therefore, issues of singlehood, marriage, and parenting must be asked and addressed.

First, an elder must be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). This has been taken a number of ways. Some argue it means an elder must be married. This seems unlikely since Paul could have said that and since, elsewhere, Paul commends being single (1 Cor. 7:32-35). Others insist this is a prohibition against polygamy. While Paul's phrase certainly rules out polygamy, multiple wives were rare in Paul's day and this was not likely his intent. Others insist Paul means that a married man must have one wife his entire life. In this case, a remarried man would likely be disqualified from serving as an elder. Perhaps, but this too seems unlikely because Jesus and Paul elsewhere teach that there is such a thing as a biblical divorce. Merkle therefore writes, "It is wrong to treat divorce and remarriage as the unpardonable sin. If a former murderer is able to be forgiven and later serve as a spiritual leader (like the apostle Paul who was guilty of murder...), then it would seem rather arbitrary that a person who remarries cannot serve in such a capacity." Finally, some insist Paul is demanding faithfulness to one's wife. Is the man known

for loving and serving his wife? Is she the apple of his eye? If a man has been divorced, this necessarily raises questions: Was he faithful to his wife? What personal sin led to the end of the marriage? Is he currently faithful and known as an example of faithfulness in singlehood or marriage? These are hard questions to address and, when necessary, must be explored with a spirit of love.

Second, an elder must manage his household well (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6). In Titus 1:6, Paul writes the children must be *pistos*. This Greek word can be translated "believers" or "faithful." It would seem strange for Paul to require that an elder's children be converted—after all, conversion is in the hands of the Lord. It seems very likely that an elder must have children who are faithful, under control, well-supervised, and loved. A man with older kids, still in the home, who have yet to put their personal faith in Christ, should not be disqualified. We must keep in mind, however, that a man's family is an important factor in considering whether he is qualified to serve as an elder.

Let me flesh this out a bit more. Managing one's household does not require a "Stepford" family. Some may think a well-managed home means everyone has their shirts ironed, shoes polished, and walk single-file behind Dad. Not so! A man manages his family well by investing in his wife and kids, by shepherding them, by teaching them the Bible and praying with them, by disciplining his kids lovingly and consistently. A man who manages his household well puts his family before work and the ministry.

Moral Qualifications

It should be no surprise that the majority of elder qualifications are moral. They have to do with matters of personal integrity. Obviously, the only man who will perfectly meet these qualifications is Jesus! Nonetheless, the church deserves men who humbly model these qualifications, and who serve the church as examples worthy to be followed.

Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7). There is nothing in his life that discredits him. He is known within and without the church as a man of good character. In that sense, he is blameless. It's not that he's sinless! He is, however, without dark secrets that would indicate a corrupt life.

Sober-minded or temperate (1 Tim. 3:2). Such a leader can make decisions without being wrongly influenced by others. He is a serious man, serious about the word and about the church. He is not always overacting or wrongly-reacting. He does not turn molehills into mountains. As he writes to Titus, the sober-minded man is not quick tempered. He can control himself and his words. The man who is not sober-minded, who is quick-tempered, does not deal well in emotionally-charged situations.

Self-controlled (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). His internal passions do not outweigh biblical, rational thinking. Alexander Strauch, in *Biblical Eldership*, wrote: "God's steward must be characterized by self-control and self-discipline in every aspect of life, particularly in his physical desires (Acts 24:25; 1 Cor. 7:9; 9:25). An undisciplined man has little resistance to sexual lust, anger, slothfulness, a critical spirit, or other base desires. He is easy prey for the devil." In other words, we are looking for men Satan runs *from*, not *to*.

Respectable (1 Tim. 3:2). This respect does not come from the office itself. Other people believe this man is worthy of honor on the basis of the God he serves and the life he lives.

Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). Not only does an elder make time for his own family, but for others as well. He invests in people beyond his immediate family. He opens his home up to others. He opens his schedule up to others. He opens his life up to others. He allows himself to be known as a teacher in the church and as a man in need of the Savior. A man who is hospitable pours his life not only into church business, but into the people who make up the church.

Gentle (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). He is neither harsh nor aggressive with others. You don't feel like he is at war with you. He is kind—and not just in public, but in private as well. Merkle writes, "A gentle person is not overbearing but patient with others, especially when they have done wrong. He does not retaliate when wronged but returns love for evil."

Loves what is good (Titus 1:8). He has a taste for righteousness. He loves what glorifies God and builds the church. It is obvious to others that his heart is for the things of God and not for the things of the world. In Titus 1:8, an elder is also described as one who is upright and holy. In all these words we get the sense of an upstanding man who is devoted to the service of the Lord.

Not given to drunkenness (1 Tim. 3:3; 1:7). Paul does not say an elder must be a teetotaler. He cannot use any substance in such a way that discredit is brought to him, the gospel, the Lord, or the church. When we give into alcohol or drugs we prove that we have no self-control.

Not violent (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). Men who are physically or verbally abusive cannot serve as elders. They must not use manipulation or intimidation to get their way.

Not quarrelsome (1 Tim. 3:3). The man qualified to be an elder diffuses tensions—he doesn't cause them! When someone complains to him, he doesn't pour fuel on the fire. He listens to see if there is merit to the complaint and, if there is, he may seek to address it or advise that the wrong be overlooked. In fact, if an elder thinks that he is about to hear gossip, he will lovingly but firmly encourage someone to speak to the person being affected. In any event, he does not intensify quarrels, he is a peacemaker.

Not a lover of money (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). In the first century, as today, our pocketbooks say a great deal about our character. Money can divide our passions. If a man cares more about the things money can buy than about God, God's Word, and God's people, then he is not suited to oversee the church. Does a man see his money and, for that matter, his time and possessions as tools to be used in the service of God or does he seem to be accumulating wealth for the sake of wealth? That is the question that needs to be asked.

Not arrogant (Titus 1:7). An arrogant or overbearing person runs roughshod over others. It's his way or the highway. An elder must be confident, especially about biblical teaching. However, he must not use his will or his personality to overpower people. He will trust God's Word and God's Spirit, and will not carry himself with an air of superiority.

Elders have the weighty responsibility of "being examples to the flock."

Next Steps

It is one thing to read and understand the qualifications of an elder found in 1 Timothy and Titus. It is another thing to know which men best meet these qualifications. James wrote that we are to pray for wisdom (James 1:5). We can trust God wants us to know, as a church, which men are qualified to serve at this time in this way. We can trust that God will act here because he loves his church more than we ever could. Paul knew the Holy Spirit raised up elders for the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:28), and we can be sure God will raise up elders for this church in Sandy Springs.

As you begin the process of discerning whom you believe is qualified to serve as an elder, please keep four questions in mind. My hope is that these questions will help you determine which men best meet the above qualifications.

First, is he a man of theological conviction? An elder can understand, happily affirm, and willingly defend the truths of Scripture. He is not afraid of doctrine, and he is willing to dig deep for the glory of God and the good of the church. At the heart of every church is the Gospel—the message of the Son of God who was crucified for our sins and raised for our salvation. A man of theological conviction knows, believes, and protects this message.

Second, does he appreciate and agree with the distinctives of Mount Vernon Baptist Church? We believe baptism is for those who have repented and believed. This distinguishes us from other godly, evangelical churches. It is important that those men who serve us as elders agree with our Statement of Faith which includes our Baptist identity.

Third, is he bold? An elder must not be arrogant. But the fact remains that to be a Christian is often to swim against the stream. Our society at large does not want to take a stand on issues related to homosexuality, women in pastoral ministry, and easy divorce. If the church is going to remain committed to the Bible in an age of compromise we will have to stand where standing hurts. This requires boldness.

Fourth, does he love the church? His love for the congregation should be evident in his regular presence and active service. A man who loves the church gives of his resources to the church. We live in an age of countless distractions—we want elders who love God and their family and who love MVBC.

And now, if you are a member of MVBC, you must begin to pray and decide for yourself whom to nominate for this important position.■

~ Aaron Menikoff

What's Next?

In December the Elder Nominating Committee will be asking you to nominate the men you believe should be considered for the office of elder. We are looking for a minimum of seven elders. Every adult, male member is eligible to serve. Please know that the Senior Pastor is automatically an elder.

On **Sunday, December 12**, at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall, we will have a Q&A to discuss the qualifications of an elder. Please read 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and come with your questions.

Also on **December 12**, a nomination form will be available in the Sunday morning bulletins. All nominations are due to the church office by **Sunday, January 9**. Please bring your nomination in a sealed envelope.

December 12, 2010
7:00 pm

Featuring
the Mount Vernon Worship Choir
Dr. Becky Lombard, Organist
&
David Carnes, Pianist

Directed by
Dr. Kristine Harris

Join us for an evening of music that celebrates God's promise to His people, fulfilled in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ.

Reception to follow.

Christmas @
Mount Vernon
...a promise fulfilled

Foundations Debt Challenge

We are making great progress in retiring the Foundations debt. We need \$152,733 from the congregation to reach our goal. 65 family units have participated. If the remaining 217 units contribute at **\$704 each**, we will retire the debt.

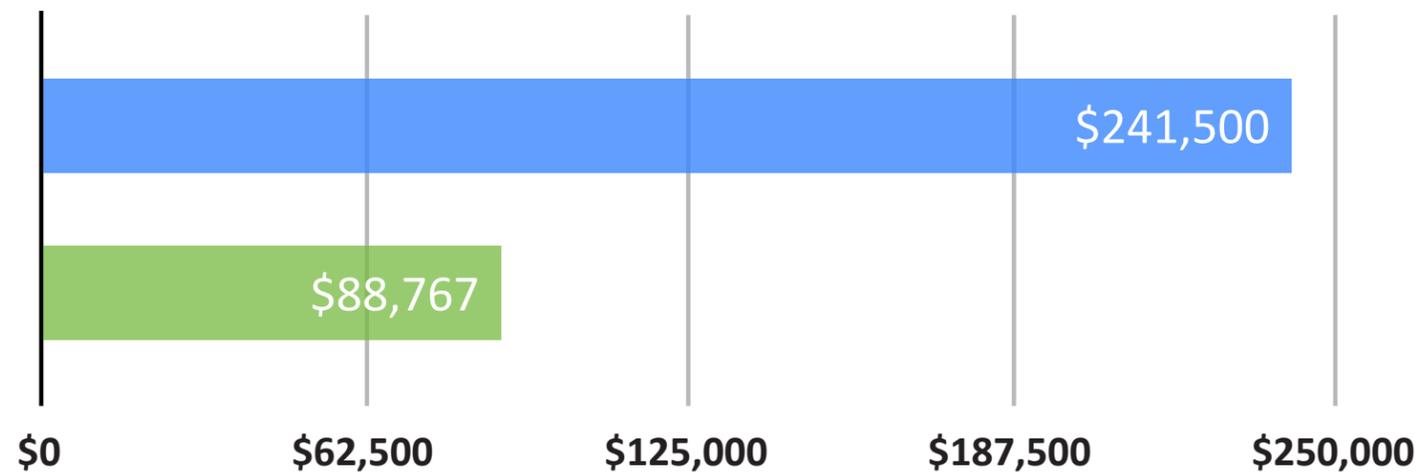
\$1-to-\$1 Match: Every dollar given to the Foundations Challenge will be matched. If you give \$50, it will be matched with \$50. So it goes until the congregation gives half of the outstanding debt (\$241,500). It requires \$805 per giving unit to reach our goal.

Deadline December 31, 2010: All designated gifts must be received by noon, December 31, 2010. However, once you decide to participate then please turn in your gift as soon as possible so we can make principal payments and save money on interest.

Above & Beyond Normal Giving: All Foundations gifts are to be above and beyond your regular or year-end giving so that we can meet our operating expense budget.

Continue to pray with thanksgiving and for wisdom as you consider how to be involved in this effort.

Congregation's Goal - \$241,500



■ Congregation's Goal ■ Congregation's Giving



Mount Vernon

BAPTIST CHURCH

850 Mount Vernon Highway NW
Sandy Springs, GA 30327