

“But My Pastor Said!”

By: David Burruss

There's a phrase I've heard more times than I can count: "But my pastor said..." It usually comes up when someone is gently confronted with something the Bible clearly teaches, but it doesn't line up with what they've been told or taught. And while that response might seem like a reasonable defense in the moment, here's the truth. On the day you stand before Jesus, it won't hold up.

You and I won't be able to point to someone else and say, "Well, I was just following what they said." Because Jesus isn't going to ask what your pastor believed. He's going to look at you, your heart, your life, your obedience to His Word.

Let's pause for a second and ask a really important question: Do you actually know what a pastor is according to the Bible?

In Scripture, the words "pastor," "elder," and "shepherd" all refer to the same role. It's one position with different names that highlight different aspects of the job. And it's not about being a polished speaker or having a magnetic personality. It's about spiritual maturity. It's about godly character. The Bible is very clear on this, and it doesn't leave room for personal opinions or popular trends to redefine it.

1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9 lay out the qualifications for an elder. Go read them. Seriously. These are not casual guidelines. They are firm, Spirit-inspired requirements. Things like being blameless, faithful to one's spouse, temperate, sober-minded, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, and so on.

These aren't just "nice to have" qualities. They are must-haves. And yet, in many churches today, people take the title "pastor" without meeting these biblical standards. Some aren't even aware of what the Bible requires. Others ignore it completely. And still, people follow them without question, often because they sound confident, or they've been in ministry a long time, or they simply say what people want to hear.

But friend, hear me on this. Just because someone calls themselves a "pastor" doesn't mean they are one by God's definition. And just because someone is in a pulpit doesn't mean they're rightly handling God's Word.

It's not enough to say, "Well, I trusted him," or "He seemed sincere." The Bible doesn't put the weight of your spiritual life on someone else's shoulders. It puts it on yours. You're responsible for what you believe. You're responsible for what you obey.

Don't misunderstand me. There is great value in godly teachers. We're meant to learn from others. But their words must always be tested by Scripture. Acts 17:11 praises the Bereans because they "received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." That's the posture we're all supposed to have.

The Lord gave us His Word for a reason. Not so it would sit closed on a shelf while we take someone else's word for what it says. But so we would read it, study it, and live it. Because when the day comes that you meet Jesus, and it will come, you'll give an account for your own life, not your pastor's.

So, if your faith is hanging on what someone else said, it's time to make a shift. Open the Bible. Let it search your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand. It might feel overwhelming at first, but God isn't hiding truth from you. He's inviting you into it.

At the end of the day, it's not about what I say, or what your "pastor" says, or what any person says. It's about what God says. And you can know that for yourself.

So, pick up your Bible. Read it. Wrestle with it. Obey it. Because when you see Jesus face to face, that's what will matter most.