



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Start # 1907

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***Proverbs 20:5 "A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out."***

I thought of this verse recently. I've been gone for two Sundays in a row. That's very rare for me. So, I have a lot of catching up. Not paperwork, but listening to lessons that I missed. I've been doing that. Today, I listened to a class that was taught in my absence. We are running three consecutive classes on the theme of marriage. Our teens and college students are studying about getting married. Our young marrieds are having a class. I've been teaching the older crowd, again, about marriage. I've told some that our classes are, "Before you say, I do. After you say, I do. And, then my class, why did I say, I do."

Last week I asked one of our godly brothers to teach a class about divorce. Not your typical "here's what the Bible says about divorce." Not all the different views. Not all the reasons why people get divorce. Not even how to prevent divorce. But a very specific, pinpointed class. I wanted him to teach a class about what do parents do when their grown child tells them that they are getting a divorce. I've never heard a class on this. I felt that it is necessary in our times and the man I chose to teach, not only knows the Bible in and out, but he has seen the bitter agony of a grown child who divorced. He knows.

I listened to that CD. I really listened. His approach was brilliant. He brought in thoughts and passages that were essential, helpful and he spoke from the heart. It was an amazing class. He used verses that were perfect. His approach was kind. As I listened, our verse today came to my mind.

There are several things about that deep water that is drawn out that is helpful. Here are some quick things I thought about.

First, what a blessing to be part of a congregation that is not afraid to tackle delicate and tough subjects. The elephant in the room can be so obvious, yet no one wants to deal with it. Some of us are spending a lot of time answering questions that no one is asking any more. We need to know how to help people Biblically. What do you do when your grown child says he's getting a divorce?

Second, shallow Bible classes tend to produce shallow congregations. The same obvious questions can be asked over and over and over again. Lower the nets. Find that deep water. Bring an understanding out. Bible classes can be boring or they can be true learning experiences. Look beyond the obvious. Don't state what everyone already knows. Scratch around. Dig deep. Explore. Look at words. Look at situations. Make applications. Our class time is not creed rehearsal. It is a period of truly studying and coming to know more about God's word.

**(OVER)**

Third, among us are some amazing teachers. We sometimes assume that the preacher knows the Bible better than anyone else. That's not always true. We also assume that the preacher is the best teacher. That, too, isn't always the case. As I listened to our Bible class from last week, I thought, this is amazing stuff. This is great and helpful. I realized what a blessing we were to have such a man among us. He's not a preacher. He's not in the leadership roles. He loves the Lord and he has spent hours thinking and digging deep into God's word. It shows. I could never have taught what he did. For us preachers, we must recognize great ability around us and use them to God's glory. Drop the jealousy. Quit thinking that you have to be tops, the best, praised and patted on the back. It's not about us, preacher, it's about teaching God's word. Good men sometimes are benched on the sidelines because ego driven preachers can't stand to be in the background of things. Use talent where you can.

Fourth, it helps to learn what to do before you face the difficult situations in life. Our children in school will go through a fire alarm. It is a practice to show them what to do if something terrible were to happen. Before every flight takes off, there are a series of safety procedures that are demonstrated. The exit doors are pointed out. A life jacket is put on and shown how to inflate. All of this is in case of an emergency. Knowing ahead of time, keeps one from reacting. A person knows what to do. They know. Do we know spiritually? Do we fly off the handle, forgetting the words of James to be slow to speak and slow to anger and quick to hear. Oh, yeah, we say. I forgot about that. Why? Why did you forget? We can make matters worse by not knowing what we ought to do. We can even do things that are wrong by not knowing what to do. Prayer. Self control. Listening. Being slow to anger. All of those help and keep us next to the Lord. Terrible situations are not reasons to toss everything we believe and act ungodly and disgrace the name of our Lord. I thought as I listened to that sober question, "What would you do if your grown child called and said, 'We're getting a divorce.'" I had not thought about that. What would I do? I now know. I know what not to do and what I can do.

Fifth, life is tough. It's edgy. It's complicated. Even among God's people. Nice, simple lives are how we appear to each other, but too, often that's not what is really going on. There are homes that are on brink of divorce. There are hearts that are addicted to porn. There are families that are torn with the inability to forgive and offer grace. There are some who are more committed and in love with their work than they are their spouse. There are parents who are clueless about what to do with their teens. There are far too many who have their heads buried in the sand, who refuse to see that they need help. It can be ugly and messy. This is hard on shepherds as they try to lead God's people to safer places. Real and honest lessons is what folks need today. They need that in our sermons and they need that in our classes and they need that in our conversations. Our Bibles need to be opened as well as our hearts. We need each other. We need Heaven flooded with prayers. We need shepherds who are among us and understand us. We need preachers who are pointing the way through the fog of today's false ideology.

Sixth, I am thankful that we can have help today. I am thankful that God cares. Imagine what it would be like being on the other side of things. As tough as things are, imagine not knowing the Bible, not having an amazing church family and not having help from each other. Imagine getting all of your ideas from Facebook or co-workers? What a mess that would be! This reminds us that God's word is for every day. Jesus remains the answer for all times. There have been fiery furnaces and Egyptians closing in fast behind us, and prisons and lion's dens, wars, famines and troublesome times. Yet, what remains true through all of those times, is God. He remains upon the throne. His word is the need of the hour. His Son, our Savior, Jesus, is still our hope.

Let us be helping one another. Let us show others what we have learned to help them. Let us point folks to God through the Bible. We are all in this together and together we will make it!

Roger Shouse (used by Permission)

**P.S.-** I am so thankful for all the teachers here at Palmer Rd. For your dedication to the word of God and to your students young and old. May God bless you all. Joe