



## Dear Brother Faull,

I confronted my preacher about his plagiarism. He did not stop though he said he would.

The Elders rebuked him, but after they called a Bible College who said plagiarism is an accepted practice today, they would not do anything about it.

What is your opinion?

## ANSWER:

A Bible College cannot give us permission to steal.

The sermon that I preached this morning had two illustrations that I had read in a couple of sermons. I never gave credit because I did not know who told the correct version of the story.

If I quote, I usually say, "Someone has said...". I do not always give the author because it is probably not original to him.

President Reagan used an Abraham Lincoln story that Lincoln did not give. He credited Lincoln and everyone said he was an uneducated bumpkin.

Kennedy's famous, "Ask not what your country can do for you, etc.," was not his but someone else's.

There is an old saying, "He who never reads will never be read and he who never quotes will never be quoted." That is true, but with the Internet, one should not attribute things to someone because it is probably not theirs.

Better to say like Paul, "One of your own prophets has said"...and then he quoted it. I say, "Someone has said..." and so that shows the thought was not original with me.

A famous preacher among us, with permission, preached another well-known preacher's sermons. One time he was preaching and he quoted something and said, "Wait a minute...that's not what I believe." Of course everyone laughed.

One good brother says using another man's sermons allowed him to preach another five years. Once he preached somewhere and then the author of the sermon came and preached the same sermon. They accused the original author of doing almost as good as the copycat.

That's the problem. One of these days your preacher will be caught by others and then his influence will be hurt.

Someone has said, "If you quote it word for word, that is plagiarism. If you take several men's sermons and put them together, it is research".

Most preachers do research and as long as he does not steal it and pass it off as his own, I don't get bent out of shape.

If it's from a sermon book, it was meant for others to preach. Obviously you could not call that stealing. It is still wrong to plagiarize and pass off material as if it was your own original idea.

However, remember that we often forget where we learned something. But if it is "word for word", "scripture for scripture", "illustration for illustration", and not studied out, it is deceptive.

The college is wrong.

I could name a half a dozen preachers who were fired for doing exactly what you say. Some were men who preach in very large churches. Sometimes

the other staff members will warn the man if they catch the preacher doing it again that they are going to expose his practice.

Now, I tell my students, "Use my material, but don't give me credit".

I have several enemies and they will reject truth just because the idea came from me. I tell them, "If it's worth using, then use it." I probably heard it somewhere along the line and do not even recall it. Who remembers where they heard a joke or an illustration?

**Imitation is the greatest form of flattery.**

I have a sermon called "Joe Brown's Funeral". Dozens have preached it. I am not offended but flattered and I have given wholesale permission for anyone to use it. I do not want my name mentioned every time because then people would begin calling their preacher "Faull-ites". I do not want that. So there are two sides to the story.

Many take Baptist preacher's sermons and just add water. This is especially dangerous because false doctrine can creep into the sermon and if he is not studying it for himself, then he might not be smart enough to catch the error.

In my opinion, to steal another's sermon without permission and to tell the illustrations as if they happened to you or lead people to think you originated the main idea, is stealing.

**I would discourage it.**