

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Godly Leadership

1 Timothy 3:1-7

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PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: God has given certain men the responsibility to watch over the souls of the church. These men must be properly related to both God and man and with that in mind Paul gives us a clear list of qualifications that are to be present. Much damage in churches could be avoided if each church took these to heart.

Members Meeting / Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. I introduced the subject of church leadership last week. Three points were made:
 - 1. First, there is the reality that there are recognized leaders in the Church.
 - 2. Second, there is the reality that these leaders possess authority and it is hard work.
 - 3. Third, there is the reality that how the church responds to their leaders has either a positive or negative effect on their lives.
- B. The roles of leadership in the church is not a simple thing, it is serious and therefore to be taken seriously by both the church and the leaders.
- C. Today we will consider the qualifications that an elder must not only meet, but also maintain.
 - 1. **Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7.**
 - 2. In the Ephesian situation this is important for they had lost their way.
 - 3. Realize that Paul has called out the elders already. They had tolerated false teaching and were also teaching falsely. The result was a church in disarray.
 - 4. Timothy has been given that responsibility to put the church back on solid ground and the only way that is going to happen is if the leadership is solid.

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- a. Have a godly church with ungodly leadership and the church will suffer and eventually become ungodly itself.
 - b. Have an ungodly church with godly leadership that perseveres and the church will eventually become godly.
5. Imagine the church as Timothy rises to read this letter.
- a. Eyebrows would have been raised as these qualifications were listed.
 - b. Mental checklists would be made and the realization would have been that those in leadership were found lacking.
 - c. Leadership had just been objectified for them and now they are able to know who they are to follow.
- D. He introduces this subject by speaking of desire for the office.
1. "fine" or "noble" speaks of it being praiseworthy.
 - a. You should not be embarrassed or ashamed if this is your desire. The work itself is praiseworthy, and your desire is proper and natural.
 - b. There is a tendency to believe that it is pride to desire things such as leadership, but this passage rebukes that sort of false thinking.
 - c. To lead the people of God is a good work and there are those God raises up to do so. One should never shy from expressing that desire and no one should rebuke him for doing so.
 2. It is noteworthy to see that Paul calls this a "trustworthy statement."
 - a. Used two other times 1:15; 4:9 and each of those are huge statements.
 - b. This gives you a sense of the importance God places upon the role and responsibility of elders and the rightness of that role before God and man.
 3. Having said it is a good thing to desire he then moves to the qualifications that are necessary to hold this position.
 - a. He moves from subjective to objective reality.
 - b. It is fine and right to desire this position, but that does not mean you can hold it.

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4. One final observation.
 - a. Paul is not making the point that you must “want” the position of elder before you should accept it.
 - b. He is merely stating that it is a good, noble work that you aspire to do.
 - c. Many who have never thought of being an elder may find themselves asked to consider that task.
 - d. Explain the typical process at MDF.
- E. In vss 2-3 we have the general qualifications. Then we have three others that stand out because they add consequences if not followed.

II. The Objective Qualities of an Elder.

- A. The general qualifications:
 1. Vss 2-3 there is a strong emphasis upon the broader idea of self-control. An elder is one who has learned to bring his desires, appetites and such under control. This involves his emotions, his alcohol, his relationships, and his material desires.
 2. ‘Above reproach’ is the broadest of the categories. Some even see it as the qualification, which the rest of vss 2-3 being examples of it. In Titus it is blameless (Titus 1:7).
 - a. The church must require that their leaders be of a high moral quality.
 - (1) These men are examples to everyone else.
 - (2) These men are going to be teaching everyone else.
 - b. The word in 1 Timothy means that there is no valid charge against the man. It also carries the idea of acting in a dishonorable manner.
 - (1) Again, we need caution to make certain that the charge is a valid one, not merely a perception.
 - (2) This is not sinlessness, but it is also not winking at sinful activity.
 - (a) Some things would be much harder to recover from.
 - (b) Such as immorality and adultery.

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3. There are five main views on the meaning but we will only consider the two primary ones.
 - a. The first view is only one marriage, ever.
 - (1) Very old view, extending back to at least A.D. 300-400.
 - (2) Literally the phrase is “one woman man.”
 - (3) The word “one” is emphatic; therefore, part of the argument is that Paul said that the elder can only have had one wife.
 - (4) Some observations.
 - (a) The elder, we have seen, is to be an example for all the church to follow.
 - (b) Yet in 1 Timothy 5:14 Paul commands a young widow (under 60) to remarry. Why would he do something that contradicts the example the elder is seeking to set?
 - (c) 1 Timothy 5:9 use the same phrase referring to a “one man woman.” as a widow who can be helped by the church. Why would Paul command the younger women to remarry if he knew that it would then disqualify them from ever receiving help from the Church?
 - b. The second view, which I hold to, is that the man is devoted to only one woman.
 - (1) He is a “one woman kind of man.”
 - (2) It is emphasizing the quality, or character, of the man.
 - (3) He is by quality devoted to one woman; there is a loyalty and single-minded devotion.
 - (4) This, as well as the first one, would also eliminate polygamy.
 - (5) This fits best with the meaning of the other passages I just discussed regarding the weaknesses of the first view.

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- c. What of a divorced and remarried man?
 - (1) I take a very conservative view on divorce and remarriage (SermonAudio).
 - (2) However, over time I have come to the position that a man who has divorced and remarried could hold this office, though each situation would need to be observed carefully.
- 4. Temperate/sober-minded.
 - a. Simply put, this man knows how to be serious and pursues life in a serious manner.
 - b. This refers to a man whose life is disciplined or purposeful.
 - (1) This man is not the “free spirit” we see so often on television.
 - (2) This orderliness would apply to all aspects of his life.
- 5. You must be prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
 - a. The sense is that of being thoughtful.
 - b. It is exhibiting self-restraint in decision-making.
 - (1) Denying yourself of your wants.
 - (2) Learning to say no to things.
 - (3) And when you say “yes” there is a purpose and rationale behind it rather than just because you want to do it.
- 6. The next term, ‘respectable’.
 - a. This is a lifestyle and manner that elicits admiration from others.
 - b. It is a quality of being a leader, people simply follow you. They look to you for direction or help.
 - c. An elder is often acting as an elder before ever being asked. They have a manner about them that simply draws people to them.
- 7. You must be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8).
 - (1) In the time of this letter traveling was very hazardous.

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- (2) There were many believers on the roadways.
- (3) 3 John speaks of Gaius being praised for the manner in which he opened his home to other believers.
 - (a) Most likely these were traveling teachers and missionaries and evangelists.
- (4) This is the point behind this term.
 - (a) It is not emphasizing the entertaining of strangers.
 - (b) It is emphasizing the need to care for other Christian brethren in need.
 - (c) To be cold to the needs of the people of God disqualifies any man.
- 8. You must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2).
 - a. The word “to teach” involves three characteristics.
 - (1) Skilled in teaching.
 - (2) Capable of teaching.
 - (3) Qualified to teach.
 - b. This term does not mean that you must be seminary trained.
 - c. But it does mean that you must have a good grasp of the Bible and its doctrine to the point that you can teach others.
- 9. He is not addicted to wine.
 - a. Little comment is needed here, rather obvious.
 - b. Not that he cannot drink alcohol, but that he is not captured by it.
 - c. Would be appropriate to anything, such as drugs and such.
- 10. He is a peace-loving man.
 - a. Not pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious.
 - b. The first is a physically abusive man, with the church, wife, or children.

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- c. This is a man who is not looking for a fight nor eager to do so, even verbal ones.
- d. He seeks to bring peace to a situation rather than inflame it
- 11. Free from the love of money.
 - a. Again an easy to understand passage.
 - b. This man is not about money, making money, charging money or keeping money. He is a man known for generosity for generosity's sake.
- B. Three specific areas that require greater comment:
 - 1. The household requirement (4-5).
 - a. It is not the business of a man to worry about other men's households, he is first to give himself to learning to lead and manage his own.
 - b. Only when that is accomplished and modeled will he then be allowed to expand his influence into the household of God.
 - c. Children and wives will never make an elder but they can destroy one.
 - d. This requirement tells us that for the elder there is really no private life, for what and how you conduct yourself in private determines the ministry you can have in the public.
 - e. Accepting the responsibility as an elder places unique stresses upon the home, bringing greater scrutiny upon your family, for you are an example on how a household of a godly Christian man is to look like.
 - f. Present middle participle of "manage" indicates a consistency and initiative on the part of the man.
 - (1) He is not afraid to make a stand and give clear direction, support and care for his home.
 - (2) He is financially supportive of the home. He is not relying on others to support him and to provide the essentials to his family.

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- (3) He is not afraid to make decisions.
- (4) His decisions reflect a biblically filled mind.
- (5) It is a man who is positively engaged with his household and its life and activity.
- g. The family is not a hindrance, but rather his ministry ground—in fact ministry starts with them before it moves outward.
- h. Having children in submission is key.
 - (1) Submission is more than mere obedience. Children are commanded to obey their parents.
 - (2) A man's goal is to have them in submission to his headship. It is a willing acceptance of the father's authority in their lives.
 - (3) If they are not in submission to him, there is no reason to believe that the church will submit to him, for the church is far harder to manage and shepherd.
 - (4) Titus 1:6 gives the goal, children who are faithful (not necessarily Christians) who are not given to rebellious living, showing no self-control.
- i. How he manages his household is to be dignified.
 - (1) NIV wrongly applies this to the children (his children obey him with proper respect).
 - (2) This tells us that just as he is to manage his household so that his children exercise self-control, so he is to manage his household with self-control.
 - (3) A man must first learn to control himself if he is ever to control his children.
- j. How a man handles his household becomes the template on how he handles the church.
- k. Paul desires no hypocrisy nor does he desire the man to oversee the church to his family's harm. It reflects the biblical truth that what you do in private will eventually come out in public.

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2. Not a new convert requirement (6).
 - a. Any type of leadership is a hard place for a new believer. But shepherding the flock of God is never a place for the new convert.
 - b. Titus 1:9 helps us by saying that the elder must be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."
 - (1) The man must KNOW the Word, HOLD to the Word, be able to TEACH/EXHORT with the Word, and REFUTE with the Word.
 - (2) In other words, he is to biblically saturated.
 - (3) A new believer simply does not have that biblical framework with which to think. This is something that takes time. Even after you have the theology and bible knowledge it does not mean that you have the wisdom.

Here is a bit of how my own mind operates. When I hear something I immediately seek to draw out biblical passages that would attach themselves to it. Then my mind backs away and 'walks around' to a different side of the issue and reconsiders it again. I keep doing that until I can't see any other side. I separate out biblical commands from the lesser binding principles. Then I ask how do I apply these to the situation, how do I speak wisdom rather than simple knowledge. I also ask if this is something I need to say now, or later. Sometimes I do this well, and sometimes, not so much. But one thing I can say is that this takes time to develop. This is one of the reasons I can ask a million questions, even though I know it can make people uncomfortable.

- c. Immature believers have not had the time nor life experiences to deal with these in their own life, much less others.
- d. The danger that comes with immaturity as an elder is that of conceit.
 - (1) The challenge is to understand what is meant by this. Obviously it is pride, but in what sense?
 - (2) The term is only used three times in the bible, all by Paul and all in this letter and 2 Timothy (6:4; 2 Timothy 3:4).

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- (3) The elder does not exist to display his talents and skills. He is not to be driving his own agenda for his own purposes. You cannot be a free spirit like those in 6:4, '... Having a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words. . . .' You don't get to 'color outside the lines' of orthodoxy. You stay smack dab in the middle. But conceit encourages 'exploring the edges'.
 - (4) It is probable that the type of conceit is that type of fascination with having authority. Power or influence in immature hands is seldom a good thing.
 - (5) To oversee the church rightly requires humility and an awareness again that you are dealing with people Jesus died for, not you.
- e. Notice also that Paul's concern here is not only for the church's well-being, but also the young believer.
- (1) To be placed into a situation that can encourage pride is potentially devastating to him. He could ruin his reputation forever within the church.
 - (2) Just as God dealt strongly with the arrogance of Satan in his lies, so too with anyone who arrogantly believes they can delude the church of God.
3. Good reputation outside the church requirement (7).
- a. This is a good closing point and connects all the way back to vs 2 and being above reproach.
 - b. What is the reputation that you have among the unbelieving world is the question.
 - c. Just as how a man manages his household defines his fitness for this office, so too how he manages his relationships with the non-Christian will define that fitness.
 - (1) Does he live a life that is contradictory to that within the church?
 - (2) How do the neighbors see him? How do his creditors, his employer or employees?

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- (3) It is amazing how one's language and standards can be radically different in one context compared to the church.
 - (a) If I came and visited you at the workplace and we conversed over various issues and you conducted yourself with those around you with me present, would the people see and hear a different person?
- d. How one is viewed by those outside the church is important, yet in our culture it is often diminished in our minds. This is due to the contradictory reality that we find in our world.
 - (1) The business world really doesn't care if you are a cheating, hard drinking man as long as you perform the tasks necessary for their profit.
 - (2) Our world of politics are replete with examples of moral failures and lies of every stripe, but the person gets voted into office again and again because he stands for certain things we value.
 - (3) Remember during the Clinton/Lewinsky affair how the media created the storyline that private actions should not be considered by the people.
- e. The reality is that Satan is truly the lion who prowls about seeking whom he might devour (1 Peter 5:8).
 - (1) He never seeks the good of anyone and only desires to drag as many image-bearers into eternal destruction as possible.
 - (2) And a simple way to bring disorder and pain into a church is to destroy an elder.
 - (3) When a man does not guard his reputation outside the church Satan only has to merely wait until he is brought into disgrace.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Bottom line, the office of elder has no off limits regarding the man who fills it. Your life, private and public, is subject to scrutiny and it is to be maintained in an above reproach manner.

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- B. Being an elder is a privilege but it is a hard privilege. It is not something you rise up to and then simply have for life.
- C. These are the men who are to watch your soul and they need to be men who you want to give watch over your soul.
- D. Pray for your elders.

Small Group Questions

- In this sermon, what stood out to you as you heard it? Why?
- Why is there only one skill related qualification (able to teach) while the rest are character related? Why did Paul choose that one skill?
- How do we distinguish between the normal challenges in leading any home and one where the man is not managing it well?