

Elder Qualification:

(1 Timothy 3 & Titus 1)

Scripture:

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Introduction:

Several weeks ago I put this classified add on the power point that said "Elders needed". In recent sermons we have listened as God has given the job description for an elder, in other words God says if your going to work for me as an elder here are the things I will expect you to be doing.

Today we are going to listen in as God completes his own classified add with the qualification for an elder. You see, God will expect both experience and training for a man to serve as elder. It won't be enough that the man is likable or friendly although these things are very important.

Special Note:

Before we get started looking at the list of qualifications there is something we need to keep in mind. You have heard and rightfully so that these qualifications that we will be going over today, which are found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 paints a picture of a man. I most defiantly agree that collectively they are a representation of a godly character.

Some, over the years, have made claim that this is not a list of qualification but merely a list of qualities that should closely represent an elder of the church.

This is not the case. 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7 both use the word "MUST" in regard to their lists. This word "Must" in the greek is word "dei" meaning necessary & binding

TS So I simply want to state that these two lists represent both qualities and binding qualification of any man who would be called out among us to serve the congregation as an elder. Some congregations have made the mistake of choosing the best of what is available instead of strick adherence to God's word. Here in the presence of God I ask you when you fill out this recommendation form to do so with all integrity of heart before God.

I. First, lets look at the list in 1 Timothy 3:2-7

1 Timothy 3:2 “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,”

A. V:2 Above reproach

-The best word here seems to be Blameless

-Not deserving blame

-Not deserving harsh criticism

1. Here it is the Greek word means...One who has nothing which an adversary could seize upon with which to base a charge.
2. In other words, a man whose character is unimpeachable, blameless
-Doesn't mean sinless Rom. 3:23
3. And certainly not a man about whom a whole galaxy of uncomplimentary rumors have been circulated.
*Generally where there is smoke there might be a little fire.
4. Here it is God's intention that the elder be known for his integrity and pure life.

*Blameless here may very well be the umbrella under which we examine the rest of the qualification. Some qualification may be interpreted in different ways, but congregationally will have to be agreed upon so as to know whether the congregation will follow a mans leadership.

B. V:2 Husband of One wife

1. I believe the idea here is a “One Woman Man”

2. First, God requires elders to be married men

*It is not that an unmarried man can't be spiritual on this level, but that a wife adds something to the equation here that God demands.

*My wife can help me see things in my life that no-one else can because of our extreme closeness. She knows my life intimately and I can't possibly hide anything from her. She is there every minute helping me along my path toward God.

*God knows this is the case and he wants married men

*In other words, not a bachelor

3. Certainly not a polygamist, that is with a number of wives

4. The Greek word “one” here means “one or first”
- *With this in mind what are the possibilities:
 1. Is this talking about a man married only once in his whole life?
 2. Will this include a man whose first wife has died and he is now remarried?
 3. What about a man with a scriptural divorce, who presently has only one wife scripturally?
 - *These questions are complicated..... but real.
 - Each of us individually will have to answer these
 - *And depending on whose names are put forth to be considered we as a congregation will have to determine where we come down on this issue together.
5. I can't say with all certainty how this is to be understood.

*But, scripturally I think there are some considerations.

- a. I can say if a man has had a divorce in his past which was questionable to any degree that this matter would be moved up to the “Above Reproach” category and be settled there.
- b. I can also say that divorce can and does often times cause a lasting bitterness of heart that many times slants a persons judgments .

*Although some men can and do rise above this.

- c. The Apostle Paul could have said here:
 - An elder simply needs to be married, .i.e. The husband of a wife.
- *But Paul chose to say the Husband of One Wife.
- *This seems to be exclusionary of something.

- C. V:2 Temperate & Prudent
- Self controlled
 - Wisely cautious
 - Sound in mind
 - Moderate in opinion and passion
- D. V:2 Respectable
- Of Good behavior
 - Orderly
 - Sensible
- E. V:2 Hospitable
- Fond of guests
- F. V:2 Able to teach (instructive)

1 Timothy 3:3 “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.”

- A. Not given to wine
 - Not staying near
- B. Not a striker
 - Smiter
 - Quarrelsome
 - Not excessively inclined to fight or be quarrelsome
- C. Patient
 - Mild
 - Gentle
- D. Not a brawler
 - Peaceful not contentious
- E. Not covetous
 - Free from the love of money
 - Not greedy

1 Timothy 3:4 “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity”

- A. Manages his own house well
- B. Kids are in subjection
- C. Has his families respect
 - 5. (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

1 Timothy 3:6 “and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.”

- A. Not a novice...newly planted

1 Timothy 3:7 “And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

- A. Has a good reputation with outsiders

II. Titus 1:5-9 Looking only at the additions to Timothy’s list

Titus 1:5-6 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.”

- A. Here it is added “having children who believe.”

- B. There are really **two** realistic ways to look at this:
1. First this Greek word Pistos primarily meaning trustworthy
 - This seems to fit in the immediate context with the continuation of the phrase “not accused of dissipation or rebellion.”
 - This also parallels 1 Timothy 3:4-5 “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),
 2. Then second, Pistos can mean believing and this would certainly also seem to be a quite legitimate thought.
 - * A good question here might be, Is the basic idea in the text more about the elders leadership abilities or the child’s faith?

Titus 1:7 “For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

- A. God’s steward
 - Hugo McCord translates this God’s trustee
 - Being an elder is a trust from God and the congregation
- B. Not self-willed
 - Self pleasing or arrogant
 - An elder understands it is all about God
- C. Not quick tempered
 - Not easily provoked to anger
 - God doesn’t want a lose cannon who wears his feelings on his sleeve as an elder.
 - Because as an elder a man must be able to exercise great patients.
- D. Not fond of sordid gain
 - Some folks don’t care how they get ahead, but an elder refuses to engage in any gain that does not have the best for both parties in mind.
 - God doesn’t want a man as an elder who will win at all cost, even if you have to lose

Titus 1:8 “but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,”

- A. Loves what is good
 - Promoter of virtue
- B. Sensible
 - Sound in mind
- C. Upright
 - Innocent in character
- D. Holy
 - Letting God shine through them

Titus 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

A. Holds to the truth

-To exhort or encourage

-Or refute contradiction

*Not easily tossed about by every wind of doctrine

Conclusion:

-Pray over the process.

-That God would work in our hearts and give us direction

-That God would prepare the heart of any man who would serve him as an elder.

-And that God would be glorified by our efforts as His children

-This morning we want to extend the invitation of Christ to all. If you have not accepted the saving sacrifice of Jesus through baptism as we are commanded to in Acts 2:38 and a host of other scriptures, the baptistery is warm and the call of God is in the air. I pray that you will listen to your own heart as we sing the song of invitation.