

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 4.16.2023

## QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP - PART 9

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. **2** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **3** not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. **4** He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, **5** for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? **6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. **7** Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

### II. A NOBLE ASPIRATION

#### OVERSEER/ELDER/PASTOR

- *"The saying is trustworthy..."* - this is the second of five trustworthy sayings in the Pastorals.
- Paul is highlighting something important.
- *"If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."*
- This statement helps us understand how leaders in the church are selected.
  
- What is the office of overseer.?
- The use of the word "office" denotes function. It is a position with a certain function and set of tasks and responsibility.
- An overseer gives oversight; they watch over something; they supervise and direct.
- In this case the overseer watches over the local church.
- Overseer is the Greek word, "episkopē" (ἐπισκοπή) and means position, assignment, supervision.
- It is where we get our English word "bishop."
- A synonymous term for overseer is the Greek word, "presbyteros (πρεσβύτερος)" and it means 'elder.'
- "Presbyteros" is the word Paul uses in writing to Titus to "appoint elders in every town as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).
- What's the difference in the terms?
- "Presbyteros", which we translate as elder, is of Jewish origin. The elders were those who ruled families, clans, and communities. In Exodus 24 we have 70 elders appointed to serve alongside Moses. Every synagogue had elders. It is a term that speaks of leadership or seniority.
- "Episkopē", which we translate as overseer, is a term of Greek origin and best defines the superintending function and nature of the elder's ministry.
- You can say the title or position is elder and his function or role is overseeing.
- We'll also throw in the term pastor as elder/overseer/pastor are used synonymously.
- Acts 20 is an example of this. Paul sends for the elders of the Ephesian Church but when he addresses them he calls them overseers/bishops (Acts 20:17, 28).
- Peter also exhorts the elders in his letter calling them to shepherd (pastor) the flock of God, exercising oversight. In other words, "be bishops over the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:1-2)
- Titus 1, Paul gives instructions for appointing elders and then proceeds to call them overseers.
- These terms are synonymous.
  
- We can conclude that God intended for his church to have elders/overseers/pastors.
- Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

#### HOW DOES ONE BECOME AN OVERSEER/ELDER

- The first step is personal aspiration and desire.

- Aspire means “to stretch oneself out”. It means to have one’s heart set on becoming an elder; to passionately desire it.
  - No one should be appointed to the office of overseer if they don’t want to do it.
  - Paul is not talking about selfish and sinful ambition. That would be a disqualifying motivation.
  - Peter writes exhorting the elders to exercise their oversight, “not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you ” (1 Peter 5:1-2).
  - No one should be put into this office of overseer just because there is a need in the church or because a man is influential, a big giver or a successful businessman.
- Why does Paul call this a noble task? Noble means good, beautiful, having positive qualities.
  - He calls it noble because it is! It involves the care and protection and nurturing of God’s people.
- The second step is the Holy Spirit’s calling upon a man to the office of Elder. Logically, it must precede the first step of inner aspiration and desire.
  - It is the Holy Spirit who puts it on a man’s heart, who motivates him to desire the noble task.
  - Act 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
- The third step is the external call, which involves the examination of the individual who both aspires to the noble task and senses the inward call of the Spirit.
  - The qualities have to be recognized in the individual by the congregation.
  - This is why it is important that elders come from within the body of believers.
  - Peter writes, “So I exhort the elders among you,..” (1 Peter 5:1)
  - A prospective elder must come from among the sheep.
  - Before a man is appointed to the role of elder, he has already been proving himself by leading, teaching, and bearing responsibility in the church.
- Take note of Paul’s use of the male pronoun. Nine times he uses ‘he/his’, and refers to him as being the ‘husband of one wife.’ He is talking about a man.
  - Paul definitively states that the office of elder/overseer/pastor is for qualified men only.

### III. A NECESSARY EXAMINATION

- I want you to clearly see Scripture’s teaching that character matters.
  - Everything you see in the list is primarily issues of moral and spiritual character.
  - The NT apostolic teaching is quite emphatic that only morally and spiritually qualified men can serve as elders.
  - Take note that these qualifications are ones that every Christian should want to have others recognize in their own lives.
  - They reflect what should be the character of every Christian.
- “Therefore an overseer MUST BE...”
  - These are mandatory, non-negotiable. He must be these things. They are not optional. A failure in any of these areas disqualifies a man from eldership.
- We’ll break them down into four categories.
  - Relation to God
  - Relation to Self
  - Relation to Family
  - Relation to Others

#### 1. RELATION TO GOD

- **Above reproach** - As far as what can be observed in the man’s conduct, no one can bring a substantiated charge against him in respect to anything in the following list.
  - Paul writes to Titus that an overseer must be “upright, holy...a lover of good.” (Titus 1:8)
  - As far as his reputation is concerned, he is walking in holiness before the Lord and others.
  - There is nothing in his public life that brings shame and disgrace upon the church or the gospel.
- **Not a new convert** - this is about spiritual maturity.
  - The Greek word for ‘new convert’ means “newly planted.”
  - You do not want someone who is newly converted, still young in the faith, who hasn’t been tested or gone through trials, hasn’t progressed much in sanctification, to be put in the position of giving spiritual oversight of God’s people.
  - The mature person has weathered the storms of life and has born spiritual fruit. They have overcome adversity, their faith has

been tested and tried.

- Wisdom dictates that we should not appoint elders hastily.
- Paul gives a good reason why you should not appoint a recent convert, they can become puffed up with pride.

- **Able to teach** - this is the only task that is mentioned in the list.
- This doesn't mean that every elder will have the responsibility of the pulpit preaching ministry but every elder must know the Word, how to apply it, and how to teach others to do the same.
- The elder must love God's Word.
- Titus 1:9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.
- Not only must he be able to communicate and teach God's Word, he must defend the faith when necessary against its perversions by false teachers.

## 2. RELATION TO SELF

- We can list all of these qualifications as self-mastery.
- **Sober-minded** - he is 'clear-headed'; he is able to think soberly about spiritual and moral issues.
- **Self-controlled** - he does not act according to his urges, he is not mastered by his passions, he is disciplined (Titus 1:8).
- **Not a drunkard** - Scripture warns against drunkenness. If you like strong drink too much and get drunk you are unfit for eldership.
- **Not a lover of money** - this goes to the heart of the elder's attitude toward money.
- Paul closes his letter to Timothy with this warning that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils (1 Tim. 6:9-10).
- To Titus he writes that the overseer must not be "greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7).
- Peter exhorts the elders to not be in this for "shameful gain" (1 Pet 5:2).
- Towards the end of this letter Paul writes how elders who teach will be supported financially by the church (1 Tim. 5:17-18).
- Paul talk about this often in his letters, how he worked hard so as not to be a financial burden on the churches.
- Acts 20:33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me.
- You can't be in this for the money. If you love money, you can't be an elder.
- He also must be generous. They give faithfully to the church, they are generous with their resources and with their time, they are sacrificial givers.

## 3. RELATION TO FAMILY

- **The husband of one wife** - literally, a one-woman man.
- An elder is faithful to his spouse, he only has eyes for her. If he is faithful in his covenant with his wife, he will be faithful to the Lord and his church.
- **He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive** - If someone's home life is in chaos and disorder, if they can't manage the home, which is a little church, how can they manage God's church?
- Every man is a pastor in his own home and his family is his little flock.
- Every man is called to shepherd his family and give oversight to those under his authority, his wife and children.
- If you fail there, you are disqualified from leading in God's household.
- The submission of children is with all dignity and respectability - that means the man is not a tyrant in his home. His children view him as a loving and caring father.
- While a child is under the father's accountability and responsibility, they must confess the truth (Titus 1:6), be orderly and obedient, and submit to their father.
- Men take care of the home front before you want to work in and on the church!

## 4. RELATION TO OTHERS

- **Respectable** - He is respected inside the home, the church, and by outsiders. He has a well-behaved and well-ordered life that people take notice of.
- **Hospitable** - literally means, "love for strangers." An elder's home is open and people should feel welcome there. An elder is to be welcoming, warm, and friendly to all.
- **Not violent** - He cannot be quick-tempered (Titus 1:7).
- **Not quarrelsome** - The false teachers were characterized as being contentious, stirring up strife, discord and controversies. Elders cannot be people who always want to pick a fight.
- **He must be gentle** - he doesn't get drawn into petty quarrels, doesn't get drawn into fruitless arguments and controversies, doesn't resort to shouting and name-calling.
- Gentleness is his style. Jesus said that he is "gentle and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29). An elder is to be like Jesus.
- 2 Tim. 2:24-25a And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness.

- There is no place for a domineering, bullying, or verbally abusive and harsh elder.
- **He must be well thought of by outsiders** - he must bear a good witness for Christ among the unbelieving world. He must have a good reputation with outsiders.
- A good reputation is to be guarded so that the person does not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.
- Paul mentions the devil. This is a reminder of the devil's work to try to discredit ministers of the gospel in order to bring reproach upon the gospel.
- Pray for your pastors. The spiritual warfare is intense.

## CONCLUSION

- Why all these character qualifications? Because the character is the job description of the elder.
- There has to be consistency of character in all arenas; home, church, and his relation with outsiders.
- He must be above reproach in all of these areas.
- Now, no one should walk away from this message today thinking, *"These things are only for those who want to be an elder."*
- These are the character qualities that should be formed in each one of us as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.
- These lists and qualifications can seem overwhelming, and they are.
- No one can fulfill these qualifications perfectly.
- Thankfully, there is One who has fulfilled them perfectly.
- Jesus is the Head of his Church.
- He obtained her with his own blood.
- Because there are human leaders who serve the church, they will fall short.
- Christ is the Suffering Servant, who shed his blood for his church, who died for her and for her officers, that their sins would be forgiven.
- And wherever we are weak and fall short, we can avail ourselves of the grace extended by our Savior.
- Peter calls Christ the Chief Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).
- He is the one Bishop over all of His Church.
- He fulfills all of these offices perfectly and completely.
- And he has designed his church to have these offices and he gives the grace to any man who faithfully heeds this trustworthy saying, "if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."
- May the Lord continue to raise up faithful men and women at Sent Church for his glory.

## APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?