

Titus, pt.2, 10.21.2008

Titus 1.5-9

The Qualifications of an Elder

Intro.

1. What qualities of a good leader? Survey done by Kingdom Kids.
2. Review setting, recipient, purpose & v.5
 - a. “so you could complete our work there” (NLT); “straighten out what was left unfinished” (NIV). Phrase only here in NT. Titus was to continue the work that was started there. Otherwise, it would be like giving birth to a baby and leaving it on someone’s doorstep. If he didn’t do this, false teachers, divisive individuals, and the worldly culture would undermine the work among this spiritually young move of God. Titus was to take care of the unfinished tasks so the work could prosper. The biggest task was to appoint elders.
3. The different qualification list – 1 Tim.3.1-7. There are many similarities but some key distinctions
4. Note the focus of the list – personal character & doctrinal soundness. It’s not on oratory ability or leadership skills or anointing or personality traits. It’s entirely focused on spiritual maturity/character. Is this person sound in life & truth? **THESE ARE MUSTS!**

The word “Elder” (v.5)

1. “Elder” – (presbuteros) lit means “aged man”, and is a carry over from the synagogue leadership. In the NT, it refers to a church leader. The word “elder” refers to his spiritual maturity, not age.
 - a. Elder is used interchangeably with overseer/bishop & pastor – Acts 20.17, 28
 - b. There wasn’t a hierarchy of leadership in the NT church – Apostles, pastors/overseers/elders, deacons
2. “overseer” (translated “elder” in NLT), v.7 – also bishop (episkopos). This refers to his leading & authority role in the church.

3. "Shepherd", Acts 20.17, 28 – pastor. The relationship the elder has with his flock. This refers to his shepherding & feeding of the flock.
4. Elders/pastors/overseers are spiritually strong & stable people.
5. This doesn't happen over night. You can be instantly saved, healed & delivered, but you aren't instantly mature. Just because a child can quote great quantities of Scripture doesn't mean he's mature in the Lord.

TS – While many would like to go into the pastorate, not all are qualified. There are restrictions placed around those who would strive to be an elder. Paul says in 1 Tim.3.1, that if a person desires to be an elder he desires an honorable position. Then he lists the qualifications necessary to be one. Just b/c a person can teach and carries a wonderful anointing upon his life doesn't qualify him for the position of an elder/pastor in a church. Just b/c a person wants to start a church and has a lot of sincerity and fire for God doesn't mean they are qualified. You can't start up a church like starting up a business. If a person wants to lead a group of people they must be qualified.

An elder must reflect spiritual maturity in his home life (v.6)

1. "blameless life" in both v.6 & 7. The overall qualification. With increased responsibility comes increased accountability & visibility. The church leader is not only accountable to God, but to the church he serves. The conduct of the pastor must clearly reflect the gospel he believes and teaches. He must be living out his faith in integrity before his family, flock & community. There can't be any duplicity.
 - a. Lit. "You can't bring a charge against"; having no blot on his life.
 - b. This isn't sinless perfection, but that there's no sinful defect that could call into question his leadership and the truthfulness of the gospel.
 - c. Every man will fail at some of these qualifications on occasion, but is this the rule of his life? Is this a pattern? Do you see these things with regularity?

2. The reason the home first is b/c true faith is lived, modeled and multiplied there. If true faith isn't seen in the elder's house then how can it be manifested in God's house.
3. The homelife must reflect this blamelessness. He must be lit. "a one woman man"
 - a. This obviously eliminates polygamists, & those involved in adulterous relationships.
 - b. What about men who have been divorced? Is he disqualifying every man who has been divorced? Some see this as saying, "one woman at a time" and other see this as completely disqualifying a person who has divorced. He doesn't explain.
 - c. But in other places of his writing, he allows for people to remarry if their spouse has died. Therefore, he's not saying you are disqualified if you remarried after your spouse died. This still doesn't answer the divorce question.
 - d. Personally, he seems to be talking about the current reality. Is he devoted to his wife alone & not a womanizer? If a person is disqualified b/c of the past then we must use that same interpretation on the other qualifications. IOW, if the person used to be violent or arrogant or easily angered then he too is disqualified even if it was 20 years ago.
 - e. B/c of the uncertainty of the text, it must be left up to the church and elder candidate to decide about this matter.
4. An elder must have children who are under control (v.6)
 - a. The children must be believers. If they aren't believers, it's an indicator that he hasn't passed his faith along to them. If he hasn't passed it along to them, then how can he lead a church.
 - i. *This is critical for all of us. Our first call is to evangelize our own kids. They ought to see by our lives that Jesus makes the difference.
 - b. "a reputation for being wild or rebellious" – language very similar to the Prodigal son in Luke 15. They must not guilty of squandering their lives and living in rebellion to parental authority. For

- c. If a man can't control his kids, then how can he govern the church?
- d. How long are elders responsible for their kids? It seems as long as the children are in his household or are dependants.
- e. I have seen pastors & churches make exceptions for the pastor's rebellious kids. They loved the pastor so much, that they didn't hold to this standard.

5. ss

An elder must reflect spiritual maturity in his personal life (v.7-8)

1. 5 Negative character flaws an elder must avoid

- a. arrogant – it's the word in the Gk that we get "hedonism" meaning "self willed or refusing to listen to others." He's not open to the opinion of others. He builds the world around himself. He should be sensitive to the viewpoints of others and eager to do God's will rather than trying to promote solely his opinion & will.
- b. Quick-tempered: Pastors are presented with all kinds of situations & personalities. He can't be easily ruffled. It doesn't mean he can't be angry, b/c at times that is the appropriate response, esp in the face of injustice. It means he shouldn't have a short fuse. This is related to the preceding. A person who is always pushing to get their way is often an explosive personality. A pastor who is easily angered often complicates problems through his reactive attitude. Patience, kindness & self-control are the virtues to be embraced.
- c. No a heavy drinker: It doesn't prohibit drinking, but excessive drinking. A pastor cannot be under the control of the spirits rather he must be under the control of the Spirit.
- d. Violent: lit "a striker". One who is quick with his fists or prone to violence. This is a person totally out of control. There seems to be a natural connection betw this characteristic & "a heavy drinker."

- e. Dishonest with money: A person who took advantage of his position and people to embezzle funds. It might also refer to false teachers who saw teaching as a way to make money, ie, “give the people what they want.”
 - i. 1 Tim.3.3 says pastors must not love money. Making money & having money isn’t evil, but it’s the love of money that causes all kinds of problems.

2. 6 Positive qualities he must have

- a. He must enjoy having guests in his home: lit “a lover of strangers” . It’s the idea that he cares about the welfare of others. During this day, it was critical that he be ready at a moments notice to take in traveling or fleeing believers. Due to persecution of families and communities, believers were often faced with being forced to leave their homes and/or communities. The elder needed to be ready to take them in for a time.
- b. He must love what is good: He is a lover of good people and good things. He doesn’t fill his life with filth and impurity; sensuality & violence. He’s careful what he watches & reads. Phil4.8: whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, if there is anything excellent and if anything worthy of praise, think on these things.”
- c. he must live wisely: “sensible”. He has soundness of mind. He is sober minded. He isn’t swayed by extremes of emotions. He doesn’t give into impulses that would be sinful or harmful. He is level headed.
- d. Just: Upright. His behavior corresponds to God’s standards of what is right in all dealings of life, esp with people. His life conforms to the standards of Scripture.
- e. Devout: Holy, pleasing to God. Rare word – unpolluted. He is separate from sin and evil behavior. He doesn’t carouse with sinners in their sin.
- f. Disciplined life: They can keep themselves under restraint. It refers to the strength needed to hold the passions in restraint. It’s a life under the control of the HS.

- g. Conclusion: These traits don't develop in a short time but over a long growing season. Too often, we are eager to let a person loose as a pastor/leader in a church b/c we see their enthusiasm or feel their anointing, but we must always weigh their character FIRST!

An elder must reflect spiritual maturity in his doctrine (v.9)

1. He must have a strong belief in the Word of God
 - a. He must be firmly convinced in the trustworthiness of God's Word.
 - b. "He must hold fast & sure" to it during the winds of difficulties and unbelief.
 - c. Any pastor who questions the trustworthiness of God's Word and its accuracy doesn't deserve to pastor a church. He has disqualified himself. You can question the meaning of the Word and not have all the answers to the Word, but to say it's inaccurate and unreliable is to disqualify yourself from pastoral ministry.
2. B/c of the elder's strong belief in the trustworthiness of Scripture, He must encourage others with wholesome teaching and refute those who oppose him.
 - a. Encourage with wholesome teaching - with all the false teaching in Paul's day and our day, it is encouraging hearing wholesome teaching. Sound doctrine stabilizes the believer.
 - i. Listening to Robert Morris & Lester Roloff; reading David Wilkerson & Mike Bickles messages.
 - ii. Teaching truth is its own antidote to falsehood.
 - b. Show those who oppose him where they are wrong: This is educational in nature. It's not hostile, but redemptive. To point out a person's false belief with the hope of bringing them into truth.
 - i. We must be able to discern between falsehood and difference of opinion/interpretation. Pastors aren't called to address every area of doctrinal disagreement,

but only when its clearly in opposition to the trustworthy message of the gospel. We can disagree over the security of the believer and that's okay. But,

- ii. Any ministry designed to call into question the teaching of other ministries w/o the intention or the heart of redemption is unhealthy and unbiblical. Any person or movement who pretends to have or know all the truth is only deluding themselves and their followers.
- iii. The elder is to hold onto the trustworthy message and in a spirit of love confront false teachers with the sincere desire of seeing them turn to Christ.

C. SS