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**Qualifications Of The Elder**

In this series we are exegeting all the NT passages related to church leadership. We've already covered the formation of the diaconate in Acts 6 and the formation of the elderate in Acts 11 and 14. Those are the two basic offices in the biblical form of church government which is Presbyterian or Elder, sometimes called Federal where the elders rule over the spiritual matters and they delegate physical matters, matters of the building, if you have one, financial distributions, visitation of the sick and the like, to the deacons so that the elders can be freed up to devote their time to spiritual matters, namely prayer and teaching of the word. As the apostles led the early church they recognized that with the expansion of the church they couldn't manage every little detail and so they wisely formed these two offices; the diaconate and the elderate which become the norm and standard for the Church when the apostles passed from the scene.

Now we are going to turn from the formation of these two offices to the qualifications of the men who serve in these two offices. There are two passages, one in 1 Timothy 3 and the other in Titus 1 that give a sketch of what an elder must be and there is one passage also in 1 Tim 3 that sketches what a deacon must be. We'll look at the elder qualifications in 1 Tim 3 tonight. I said we would finish Acts 20 but I want to keep these lessons compact and together, not all broken up. If you want the rest of the exegesis for Acts 20 it's in last week's text lesson and it's available on the internet. If you don't have the internet we can make copies available. The important principles are on the two handouts you just received.

Alright, tonight let's turn to 1 Timothy to delve into the qualifications. 1 Timothy was written by Paul near the end of his life to Timothy, his younger protégé. Timothy had come to Christ years before during Paul and Barnabas'

1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey in south Galatia. It's at that point that young Timothy believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved. When Paul and Silas decided to return to south Galatia to check up on and strengthen these churches on the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey Paul discovered this disciple and wanted to take him along for the remainder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey to train him. The sense I get from the NT is that Paul noticed in Timothy a tremendous capacity. And so Paul's intention from the start was to train Timothy in pastoral leadership. 1 and 2 Timothy are often called the pastorals because they're written from Paul to Timothy giving practical application for pastoring the church. The church Timothy was involved with at the time was Ephesus. So again we're at Ephesus. Ephesus was a major training ground and logically so. It was a major city on the Aegean Sea, it had a large seaport with lots of visitors and Paul spent 2 ½ years there preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God. So the word of God made great inroads at Ephesus and it became an early training center for Christianity.

Now years later Timothy is there and Paul writes him this letter. And Paul is charging him with how the various groups in the Church should conduct themselves in the household of God. Notice 1 Tim 3:15. Paul wants to come, Paul is anxious to come but, verse 15, "...in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." So this tells us the purpose in Paul's writing. And it's a sobering purpose. The church is the household of God. It's God's dwelling place. Not a physical building, it's not saying God dwells in these four walls. It's saying God dwells in a people group called the church. And since He dwells in this people group called the church then that people group ought to conduct themselves differently than the rest of the world. The world is the household of Satan and he runs his house according to a certain pattern. But the church is the household of God and He runs His house according to a certain pattern. That pattern for how we ought to conduct ourselves, particularly when we gather as a local church, is laid out in 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy is giving us the norm and standard for what the church operational looks like. Why do we need this pattern sketched for us? Because the transitional period of the church traced in the Book of Acts was coming to a close and so it was at this time that they needed the norms and standards written down for all time. So Paul is sketching how the church should function from this time forward. How the

various groups in the church, the men, the women and the leadership should operate. What roles these various groups should fill. And since Paul may not be around any time soon to teach these things to them personally he writes them

So we have a revelation of how we ought to conduct ourselves as the household of God. And it is very serious that we conduct ourselves according to this pattern because if we don't and we operate according to the pattern of the world then we lose our testimony to the world. So first we have the men and the women. The men in 1 Tim 2:1-8 are to lead the church in worship and they are to lead with prayer. Prayer is put first, not necessarily in the order in which we start the formal church service, but it should take a priority in church life and it should be led by men, 1 Tim 2:8 is very clearly designating the men as the one's who lead the church's prayer life. Then we have the women in 1 Tim 2:9-15 and their role is not to lead but to follow the men and to live a life of godliness in all quietness and humility of spirit, attending to the priorities of motherhood. These are general instructions for church conduct. So chapter 2, the men and the women make up the congregation.

Then we have in 1 Tim 3 the leadership, what is their function and how should they conduct themselves? Answer, the elders are to conduct themselves in terms of 1 Tim 3:1-7 and the deacons are to conduct themselves in terms of 1 Tim 3:8-13. The elders and deacons together make up the leadership of the church, which is the household of God.

Tonight we're going to look at the elders in 1 Tim 3:1-7. In verse 1, **It is a trustworthy statement**, so here Paul is saying this is well-known what I'm about to tell you.<sup>1</sup> It was well-known because why? Because Paul had appointed elders in every city he founded churches (Acts 14:23). The elderate had already been formed. It started in Jerusalem as the apostles took the witness out into Judea and Samaria (Acts 11:30) and it continued as Paul took the witness to the remotest parts of the earth (Acts 14:23). The elderate was formed by the apostles who based the model, in part at least, on the synagogue eldership that had begun during the Babylonian captivity. So the saying which follows was well-known:

**if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.** The first point is that it is **the office of overseer**. Office is not in the original text but it's implied that indeed Paul is talking about an office. And we've seen the word **overseer** before. Hold your place here and go back to Acts 20:28. Overseer is the Greek word *episkopos*, it means what it says, to over see, to over look and it's their duty, it's their function, to oversee every aspect of the local church. The other word for elder is also in Acts 20, verse 17 and its *presbuteros*, and this word has to do with spiritual maturity of the man in the office. They're one and the same man. Acts 20 proves that you don't have a group of bishops that stand over the elders in the local church like Ignatius said in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Acts 20:17 and Acts 20:28 use the two different words of the same group of men, thus the elders and bishops or overseers are the same group of men. But what we're interested in now is the word overseers in verse 28, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." And I want you to take note of the fact that who made them overseers? This should strike you. I thought elders appointed other elders? But here it says the Holy Spirit made you elders. We're going to come back to that in a moment and put some things together. So hold on to that idea and turn back to 1 Tim 3:1.

The first point is that the office of *episkopos* here describes the function and these are the same group known as *presbuteros*, which describes the level of spiritual maturity. The second point in verse 1 is that only men can serve in this office. All the qualifications in vv 2-7 that follow are masculine. Besides, it was really unheard of that any woman would even be considered for this office, especially considering that 1 Tim 2:9-15 just outlined that a woman's role in the congregation is to quietly receive instruction and not to teach men or exercise authority over men. How then could she serve in an official office of authority? The woman's function in the assembly is twice repeated in the prior section as to remain quiet and receive instruction. Basically she's to follow male leadership and we don't have time to go into the reasons in detail but briefly let me highlight three reasons. One, because of the angels. Angels are highly organized into hierarchy and rank and they are watching and learning from us. So the church of God is to be organized into hierarchy and rank. The men have higher rank in the household of God. Notice I didn't say they were better, I didn't say they were smarter, I didn't say any of that because none of that is true, I said they have higher rank. Just like Michael the archangel outranks all the other angels. It doesn't mean the other angels

are less. It just means he has higher rank. We don't know all the details but 1 Cor 11 says, because of the angels men are the leadership. Two, men are the leadership because of the order of creation. Simply stated the man was created before the woman and so because of the historical order of creation men are to serve in leadership positions, not women. And third, because it was not the man who was deceived by Satan but the woman. So because of the general trend that women are more easily deceived than men God says I want men to serve in the leadership.

The third point of 3:1 is that this man **aspires** to the office. Middle voice, he himself is aspiring to it, he wants to serve in this office. It's a word for stretching and it means he is striving for it, he's reaching out for it. It's not that someone came along and said, hey knucklehead, would you be an elder, we've got a vacancy over here and we need someone to fill it. No, this man has come to this conclusion himself. Now that does not mean that other elders haven't recognized that, hey, this man would be a good elder, this man seems like he wants to be an elder, I wonder if they would be interested?

Now let's connect this with what we saw earlier in Acts 20. Who did Paul say in Acts 20 made these men overseers? The Holy Spirit. Well how did Paul know that? Because it was the Holy Spirit who gave the men the aspiration to be elders in the first place. So what Paul is talking about is what we might call Spirit implanted aspiration. God the Holy Spirit planted this desire in them. So obviously he's not talking about someone who wants to be an elder so he can get notoriety in the congregation, so he can get more business contacts, so he can be in the limelight. He's talking about someone who has genuine Spirit implanted aspiration. A man who is saying, I want to serve the people of God, I want to oversee the flock, I want to guard them, I want to study and even teach them, I have great concern for the household of God and taking care of sheep. And I'd say that has to be Spirit inspired desire because who wants to take care of sheep? Sheep stink, they poop and they are stupid. Now who wants to go spend their time taking care of stinky, stupid animals? That's why the Egyptians in the OT hated the Hebrews. The Hebrews were a shepherd people and they said, that's the lowest of the low, being a shepherd? Uuugh. Let's pen them in over in at Goshen, it was a totally segregated society. The Egyptians wouldn't even sit down and eat with them. And so if you think being a shepherd is some kind of a high and lofty position, think again, it's actually the lowest position on the totem pole. And so a man who

says I want to be an elder is saying I want to get down and do this lowly task of cleaning up sheep poop. And how do you say that if you're not Spirit inspired to. If He hasn't worked in your life ahead of time you'll never want to step into this office. So understand the office.

But if a man aspires to the office then Paul says **it is a fine work he desires to do**. Notice it is **work**, it is not just sitting around with your name on the bulletin and getting your name in flashing lights and all the rest of the baloney. It is **work**, and taking care of sheep is **work**. It takes tremendous expenditure of spiritual energy to take care of the sheep in the household of God. So Paul says if a man wants to do that **work** it's a **fine work** he wants to do, the Greek says it's a beautiful work. It is very beautiful, not in the eyes of the world but in the eyes of God and that's the point. They are God's sheep and the elder is taking care of His sheep. He's taking this lowly position, this very humble position as a servant of God and saying, Lord, I want to take care of your sheep, I want to do this work, I want to clean up their poop. And the Lord says, that's fantastic, I implanted the desire in you in the first place, it is a beautiful thing that you want to do, you are humbling yourself and becoming a servant of all as Christ humbled Himself and became a servant of all.

Now that is the kind of office we're talking about. We're talking about humility, we're talking about serving others, we're talking about cleaning up other people's crap, and we're talking about scrubbing the toilets kind of job. Because let me tell you, maybe you're naïve and you think because Christians are saved they somehow hung the moon. No, Christians are sinners, we are all sinners, and if you think I'm naïve about it you got it reversed. I get daily reminders through all the problems that go on in people's lives. I got a heavy dose of it when I came here that I never would have gotten just sitting in the pew. And I have lost all optimism about Christians. Christians are not good people, they're some of the worst, and that includes myself, but God said nonetheless, I am going to take some of these dirty rotten sinners that have grown spiritually and implant in them an aspiration to do this kind of work. So obviously it's going to take a very special kind of man and that is the kind of man that Paul now describes.

Verse 2, **An overseer, then**, inferential conjunction, meaning logically, if a man desires to do this kind of work **then** logically he **must be** a certain kind

of man. And if he's not this kind of man then sorry, he's not qualified to do the work. He **must be** and the Greek is very clear, this is a must, not a maybe, not a sort of, not a should, it is a must, he must already be everything that follows; he can't be half-way there, he can't be on his way there, he can't just have the capacity to be there, he must already be there. And here is where we head into troubled waters. It is apparently not straightforward what he **must be**. That he **must be** these things is clear. But what are these things? There are lots of different views and people get real sensitive in these verses, especially when it says "husband of one wife." Everything really comes down to that for most people. They never looked at any of the other requirements, it's just how they interpret or misinterpret husband of one wife. And often their interpretation is the one that supports their own lifestyle. If someone has never been divorced they'll say, it means married only once, someone who's never been divorced.<sup>ii</sup> If someone has been divorced they'll say, it means married to only one woman at a time, I may have been married to four girls but I was only married to one at a time.<sup>iii</sup> Some that are more indifferent will say, well, it just means they have to be married. But I think you get the point. People come to the Scriptures with agendas and then they seek out how to interpret the Bible to fit their agenda. We're all subject to the danger of doing this but when a sensitive issue like "husband of one wife" comes up we become super-sensitive and defensive of our own lifestyle.

So let's look at these, most of the other qualifications, and there are fifteen in all, not just one, fifteen, few of which receive any attention. But I think if we pay attention to them then it will show us how we should interpret the "husband of one wife," and actually that translation is pretty bad so we'll straighten that out too.

Here is what an elder **must be**. First, he **must be above reproach**, *anepilempton* (also cf 1 Tim 5:7 and 6:14). This is the most important qualification in the list because it's at the head. Because it stands at the head of the list, Lock suggested that it means: "Not liable to criticism as he would be if he failed in any of these qualities"<sup>iv</sup> In other words, and I agree with this, this word is a summary of all the other qualities that follow. Put another way, we could end the qualifications right here. An elder must be **above reproach**, end of story. But then Paul goes on to say, if you want to see **above reproach** spelled out for you then look at the rest of the qualifications that follow, they are all describing a man who is above reproach.

So what does it mean to be **above reproach**? *anepilempton* just means “irreproachable” and that means that if you look at the man he is the kind of man who doesn’t have any flaws in his character or conduct. There’s just nothing that blatantly sticks out. And if you were to have an impartial examination of this man’s character he would come out squeaky clean. It doesn’t mean he’s never committed a sin, only one person ever did that, the Lord Jesus Christ. So what it must mean is a man who is spiritually mature and maturing, he has strong Christian character. So that sets the tone for how to interpret the rest of the qualifications. They are character qualifications, not did he ever commit this sin or that sin. But would it be out of character for him to do this sin or that sin?

So you’re not asking, “Has this man ever been married to someone else?” That’s not the question. The question is, “Is this man devoted to his wife?” So the kinds of questions you are asking are all about his character, what kind of man he is. If you make these into sin questions, “Has this man ever been intemperate?” then no one will qualify. So there’s something else going on here and that something else is related to his spiritual maturity, his character. And that takes time to develop. So there is a time element. And if you ask the question, well how far back in a man’s life should we look then the text answers, only to the period of his life when he is mature and maturing as a believer. Verse 6 clearly says you cannot consider his life when he was an immature new believer. So if you can’t look at that then how much less can you look at his life as an unbeliever. That’s not under examination. What’s under examination is his life as a mature believer. You’re not interested if the person ate his boogers when he was 4 years old. You’re interested in the character of this man now after God has called him to salvation and worked in his life. You are not interested in what this man did back in 1982 at the donut shop. See the difference?

So **above reproach** or irreproachable means that the person does not have any obvious character flaws and it’s a summary of everything that follows. It sets you up. So what does it look like to be **above reproach**? Answer: first, he’s **husband of one wife**, eeee, wrong, terrible translation, *mias gunaikos andra*, “a one woman man,” that is, “a one woman kind of man.” Adjective **one** modifying the noun **woman**, pointing to the kind of man he is, “a one woman kind of man.” In other words, this man is a man devoted to one

woman. He's not flirting with every other floozy that walks down the street. His eyes aren't following every skimpily clad female that walks down the aisle. And by the way, women are given modest dress requirements in the previous section. They are to not dress like the world, they are the household of God. But the kind of question you're asking here is, "Is this man flirtatious? Is this man's eyeballs falling out of his head every time some hot momma walks by? Or does he have the character and the discipline to turn away?" So it doesn't mean a man who was only married once in his life. We're not interested if the man got a divorce when he was 19. Besides, verse 6 shows that you can't even consider a new convert. So if I can't consider a new convert then how can I consider this man's life before he was a convert? You're not interested in how they lived as unbelievers, they may have had 25 wives, I don't care. I'm banned from even considering that according to verse 6. I can only look at once that man has grown to maturity as a disciple, is he devoted to one woman. (If he has a woman). That's another interpretation that is invalid. The verse does not say he must be married. Sometimes people will argue that one woman man means he has to be married and they'll couple that with verse 5 to say that further he has to have a family. But 1 Timothy is the general letter, 2 Timothy and Titus give the specifics. And 1 Timothy is just assuming the general condition of spiritually mature men who might qualify for the office, generally they are married, generally they do have families. So it's the rule, but there are exceptions. And it's not saying or implying that the elder must be married and have a family. Paul probably was not married and did not have a family and yet he served as an elder. So if it means the man must be married and have a family then Paul himself didn't qualify.<sup>v</sup> The whole point is that this is a character qualification; what kind of man is this? Is the man devoted to one woman or is he a flirt?

Second, **temperate**, *nephalion*, is this man a level-headed man? Or does he lose his cool? If he's the kind of man who loses his cool in intense situations he doesn't qualify. If he's the man who can keep his cool then he qualifies. This is a man who is going to have to enter into doctrinal disputes and personal conflicts. So if he can't keep his cool how can solve these spiritual problems? Third, **prudent**, *sophrona*, is a man who has a sound mind, a man who is judicious, he thinks through not only what to do but how to do it and when to do it. If he's a reckless kind of man when it comes to that kind of thing he will make a wreck of people's lives. Fourth, **respectable**, *kosmion*, these are all adjectives describing the kind of man. Adjective after adjective

after adjective. This one respectable is asking is he an orderly kind of man? Is he the kind of man whose character evokes admiration and delight because he's structured? If not and he can't manage his own affairs well then how can he manage others? Fifth, **hospitable**, *philoxenos*, a lover of strangers. Basically a man who is ready and willing to help the needy, help the widows in distress, ready to welcome others into his home. Not a man who says, oh, you have some physical need, well, I'll pray for you. The person doesn't need prayer, they need some physical help! Sixth, **able to teach**, *didaktikon*, this is rather, "apt to teach" not just able, but a man who will have the tendency to teach, a man who is inclined to teach, a man who is disposed to it. If he's not the kind of man who is inclined to teach he's not qualified. It doesn't mean he has to teach all the time, remember, there's the principle of first among equals, and 1 Tim 5 states this principle very clearly, but it does mean that he has a tendency to want to teach the flock. And I don't think it's saying too much to say the elder should be studying and preparing to teach material. A four, six, eight lesson series per year is more than expectable. How he gets trained to do this is another matter we'll answer later. But basically that responsibility falls in my lap. He may not teach often because he's not the first among equals but he is inclined to do it occasionally. And this qualification, by the way, is the most prominent one that distinguishes an elder from a deacon. You will not find this qualification in the next section. So that is very telling so far as the distinctions between an elder and a deacon, a major point.

Seventh, **not addicted to wine** and here we have the two negatives. Verse 2 is what kind of man is he? Verse 3 is what kind of man is he not? So verse 3, **not addicted to wine**, *paroinon*, he doesn't drink too much alcohol. The wine back then did contain alcohol but it didn't contain as much alcohol as modern wine. Wine then was only about 3-4% while today it's 13-14%. The Bible divides alcohol into two classes, wine and hard liquor. Biblical wine was acceptable in moderation, hard liquor was condemned as sinful. Probably today's wine is somewhere in between and wine coolers and most beer would be classed along with biblical wine. It is acceptable in moderation. And so Paul is saying he can't be drinking too much wine; we'd say, he can drink beer but he can't be drinking beer all the time. And of course, he can't drink hard liquor all the time or be an alcoholic, that should be obvious. Eighth, **not pugnacious**, *plekten* and that means someone who bullies others around, he has his agenda and he's going to push it, he may use physical

violence or he may use threats or social status, but the point is does this man push others around to get his way? If so, it's a no go. Ninth, and notice the contrast, **but gentle**, *epeike*, a difficult word but my grasp of it is he's someone who is courteous and he will yield, he's not always insisting on his way, he's gentle or, I like yielding better, willing to yield. Tenth, **peacable**, *amachon*, "not contentious," he's not someone who is always looking for a fight. You find some men just wanting to fight about any and every thing. He can't be that kind of a man. He has to be uncontentious. Eleventh, **free from the love of money**, *philarguron*, "not a lover of money," he can't be someone who has a greedy little hand. Money corrupts and absolute money corrupts absolutely. You can't serve both God and money; you can only serve one or the other. It doesn't mean he doesn't have money, he may be rich, but if he is given to it, he can't serve, it's distracting him from the work of a shepherd.

Now we come to number twelve in v 4 and these last three are more elongated. While I think that it is good that he have a family I don't think it's necessary. It's the rule but there are exceptions. The home is an excellent training ground for the church. If you can't manage the home how can you manage the church? But again, Paul was an elder and Paul didn't have a house to run. So understand it's a general condition, generally a man who aspires to eldership will have a family to run and you can look at how he's doing there and it's a measure for how he's going to do in the church. So given that he does have a family, verse 4, **He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity**. Now the word for **children** is *tekna* meaning boys and girls that live at home. It's not talking about adult children that live outside the home. An elder can't control his adult children outside the home. Once they're outside of the house then the elder can't be held accountable for what the adult child does. But as long as he is in the household the father is charged with *proistamenon*, ruling well as the head of the house so as to keep his at home children *upotage*, **under control** or "in subordination," they have to obey him. It doesn't say they have to be believers. Sometimes people get it in their mind that this means the elder's children have to be believers and so and so elders children aren't believers. So his qualifications come into question. But that's not the requirement. The requirement is that the children be in obedience. An elder can't control whether his child is a believer or not, the elder can't control anyone's eternal destiny. God decides those

kinds of things. But an elder better have his children in obedience because he can do that. He's commanded to do that. And there are two ways he does it. One he has to be a disciplinarian. He can't have his children running wild. If his children run wild and he can't control that with discipline then how in the world is he ever going to keep the church under control? He won't have the guts to do church discipline. And the whole thing will spin out of control. Second, he has to be a teacher. He has to teach his children the word of God. Because that too is a part of keeping children under control. And in fact, in ages past, when the Bible used to be taught, every Bible teacher knew that the training ground for teaching the word of God in the church was teaching his children at home. If you can't teach your children at home how in the world are you ever going to teach the church at large? You can't. So a father who rules his household well is a man who keeps his children under control with physical discipline and with teaching. These are both training grounds for an elder.

Thirteen, verse 6, **and not a new convert**, that is, not a new plant, a *neophuton*. The early church considered a new convert a person who was newly planted in the Christian community. How can you consider a new Christian? He may be nice, he may have high social status, he may be wealthy, it doesn't matter, he just came to Christ. How is he going to rule the church well? New believers spend most of their time walking by the flesh, they haven't learned to walk by the Spirit, it takes time to grow, he doesn't know much doctrine and he needs that to grow, so there's no way he can even be considered, what is he going to teach the sheep?

And since you can't consider a new convert then I think practically we can say you can't consider someone's life before they were a believer. I don't care what they did. I don't care if they killed people. Paul killed Stephen. How can we judge people on what they did before they were believers? When all they had was their flesh as an operating asset? When all they could do is sin? You can't consider that when you're weighing whether someone's qualified today. But you can consider their life from when they grew up, from when they matured from that little shoot and became a strong plant in the church. Then you can start considering their life and I think you should, you need some kind of a track record. And of course you have the home, you have the person's interaction in the community, these are all places you can look to see what kind of man is this?

And by practical example that's what they did with Saul. Before Saul was a believer he killed Christians. So when he was a new convert and he started walking around Jerusalem trying to interact with the disciples, all the disciples were afraid of him. And so Barnabas came up and said, hey Saul, quit it, you're scaring the be-jeebers out of these disciples, just lay off. You couldn't consider Saul for the office of elder for a long time. His sorry reputation preceded him. But it wasn't long before they were saying; he who once persecuted us is now preaching that Jesus is the Son of God. And they recognized he was a powerful teacher. So his status, as he went from that little new shoot to a mature plant was growing and finally Paul was accepted by Peter and John and James and they decided to go to the Jews while Paul would go to the Gentiles. So the basic operation of how this should work is illustrated in the life of Paul and it shows you can't consider what they did way back while they were unbelievers and you can't even consider them as new believers, growth takes time and you have to wait until they get some spiritual maturity, then you start gathering the data to evaluate whether this man qualifies for this office.

And the main reason is given in verse 6, if they're a new convert they don't have any spiritual maturity, they're neophytes and so Paul says, you put a new convert in office and he'll become **conceited and fall into the condemnation of the devil**. You put a new convert or even a Christian new to a community in leadership and that person is going to get conceited, *tuphotheis*, they're going to puff up, hey look at me, I'm something great, I'm some spiritual giant over here and they're running around showing everyone I got an elder badge. And when they do that they're doing the same thing Satan did. Satan was the top angel, he was created perfect in beauty, he was the crown of God's creation and what happened? He got conceited and fell. And that's what Paul's saying here, you slap an elder badge on a new convert and you are setting them up for failure. It's not a light thing to come into this office. It must be taken very seriously.

And finally, number fourteen, verse 7, **And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church**. He must have it, this is that same verb from back in verse 2, must, not sort of, not maybe, he must **have a good reputation with those outside the church**. Why? So that he will not fall into reproach. What it means is people outside the church are

disparaging him. Say you have a man with a bad reputation outside the church. Can you see their response when they hear that so and so is an elder at your church? That guys an elder at that church. Do you know how that guy operates on city council? Do you know how that guy runs his medical practice? Do you know how that guy runs his law practice? I can't believe you guys would make him an elder. That man has one of the worst reputations in our community. I'm not going to that church. And so it will save you a lot of grief if you make sure the men you put in the office are good representatives of the household of God. And don't be deceived. A lot of times people act all wonderful at church but out in the world there's another story. You better check it out. Many of us get duped all the time.

And second, so he will not **fall into the snare of the devil**. That is, so he will not be caught so as to do Satan's will. The world outside the church is Satan's domain and he captures Christians to do his work for him. And that's the last kind of person you want as an elder, someone who is working for Satan.

Alright, so those are the qualifications for the elderate. Let's put out five principles. One, the only men who should be considered for eldership are men in whom the Spirit has implanted an aspiration to do this work. If a man doesn't want to do it why would you put him in the office? If your church policy manual says you have to have five elders and you only have four that want to do it then change the church policy manual. But don't stick another man in there who doesn't want to do it. Second, understand that the work of an elder is work. It means getting down with the sheep and dealing with real spiritual issues. In those situations it's very dangerous and you can slip into the snare of the devil quite easily. Therefore it is necessary to have certain qualifications. Third, the qualifications are character qualifications. They are asking what kind of man is this? Not, did he commit a sin last week. Yeah, he did, that's not the issue, the issue is what is this man's character like? All the qualifications have to be interpreted in that light. It's not what did he do, it's what is he like? Fourth, you can't consider his whole life. You are only looking at his life as a mature believer, not a new believer and whether he divorced his wife as a new believer or something, but as a mature believer, that's the area under investigation. Fifth, the two main places to look at his life as a mature believer are in his home and in the community. How does he rule his home? Does he discipline his children and does he teach them the word of

God? The home is a great training ground for the church. And what is his reputation in the community. What is this man's reputation out in the world? That will play a very heavy role in whether this man qualifies for the office or not. He may put on a face around here, that's why you have to look into these other arenas

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<sup>i</sup> Some commentators hold that this saying refers to what precedes and not what follows. It seems more likely to me that it refers to the saying that follows as the near identical statement in 1:15 (*o logos o pistos*).

<sup>ii</sup> By the end of the second century this interpretation was being promulgated, under the influence of an asceticism that led to clerical celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>iii</sup> Most commentators believe it means monogamy—only one wife at one time—and that the overseer must be completely faithful to his wife.

<sup>iv</sup> Earle, R. (1981). 1 Timothy. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (364). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>v</sup> Some commentators think that Paul had been married and his wife had died making Paul a widower. They argue that Paul's influence on the Sanhedrin in Acts 6-8 indicates that he was a member of the Council. But to be a member of the council the man had to be married. Therefore Paul had to be married at the time and sometime after his wife died. I think this interpretation has much to commend it.

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