

## Message #4

## Titus 1:7-9

How do we put together an impacting church in a world that is a free-for-all crazy chaotic mess? How do we come up with a church that God will use for His glory in a world that does not care about God or His glory? What program or gimmick should we invent to help reach this world?

Paul says what you do is establish a well-organized church in every city that is governed by godly, stable, spiritual men, who know the Word of God. The island of Crete was a wild world. It was an island that was immoral, undisciplined, unstable and unrighteous. Paul said let's establish a solid church in every city. God will use that church. Now to start it, there must be some leaders. So Paul begins by telling Titus this:

**TO DEVELOP A GODLY, IMPACTING CHURCH IN A GODLESS AND UNSTABLE WORLD, SELECT A TEAM OF GODLY, STABLE LEADERS TO LEAD EACH CHURCH WHO HAVE PROPER QUALIFICATIONS TO LEAD.**

Now most of the time when churches look for leaders, they look for one who seems to be successful in life and seems to have a zeal and fervor for the church. Neither one of those things are not necessarily wrong, but they aren't the criteria. Often times personal dynamics and influence get one into the role of a leader in a church.

Titus was to be more objective. Paul told him exactly what to look for in a leader and he spelled out a total of sixteen qualifications:

**QUALIFICATION #1** – Select a man who is above reproach—good, solid, earned reputation.  
**1:6a**

**QUALIFICATION #2** – Select a man who is devoted to one woman—not a promiscuous playboy. **1:6b**

**QUALIFICATION #3** – Select a man who controls his children while they are in the home.  
**1:6c**

He cannot have children in the home who are running wild and mocking God and disobedient.

**QUALIFICATION #4** – Select a man who is above reproach as God's steward. **1:7a**

This is the same word used in **verse 6**, which means no valid charge of wrongdoing can be brought against a man in regard to his work in the church. What this qualification means is that a leader in the church must be one who is known as a good manager when it comes to the house of God. In other words, there is no valid accusation that may be brought against this man in regard to his church life and work (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 313). This kind of man must have a reverence for God and His church.

**Now the next list of five qualifications is not about what a man should be, but about what a man should not be.** Now what is most interesting about the negative “not,” he should not be this or that, is that it is “may” and not “ouk.” The negative “ouk” would have been the stronger negative, meaning if the man were ever this way he should never be a leader. May is more of a prohibitive against this kind of behavior (Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 265-266). May involves removing these things from one’s life.

In other words, the man who is a leader is still a work in progress and it is expected that he will continue to work on his own life and walk with God.

**QUALIFICATION #5 – Select a man who is not self-willed. 1:7b**

If one is to be a leader, he must master himself. He cannot operate by a self-willed, overbearing philosophy. The word “self-willed” is a word that means he is not obstinate and arrogant. This describes one who is always out to arrogantly please himself (*Ibid.*, p. 68). This kind of man is overbearing and domineering. This kind of person refuses to acknowledge or praise others because of his own self-inflation.

This is a man who will continually look out for number one even at the expense of others. This kind of person is always a taker and never a giver. He is a self-promoter. He uses people for his own will and his own gain. D. Edmund Hiebert says this is “one who arrogantly disregards the interests of others in order to please himself.”

This kind of person has no business being a leader in the church of God. One leader of a church once said, “we need to let them know we are the bosses.” Truth is the leaders need to let people know they are the servants.

When you see a person who always wants his way and expects people to minister to him and he always takes advantage of people, he has no business being a leader in the church of God. He is self-willed.

**QUALIFICATION #6 – Select a man who is not quick-tempered. 1:7c**

One who is a leader must not be one prone to throwing temper tantrums. As a leader you must deal with all kinds of people and some of those people will rub you the wrong way. You can be tempted to lose it. But a leader must control his passion or anger, and not be quick to explode. One commentator observed, typically a quick-tempered person is a proud person.

There are two different Greek words for anger:

- 1) Thumos, which has to do with God’s calculated anger.
- 2) Orgilos, which has to do with explosive blow ups. **This is the word used here.**

The leader in a church cannot be known as having a quick fuse. The negative “not” does not mean he is perfect, but he is working to getting this out of his life.

A leader must be able to withstand criticism, pressure and problems without blowing up. I know of a case in which a leader of a church put his fist in the face of a pastor who preached that the only way of salvation was by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This was a leader in the church who was angry the minister was preaching the truth.

**QUALIFICATION #7** – Select a man who is not a heavy alcoholic drinker. **1:7d**

Having carefully crawled through every book of the Bible, I do not believe that the Bible teaches total abstinence, but it does teach careful moderation. In fact, **the very Greek words used here does not refer to one who abstains from all wine, but one who is addicted as an alcoholic.**

Now the island of Crete was known for its wine production and still is. Wine has been made on this island for 3500 years. Leaders in the church drank wine. They went to functions where wine was served and it was served at almost every meal. Paul said when you look for a man to be a leader in the church, make sure he is not a drunk or heavy drinker.

Wine was the staple drink and most of the people on the island were heavy drinkers, including older women (Titus 2:3). Paul did not want a leader in the church to be such a man who was a heavy drinker.

By the way, one writer said any man who uses alcohol or drugs or pills as a means of coping with life is not fit to be a leader in God's church. I know of a case in which a man who had been on the mission field was taking anti-depressant drugs, probably because of what he did nor did not do on the mission field, and he was put on a board of a church because he had been on the mission field and he was a pathetic, problem leader who couldn't even lead himself.

**QUALIFICATION #8** – Select a man who is not a brawler. **1:7e**

The first time Jesus Christ was here on earth, He did not get in fights with people. That is not to say He did not get angry, but He did not start fights and leaders for God must be the same way.

Now when you have a lot of people who don't work and all they do is party, you can have a lot of fights. There was a lot of alcoholic drinking on the island of Crete. When you have that you have the potential of major fights. Any person given to brawling and fighting was not Elder material. You take a quick-tempered brawler and he is not the kind of man you want leading a church.

Back during the days of the Puritans, the leaders regularly beat people or dunked them in water. This had no place in the church. They should not even have been leaders. You cannot be a leader in the church and physically attack people. This kind of person is unstable and disqualified from being a leader.

**QUALIFICATION #9** – Select a man who is not fond of sordid gain. **1:7f**

What this means is that a leader does not use his leadership entrustment in any way for shameful gain or dishonest profit. He must be a man who has financial integrity.

Greed is what pushes one to dishonest financial corruption. One of the major problems on the island of Crete was greed. Plutarch said of the Cretans: "...they stick to money like bees to honey."

We know from **Titus 1:11** that there were men on this island who would teach things to please wealthy people to get their money. They would tell people that their prosperity was a sign of God's blessings. They would tell people how giving money to them meant they would receive the blessings of God.

There are men who will do anything for money. They will cheat, promote and con people out of money. Never should such a man be a leader in God's church.

I know of a case in which a family went to visit a church, and when the family saw the leader of the church, they walked out because the man had cheated them out of their money on a business deal. This man should never have been a leader in any church.

The next seven qualifications are what a man should be.

**QUALIFICATION #10** – Select a man who is hospitable. **1:8a**

Now the word "hospitable" is literally a word that means lover of strangers. Back in these times there were no nice motels and the only place you could stay was some sleazy place that was known for immoral behavior. A leader was to be one who was known for welcoming people into his home.

Also, since there were no churches built at this point, someone had to open their home for the people to meet. Now if one were not willing to have the people of God into his house, he was not good elder material. The Elder was to be willing to have people over to his home. Leaders in a church should be those who welcome people into the church in a hospitable way.

**QUALIFICATION #11** – Select a man who loves what is good. **1:8b**

The leader in a church is to be one who is known for loving good things, not corrupt things. He likes and supports good people, good places, good activities, good programs, good interests.

It is interesting that the actual Greek word means to be a friend of that which is good. An elder does not make friends with that which is evil or immoral or corrupt, but that which is good.

**QUALIFICATION #12** – Select a man who is sensible. **1:8c**

This is a very critical trait to look for in a leader. He must be a stable man mentally, one who is in control of his mind. The word actually means good sense, a soundness and a sanity to his mind (*Ibid.*, p. 438).

The challenge to have a sound mind is critical to this book of Titus (1:8; 2:2, 4, 5, 6, 12). In a world that is given to the emotional and irrational, leaders must keep a sane and stable sense about them.

Now this sound and sensible mind must specifically be in regard to the Word of God and the doctrines of God.

**QUALIFICATION #13** – Select a man who is just. **1:8d**

This refers to the person who seeks to do what is just and right according to the Word of God. One who is leadership material seeks to do what is right in a Biblical sense and a social sense. This person is a good, law-abiding citizen, who seeks to have pure conduct before people.

I know of a case in which a city had an ordinance that said if you were going to pass out literature, you needed to have a permit. That seems very reasonable to me. Well one leader in a church said no one was going to tell him he needed a permit and he took a group and went out and passed out his material. He did not obey the rules and the church viewed him as some sort of hero. He should never have been a leader.

**QUALIFICATION #14** – Select a man who is devout. **1:8e**

A leader is to be pious and reverent and righteous in his attitude toward God and in his manner of life (*Ibid.*, p. 325). Again this does not mean the man is sinless, but it does mean that he has the character and quality of being a very reverent and serious and godly man. He has a godly dignity.

We are living in an age in which leaders of churches are not known to be reverent, godly, holy men. In fact, they are permitting things that are irreverent and godless to take place publicly in their churches.

**QUALIFICATION #15** – Select a man who is self-controlled. **1:8f**

This is a Greek word that means select leaders who have strong control over themselves and their passions. If a person cannot control himself, he cannot lead others. A leader will exercise control over “his thoughts, attitudes, actions and speech” (Knut Larson, *Titus*, p. 344).

**QUALIFICATION #16** – Select a man who is sound in the Word. **1:9**

**Leaders need to be solid, stable men in the Word of God and doctrines of God.** A leader cannot be one who is always “flirting with new doctrines.” Now Paul concludes this section by saying you need to find men who are strong in the Word:

**Criteria #1** - They need to hold fast to the faith system taught in the Word. **1:9a**

The Greek literally reads, hold fast the faith word. This faith word is taught in this very book in Titus 3:5-7. It is the doctrine of grace that is by faith. John Stott said a leader must hold firmly to apostolic teaching and never let go (*Titus*, p. 178).

**Criteria #2** - They need to have been taught the faith system in the Word. **1:9b**

Now in order for one to be a leader, he must be carefully taught the Word. Many leaders in churches have not been carefully taught apostolic truth and this is one of the causes of many problems in the church today.

A leader cannot be some new untaught Christian. He must have submitted himself to being taught the Scriptures, by those who know them. Paul spent many years teaching Titus and Timothy and now it was their turn.

**Criteria #3** - They need to be able to exhort others in sound doctrine. **1:9c**

This is a huge part of being a leader. One must exhort others to what is sound and healthy in the Word of God. A leader must know God's Word accurately and be able to teach it. Do you see what produces sound lives? Sound teaching and sound doctrine. In order for sound doctrine to affect people, it must be taught.

**Criteria #4** - They need to be able to rebuke those who contradict what is sound. **1:9d**

A leader should never sit passively by and let someone get away with teaching which is not sound or true to the text. When people start saying things in a church that are not sound, a leader must refute it and the one teaching it. John Calvin said a leader in God's church must have two voices:

Voice #1 - One for gathering sheep.

Voice #2 - One for chasing away wolves.

Now how in the world could Titus be expected to travel to over 100 cities and find a leader in every city?

- 1) He would need to believe God would lead him to this kind of leader.
- 2) He would need to make observations himself—keep his eyes open and mouth shut.
- 3) He would need to listen to the recommendation of those who went to church.
- 4) He would need to personally examine the man himself.

These qualities are attainable for every believer and those who pursue them will make a statement in any world, no matter how godless.