

I. SEVERAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

- There are certain things that I am assuming, a certain framework we are already working within in our understanding. Due to the purpose of this class being an overview, I won't take time to spell out why this is the case. I have done this in other lessons that can be found on SermonAudio.
- 1.) There is a need for the local church to have officially recognize leadership for its administration and service. While all the people of God have necessary gifts to contribute to the overall ministry of the church, there are also officially recognized offices.
- 2.) There are basically two offices in the NT local church. Elder/pastor/overseer and deacon.
- 3.) These two offices stand directly under the rule of Jesus Christ as exercise through Scripture and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is no human authority or hierarchy above these offices.
- 4.) The qualifications and definition for these offices are found in Scripture.
- 5.) Those offices are to be occupied by men.
- 6.) The ideal is a plurality of men in both offices.
- 7.) In the office of elder, there is a parity (equality) of authority. Though there are different gifts and strengths, there is no greater authority as a "head pastor."
- 8.) The primary role of elders is the care of the flock of God by the ministry of the Word (both public and private). This includes feeding, protecting, leading, and being an example of the Christian.
- 9.) The primary role of deacons is the care of the flock of God by the appropriate distribution of physical provisions, under the direction of the elders.

II. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

A. Elder/pastor/overseer (1Timothy 3; Titus 1)

- ***If a man desires the position of a bishop [overseer], he desires a good work*** – The word "desires" indicates a strong desire and pursuit after the position. This is a good desire, and it is a good thing to pursue. This is somewhat odd in the frequent testimonies of men who "resisted the call" for many years, and finally obeyed.
- ***Must be*** – This is a particle of necessity, indicated that the things that follow are not optional, but non-negotiable qualifications to enter into the office.
- ***Blameless*** – The word does not indicate sinless-ness, for there was only one who accomplished that. The word means "not to be laid hold of", like a rock wall that one cannot get a good grip on. This doesn't mean without blemish, but does indicate being "above reproach." There is no significant and ongoing failure in what follows that someone can point to and legitimately criticize.
- ***The husband of one wife*** – There has been a lot of debate over this passage (particularly regarding whether he has to be married, whether he could have ever been divorced, etc.) and I again refer you to past teachings or to personal interactions with me to save us time now. Essentially, I understand Paul to be saying that he is now clearly a faithful husband. As Pastor Savastio has explained it, it is clear that there is one woman in his heart, his eye, and his bed.
- ***Temperate*** – This word means lit. "without wine" restrained, not out of control, sober (not somber) minded. Someone who acts a way that is clear he is in control of himself as opposed to controlled by something (including wine).
- ***Sober-minded*** – Sensible, self-controlled, having a sound or healthy mind, resulting in chasteness and modesty.
- ***Of good behavior*** – Well-behaved, well-order, respectable.
- ***Hospitable*** – Lit. "stranger-loving", kind to strangers, showing mercy toward those outside his own family.
- ***Able to teach*** – Having the ability to teach. The obvious content of that teaching is the Scriptures. Not only the abstract doctrines, but their application to life. This is not necessarily giftedness in public teaching, but also in personal interaction. This will be evidence first in his faithfulness in his home sphere.
- Notice also the emphasis of these qualifications is character and behavior, not special teaching gifts. While doctrine is obviously important, the biblical emphasis is the teacher as model.
- ***Not given to wine*** – A person who habitually drinks too much, and thus a drunkard. Essential in his ability to judge and give counsel.
- ***Not violent*** – Quick tempered, violent, especially when provoked by others or circumstances. Not a bully, pugnacious, or quarrelsome.
- ***But gentle*** – [alla, strong contrast] Gentle, forbearing, kind and considerate.
- ***Not quarrelsome*** – Lit. "not contentious", not disposed to fight or quarrel, thus peaceable.
- ***Not covetous*** – Not greedy, not lover of money, but liberal and generous with what he has.
- ***One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)*** – At this point there is an emphasis on His domestic rule as the head of his household. He does this "well", in a good and gracious way. One can look at his home as an imperfect, but real example of what God intends in the family. He is not a tyrant,

doesn't rule by fear or manipulation, and is also not passive and indifferent. His children are in submission to his authority, not in visible rebellion without restraint and out of control.

- The reason Paul gives for this is that what one sees in a man's home is by and large how he is going to do in the care of the house of God. How he deals with his wife and children is what one can expect from him in the arena of the church.
- **Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil** – This points to the necessity for a man to mature as a Christian. One of the greatest dangers is for a young man, and especially a newly converted man, to be in a position of leadership. There must be a time for seasoning and maturity, lest he be brought to pride (a temptation in general) and fall into condemnation.
- **Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil** – This directs us to what this man's witness is as a Christian man in his neighborhood, his workplace, his extended family. Not that they like what he stands for, but that he is one who bears the mark of honestly, diligence, fairness, etc.
- **Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination** – I won't get into the details of the controversy in this passage, but leave it at my understanding that Paul means that the man's children who are under his authority are not justly accused of living recklessly, disorderly, disobediently, and unsubmitively.
- **Not self-willed** – This means so set on one's own way that there is a stubbornness or arrogance as a result. It expresses a looking down on others, thinking others exist to serve them.
- **Not quick-tempered** – Tendency and habit of becoming angry, prone to anger.
- **A lover of what is good** – Lit, "a goodlover." Clear in his life that evil is not his love, but good.
- **Just** – Conformed (and conforming) the standard of righteousness found in God's Word. When dealing with others, is fair and just in his thoughts (especially in dealing with conflicts impartially).
- **Holy** – Being set apart morally, reflecting God's holiness.
- **Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict** – This passage assumes that he has been taught sound doctrine. While a full seminary degree isn't required, it is assumed that he has been taught the fundamentals of the faith sufficiently that he can handle the Word so as to correct those who contradict Scripture either in their doctrine or with their lives.

B. Deacon

- **Likewise deacons [must be]** – The "likewise" makes a comparison to what was said of elders, and probably refers to the fact that they "must be" these things.
- **Reverent** – Honorable, of good character, worthy of respect, dignified.
- **Not double-tongued** – Two-faced, insincere, saying different things around different people, deceitful.
- **Not given to much wine** – Not affected by alcohol or other substances that cloud their thinking and judgment.
- **Not greedy for money** – Covetous, greedy for material gain.
- **Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** – This is related to what he himself is inwardly, that the Christian faith is to him something to be lived, and as much as he knows himself, he is living with a clear conscience. Not only is he clear before others, but as best he knows himself he is harboring no sin.
- **But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons** – Like the elder, there should be a time indicated Christian maturity and faithfulness. This may also allude to a trial period of service in diaconal responsibilities before coming into official recognition.
- **Being found blameless** – Especially in regards to his increased responsibilities.
- **Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.** – At this point in the text is the addressing of certain females, and it is disputed as to whether this refers to a deacons wife, a female deacon, or female diaconal assistant.
- **The husbands of one wife** – The same as above.
- **Ruling their children and their own houses well** – The same as above.
- **For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.** – This gives a great motivation and encouragement, in their confidence in service to the Lord Jesus.
- Another qualification not explicit in these texts is that they should be men who are desirous of that office in a particular local church need to be compatible with, and in substantial agreement with the existing leadership.
- These are things which all men in our congregation, with the possible exception of teaching gifts, should be striving. These things are basic to Christian maturity, not special extraordinary exceptions to a generally lax people.
- We should beware of setting the bar too low, as well as too high. We should commit to the necessity of these things, then look around to those men among us God may be calling to these ministries.