

Theme: The qualities and characteristics of an elder are not, by and large, extraordinary: they are qualities that every believer should be pursuing. But in an elder these qualities must be evident both to the man himself and to the body of believers that will sit under his teaching and authority.

Background & Introduction: Why are people afraid of a membership interview? Now, an ordination exam? That I understand.

I. A Noble Task

A. Seeking the Office (3:1)

1. Aspiring to serve

- a. Like any noble task - takes some effort
- b. An inherent contradiction
 - Seeking to serve - Waiting for God's call

2. Desiring something noble, good

- A. OT Line - Tracing back to Moses (Exodus 18)
- B. NT Line - Appointing and preparing elders (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)

B. Overseer or Elder or Both

1. Overseer - Greek origin (*episkopos*)

- "oversight, superintending"

2. Elder - Jewish origin (*presbuteros*) (4:14; 5:17, 19)

- Indicated seniority, respect

C. One office (Acts 20:17-38; 1 Peter 5:1, 2; Titus 1:5-7)

- The terms are used interchangeably

II. A Man above Reproach

A. Blameless - not sinless

1. In the eyes of God? No one but Christ ever qualifies.

- a. Present maturity - not a man's past
- b. No blatant sin, no unconfessed sin
 - NOTE: But the standard is not perfection but maturity.

2. In the eyes of men?

- No disqualifying flaws/obvious sins

B. You are or you aren't - His integrity must be beyond question (4:16)

III. Setting an Example

A. Who He Is

1. One wife!

- a. One who is morally pure
 - Delighting in "the wife of his youth" (Proverbs 5:18)
- b. His marital status?
 - Married?
 - Widowed?
 - Divorced?

2. Sober-minded

- Stable and steadfast; a clear thinker
- Balanced and alert

3. Self-Controlled

- Shows wise and balanced judgment
- Able to control one's own desires

4. Respectable

- A life that adorns the gospel
- Falling neither toward legalism or license
- a. Not a drunkard (not given to much wine)
- b. Not violent (which often accompanies drunkenness)
- c. But gentle (Fair, equitable, showing forbearance)
 - But...Gentleness is not weakness
- d. Not quarrelsome
 - Timothy was already dealing with such men
 - More interested in argument than instruction
- e. Not a lover of money
 - Greedy for gain? It's the wrong job!

B. What he does

1. Hospitality (Literally - "Love for strangers/guests")
 - Using his home to benefit others, especially for the sake of the gospel
 - Welcoming those within and without the church
2. Able to teach
 - Not necessarily "preaching"
 - Bible studies, SS classes, discipling younger believers, refuting false doctrine

C. How he leads - his home management

- Showing dignity in his care, instruction
- If children are present, they are in submission (not in rebellion)

D. Acting his age - Spiritual maturity

- Not about his chronological age

E. His reputation

- He is the same man at church, at home, and in the world

F. Beware - Satan will attack those in authority and responsibility

IV. Extraordinary or Ordinary

A. Exhibiting the life of the Savior

1. An extraordinary privilege
2. In an ordinary life

B. The call of every believer

1. Not everyone is called to be an elder/deacon/pastor
 - It is an extraordinary call
2. We are all called to maturity in Christ!