

The Nature of the Leadership We Need

Spiritual Authority

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We're at 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy 3, continuing to look at the subject of spiritual authority and spiritual leadership this morning. Last two Sundays we've been looking at that. We've taken a break from our exposition of 1 Peter to do that because we are at a season in our church where we are nominating elders and deacons, the two offices in the church and those nominations opened a couple weeks ago and will continue through next Sunday, May 7th, because as we continue to unpack what the Scripture says, we hope that this will help you as you pray for leaders and then also nominate those that you feel like the Lord is setting apart.

We've seen that the Bible makes clear that we all need spiritual leadership. We need spiritual authority. We talked about the blessing of spiritual authority a couple weeks ago, and then last week we talked about the paradoxical nature of spiritual authority, that God in Christ says we're all equal, and yet he has ordained, even though we're all equal and have direct access to God, he's ordained that his church has leadership and that we need leadership. And so we're going to see that this passage again is going to make the same point, but the title of the message today is "The Nature of the Leadership We Need." The nature of the leadership we need, and in that title is the assumption we all need leadership because the New Testament makes this clear, and it's going to make it clear in this passage as well that we need to be led, all of us do.

So even those who are in leadership are under leadership, under authority. God has willed to work through authority in every area of life, and it's no less true in the church. So it's an important issue, and something that as we apply our hearts to the message today, as you think about this, what we're going to see from the text is that to be all that God wants us to be, to be the man that he wants you to be, to be the woman he wants you to be, to be the young person God wants you to be, you have to be under this kind of leadership. So this should be a priority when you move somewhere, you know, one of the most important things you can do when you're moving is find a good church, and you start with what kind of preaching and teaching is there. Do they believe the word of God? Do they affirm orthodox beliefs about Christ, the Trinity, the Scriptures? Closely following that, you need to look at the leadership of the church. What kind of men are in leadership? Has God placed men like this that we're going to look at today in leadership?

And so as we do this, let's continue to ask that question, and may our hearts long for this and pray that this will be true of our leadership here and that we will be faithful.

So the nature of the leadership we need. I want to read 1 Timothy 3, the entire chapter, and we're going to focus on verses 1 to 7. I want to read the entire chapter to get the context. So 1 Timothy 3:1.

1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. 14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 15 but 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. 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, as we come to You this morning, we come worshipping You and praising You. We come also acknowledging our need of grace; as we confessed our sins earlier, we now confess our need for the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that You would open the eyes of our hearts and our understanding. Teach us to walk in Your ways. Teach us to think as You think, to love what You love, to hate what You hate, and to walk as Christ walked. We pray in his name. Amen.

So the nature of the spiritual leadership that we need. It's interesting, first of all, just to call your attention to the fact of the context that we read. We're going to be looking this

morning at the nature of the elder leadership we need in verses 1 to 7, but I read the entire passage to show us that the office of elder and deacon are both dealt with in this passage and there's great attention given by Paul to it. He lists 15 different qualifications for elder in those verses and at least six qualifications for deacon in those verses as well; 21 qualifications for these officers listed in these verses. But I wanted you to see also that after he finishes talking about deacon, verses 1 to 7 are about elders, verses 8 to 13 are about deacon, then in verse 14 he gives the purpose of this epistle, the purpose for which he wrote 1 Timothy, and he basically is saying, Paul is saying to Timothy, "The reason I wrote these things to you, I want to come soon." Timothy is in Ephesus pastoring the church there in Ephesus. Paul wants to come to him, "but in case I'm delayed, I want you to know how you, the pastor, need to conduct things in the church of God. I want you to have clear understanding of how you need to order things in the church." And he reminds him, "Listen, it's the household of God. This is the church. It's not just a gathering of people. It's the household of God. It is the church of the living God and that is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

He hammers home the importance of the church and he says, "Listen, I want you to know how you're to conduct yourself." That could have been translated "behave." Some translations say that. It's a word we've run into several times in 1 Peter in our exposition there. It means, it literally means "to turn again." And so the idea is wherever you go here, you go here, you go here, you go here, that's your conduct. So he's saying, "Listen, I want you to understand how to conduct yourself in every part of the ministry of the church. For the church to be all that God wants it to be, that's why I've written." And all six chapters are about that and so all six chapters play a key role.

But it's instructive that he brings up the purpose of why he wrote right after he spends 13 verses talking about leadership. He could have said at the beginning. That's when I would have said it. If I were writing, probably I would have said, "Hey, I'm writing to you," in chapter 1, verse 1. "Hey Timothy," if I were Paul, I'm Paul, "I'm writing to you, Timothy, to tell you how to conduct yourself in the church. I want to be right up front and let you know." No, but he saves his purpose to this point and part of that is to emphasize the importance of what immediately precedes the declaration of purpose. He's saying leadership is fundamental. Leadership is foundational.

And then it's so helpful for us now to look at what he says about leadership, and this is so wonderful how God continually goes against our normal intuition, and I find myself as a pastor often frustrated at first glance with how the Lord does things. And of course, when I find myself frustrated with how the Lord does things, we know who's wrong, right? He always does everything right and perfectly. But one of the things that I have wrestled with through the years is how do you define a job description for elders and deacons? It's a reasonable question. It's a good question, isn't it? What's the job description for elders and deacons? And one of the things I wish the Lord had done was to write out a job description for elders and deacons. I think this would have been a great place to put it, 1 Timothy 3. "Hey, Timothy, you need to know how to conduct yourself in the household of God, in the church of the living God. You need elders and deacons. They need to have this character. But here's their job description. This is what they're to do." And I point

that out to say he doesn't spend time talking about that. He does touch on it. He does touch on it but it is almost incidental. It is almost an afterthought to talk about what they do, and I'm going to show you that in a moment.

That is powerful. What it says is what he does instead is the office of elder, rather than give you a job description for the office of elder, he tells you 15 different character qualities that you need to look for in the man who's an elder. Do you see that? We'd like to have a job description, but he gives us a character sketch and what that tells us is something profound about the Christian life and that is being comes before doing. It's more important who you are than what you do. Now what you do is going to flow from who you are. If you get the being right, the doing is going to come.

There's a sense in which this is another application of what Jesus says in Matthew 6:32, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." If you get the main things first and right, the other things follow. "Seek first the kingdom of God," that is, seek his Lordship in your life, seek to walk in obedience and holiness to him and everything else is going to flow from that. There's a sense in which he's saying as you look at the leadership of the church, it's so important that you get the men who are becoming more like Christ in place than that they know exactly what they're supposed to do. And I think it's because he knows if he had given us a job description, we would be preoccupied with the job description. "I've got to do this and this and this and this, and I feel good about myself because I'm doing those things." Now there is a place for the job description, but he's just saying character, character, character. He's saying be who you are in Christ. Be before you do.

Now I'm going to show you there's a few things in the passage that does talk about what you're to do, again, it's incidental in this text. There are other places that you could go to find out what you do as an elder. I mentioned Acts 20:28; 20:17 to 38. Acts 20:17 to 38 is Paul calling for the elders of the church of Ephesus, actually the same group Timothy's ministering with years before Timothy's written, 1 Timothy. Paul had called to meet with the elders of the church of Ephesus and they come to Miletus and he spends a significant amount of time with them, pouring out his heart to them. And in that you find a verse 28 that they're to shepherd the flock of God as overseers, and so shepherding and oversight are part of what the job description is. You find it also in 1 Peter 5:1 to 4, what elders are to do and they're to shepherd, they're to express oversight. So you find it other places, and I'll mention Titus 1:5 to 9. You make a list of these passages will show you more about the office of elder. Titus 1:5 to 9, there's 19 qualifications Paul lists in Titus and, in fact, one of the things you're going to see when you compare it is in Timothy, he's talking about overseer. In Titus, in Acts 20, he's talking about elders, different word. And the question is, are those two different offices? And the answer is no, they're the same office because the words are used interchangeably. In fact, in Titus 1:5, he says, "Appoint elders in every town and this is what a man must be like," and in the middle of that description, he says, "an overseer must be..." So I'm talking about elders and," he says, "an overseer must be..." So elder equals overseer. But the issue in Titus, 19 qualifications, only one relates to skill, 18 relate to character. Being comes before doing.

Now, with that, I want us to look at this under two points. We're going to spend most of our time on the second point. Don't be alarmed by how many subpoints we have because we got quite a lot. But there's no sub-subpoints anyway. The first point there's five subpoints, in the second point there's 16. So we'll be out of here by one o'clock.

The first point is a noble work. A noble work. The character or the nature of the leadership we need is men who are committed to a noble work. And we're going to talk, this is where he does talk a little bit about job description and I'll call it out because it's there but, again, it's not his main thrust. We're going to spend all of our time on the second point where we have 15, 16 subpoints and that's where Paul's heart is. But he does speak of this, so we want to see it.

A noble work. He says in verse 1, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do." In the New American Standard, "fine work." ESV and NIV say "noble task." The word translated "work" is actually the word for work, and so it does speak of there's a job to do. And the word translated "fine" or "noble" is the word for "good; lovely; beautiful" is the idea, and it's saying this is a wonderful work. And so if a man wants to do that, this is a wonderful work he desires to do.

So it is a job. So he's not saying it's not a job. He's saying it is a job and it's a noble job. It's great that a man would want to do this. But he says it's the office of overseer. So that was the first point, it's a noble work. Second subpoint under actually noble work, first subpoint is it's a noble work. That's actually interesting. 1 and 1A are the same. 1B, the office of overseer. This idea of the office of overseer, New American Standard, is literally "oversight" is the noun. "If any man aspires to the oversight, it is a noble work he desires to do." The oversight speaks of the actual inspection, investigation that go along with responsibility. The overseer is one who is in charge and who has to check things out. So he's saying if you desire the office of oversight, that is you want to be charged with the work of overseeing and looking after and caring for and investigating and serving the church, it's a good thing that you want to do and the word's emphasized because it occurs twice, the office of overseer, verse 1, verse 2, an overseer then must be above reproach.

To oversee, the word is episkopos. An overseer is an episkopos, is the Greek word, and it literally, it's made up of two words, epi, which means upon, e-p-i. And then s-k-o-p-o-s in Greek, s-c-o-p-o-s in English, transliterates. So you think about Episcopal, you see epi, upon, and then you see skopos, which is scope. It's to look over, literally to see, to watch over. And so the office is to watch over. It's to look after the church, that's the job. To look after the church.

And we find out, what else do we find out in the passage? That's just how he introduces it. He says, "Look, if you have a man who aspires to this work, it's a noble work and the work is oversight." But then he tells us a couple other things about it as we go along. In verses 4 and 5, this is what I mean by incidental. He's telling us a qualification for the elders, the 13th qualification in my list. We're going to come back to these in a moment. But he says, "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity." So one of the qualifications for an overseer/elder is, he

must manage his own household well. And then he tells us it's related to the job description by verse 5, "but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?" Do you see that? It's managing your own household is like caring for the church. So if you can't care for your household, how can you care for the church? So he tells us this is a job description, but it's incidental. He's talking about the character and he just happens to bring up, "Well, this is part of what the job is." But that is helpful and instructive.

"To manage" means to be literally out in front, to be a leader. The word is repeated twice in those two verses, emphasizing the importance of it. A man is to lead his home. He's to lead his wife. He's to lead his children. And if a man doesn't know how to do that, well, how will he be out in front and lead the church?

And then the word "take care of" in verse 5, when he says, "how will he take care of the church of God," that word pictures the idea of the mind being directed toward an object. So the elder is a person who sees the work as a noble work he aspires to, to care for the church, and he's willing to put his mind to the task of looking carefully and examining and investigating the health and well-being of the body of Christ.

That's the job description. And a fifth sub-point, E, is that he aspires or desires the work. It's almost a qualification, but I put it under the work itself. You have to do the work with eagerness. Peter makes that point in 1 Peter 5:1 to 4 where he talks to elders as well. There has to be an aspiration, an inner burden for the church as part of what this work requires. The Lord says we need people to look after us. You and I need oversight. That's the message. You and I can't make it the way that God wants us to make it without people looking after us. It's kind of humbling. It's not the kind of message that most Western, or, well, nobody wants to hear this, but even more Western, American, you know, rugged individualists, all that, do your own thing. Especially in this culture, where it's all about whatever you feel inside, whatever you want is what you're to do. God is saying, "Listen, to be all that you're supposed to be, you need people watching after you, and looking after you, and inspecting you." And I need that too. Every single one of us does that. We need that. That's why, as elders, we understand that every elder is under all the other elders. And God's just telling us, listen, this is who we are and are you willing to accept that? And then, if you accept that, you know that you need to be in a place where the men in the church are committed to that and they're the kind of men that you can follow.

But this is a noble work. That's essentially a quick description of the job description that Timothy gives us. In the second point we move to, the character or the nature of the leadership we need, is a noble work, and secondly, a worthy walk. It's not so much about the work as it is the walk. Paul is preoccupied with character of the men. He seems to be saying get the right men in place above everything else.

I was talking with James Rouse, one of our elders, the other day, and we were talking about just how to think about, you know, life and ministry, and we were sharing with some other folks about how you, James was sharing actually about some philosophy that you see in business, that where they get something right in business principle, is that it's more important to get the right people on your team than to have the right fit for the job.

This is something that some business leaders have observed, that if you get good people, they may not fit exactly what you're looking for, but you're better off with good people who don't fit exactly what you think you need, than not so good people who do seem to fit. It's more important to have people who are a certain kind of person. They're reliable. They're trustworthy. They want to contribute to other people. They're not wrapped up in themselves. And if you find people like that, those are the people you want on your team. The business world even sees this. This is the, you know, common grace, natural revelation and we certainly see this in the body of Christ, that it's more important to have not the skillful people, but the character people. Character is above skill.

There's 15 different qualifications that he lists here for elder between verse 2 and verse 7 and we're going to walk through them and comment on them briefly and look at what this describes, what kind of man this describes, and as we do, we realize that the reason the Lord is telling us this is because, remember, we have the two offices, elder and deacon, and we talked about this last time, elder is the shepherd, deacon is the servant. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the shepherds, the elders, are to be like Jesus in the way they shepherd. Jesus is the servant of the Lord who came not to be served but to serve. Humble servant. And the deacons are to be like the ultimate servant. And as the elders are shepherding like Jesus, they're saying to all of the other brothers and sisters, "Follow me as I follow Christ." And as the deacons are learning to serve like Jesus, they say to all the brothers and sisters, "Follow me as I follow Christ." And all of us are called to follow every other believer who's following Jesus, and there are ways in which we all are called to lead and we talked about this last time. Your spiritual gifts, as you use them, and you exemplify an aspect of Christ's glorious character that excels where another believer is, that believer is supposed to rejoice in that and follow you as you follow Christ and there's this beautiful reciprocity that happens. But he's saying it starts though with prioritizing what God prioritizes and God prioritizes character over skill. He prioritizes being over doing.

I believe it was John Wesley who said in talking to young men who were preparing for ministry, he said, "It's your job to deepen your message. It's your job to deepen your message with, of course, God's grace, God's power but that's your focus is to deepen your message, it's God's job to broaden your ministry. You deepen who you are in Christ by loving Him and seeking Him, and God will increase and broaden your ministry." We tend to flip that around backwards. We want to broaden our ministry and think we'll catch up on the message later. We'll catch up on the character later. I certainly want to do that, but I need to minister all that I can. But the focus really biblically is, no, follow Jesus, love him, be like him, and then God will take care of widening your ministry. That's what we see here.

These 15 qualifications, only one of the 15 is about skill, number 7, able to teach. All the rest are about character. So first, he says in verse 2, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach," and that's the first subpoint, above reproach. It's interesting, this is the first one that, though it doesn't appear in the English translation, literally, it's the first alpha privative. An alpha privative is a fancy way of saying a word with an "a" at the beginning. You know, when you have, we do this all the time, we put an "a" in front of a word to negate the meaning of the word. You know, amoral means it's not a morality

issue. Moral, a, means not moral. Do you see that? Everything's moral, by the way. I just happened to pick that as an example because God has a will about everything. But, you see what I'm saying, alpha privative.

So, this is actually an alpha privative. It means not reproachable, literally, and it's interesting that of these 15 qualifications, six of them start with that, "it's not this." Nine of them are positive affirmations and six are, "but not this." Negative. Not reproachable. It means that there's nothing anyone can grab onto to censure this man. There's no obvious cause of censure. There's no observable flaw that you can grab onto and say, "What's the problem here?" And so, it means you're looking for people who, when you look at their life, and not just from a distance, as you get close to them, there's nothing obvious, no obvious flaws that say, "There's some real issues here." If you see a real issue, that person's not yet ready for this office. That's what he's saying. We all have sin. It doesn't mean sinless. It can't mean faultless completely. No. We all are sinful. We all have faults. We will till Jesus comes back or till we die. But there's a sense in which these men are out front and there's not an obvious open area of concern.

Secondly, subpoint B, I guess, alphabetically, will be challenging as I go through. I didn't write that down in my notes. I wrote them down 1, 2, 3, 4. B, husband of one wife. Husband of one wife. Now, what does that mean? Does it mean an elder must be married? Does it mean that you can't be an elder if you're not married? Does it mean you have to, if you've been widowed, you can't remarry? Does it mean, is it just saying you can't be married to two women at once because polygamy in the past has been something that was a reality? To answer that question thoroughly would take a lot more time than we have today. Let me say this, that all of Scripture informs how we understand this. All of Scripture has to be brought to bear, and I think what's going on here is he's basically saying that, no, you don't have to be married to be an elder. You can be single and be an elder. Paul was. Jesus was for that matter. This is where Scripture interprets Scripture. I mean, clearly, it can't mean that. To be widowed and not remarried, that can't mean that. It seems more likely that it means, literally, the Greek could be interpreted instead of husband of one wife, a one-woman man. The word for husband and wife in Greek, the word "husband" can be translated "man," the word "wife" can be translated "woman," and these words are translated that way based on context. Exactly the same word. And I think that's a higher standard, actually, than just, has someone not been divorced before? Now, it certainly means someone who's not been divorced unbiblically. If a man left his wife sinfully and remarried, even if he repented later, I think that would mean he's not above reproach and calls into question his character. This is talking about someone who is devoted to his wife. He's a one-woman man. He's pure. He's seeking purity. He's walking in faithfulness. And this is a requirement for both offices we're going to see, elder and deacon. Purity of the body of Christ is so important to God and the very fact of marriage being as sacred as it is because it pictures the gospel. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and a man who's not faithful to his wife is lying about Christ because we are a representation of Christ and the church.

So it must be a husband of one wife, a one-woman man, a man given to purity and pursuing holiness. Thirdly, or C, temperate. Verse 2, "husband of one wife temperate." Some translations say "sober-minded." Literally it does mean sober, clear-headed, not

drunk, not drunk naturally but has the figurative meaning of just being clear-headed. An elder must be someone who sees things as they are. This is something he hits quite a bit in these next couple of attributes as well.

D is prudent. Temperate, prudent. Your translation may say "temperate, self-controlled," or "sober-minded, self-controlled," depending on which Bible you're reading. So prudent, self-controlled are the two ways it's most often translated. The word can also be translated "sensible." The word "prudent" literally in the Greek means "a saved mind." It's from the word "sozo" for "salvation" and the word "friend" which means "mind." And so it means a saved mind. A prudent person has a mind that is reflecting his salvation. He sees now, like we read earlier from the scriptures, Boone read from John 9, that you're born blind but when you're saved you're given spiritual sight, you see things as they truly are. You suddenly see God as he is. You see sin as it is. And a saved mind thinks differently about all aspects of life. There's a sense of seriousness where things need to be serious. This man is prudent. He knows what to think about a situation.

So temperate, prudent, E, respectable. Respectable. Interesting. These two words I think "prudent and respectable" put a nice counterbalancing package together. Prudent speaks of the inner man, saved mind from the inside. He thinks. He has a new heart and he thinks in line with that new heart. But respectable is actually the Greek word "kosmios" which is related to the word kosmos, world, or kosmeo, to adorn. And it's a word which means "ordered; well ordered; it looks good from the outside." And what he's saying is the elder must be a man who on the inside has it together, he sees things as they are from the heart, he has a saved mind, but he also has an ordered life. The outside matches the inside. And you can see as you think about these, these are the kind of people we want to follow, aren't they? Observable order and so therefore respectable, inspiring respect. That's why it's translated that way.

F, the next in the list is hospitable, literally in the Greek "a lover of strangers." An elder must be someone who has a kind and welcoming heart to strangers. In this day, of course it meant often a willingness to bring strangers into your home because there weren't hotels and there was not the availability of those kinds of things and so when somebody came in they needed a place to stay and so elders needed to be models of that kind of hospitality as well. And certainly that's true today too but just not quite the same level of it or necessity of it as it was in those days but still the same heart. When you meet someone new, what's your disposition toward that person? Elders need to be people who have a kindness and a generosity toward new people. An open, welcoming heart like the heart of God.

G, able to teach. This is one skill in the list. Able to teach, the only skill in the 15 qualifications. This means that you've mastered a certain level of understanding of the gospel and the Scriptures so that you are then able to handle the word accurately. It doesn't mean that every elder has to be able to preach. That's not what it's saying. But able to teach, able to explain the Scriptures clearly. A lot of elders have more of a one-on-one ministry because we minister the word two ways. You have the public ministry of the word, preaching, teaching, Bible studies, and you have the private ministry of the word, one-on-one or one person to just a couple of people, that's the ministry of the word

as well. And we have to teach the word in both settings. Elders have to be able to teach the word and some are going to be more in the public declaration and preaching of the word and others are going to be more in the private ministry of the word. One of the things we realize, though, is that we do need to have as a part of our process, and we're committed to doing this going forward, we've done this in the past, we didn't do it so well all the time, but it's to allow you to hear the elder candidates teach before we vote. Even though, like I said, they don't all have to be super skilled at it, you need to understand and you can have an opportunity to see how they handle the word.

H or eight, not addicted to wine. Other translations say "not given to drunkenness or not a drunkard." Literally, the Greek says "not staying long beside the wine." The word para, which means beside and oinos, which means wine. So it's not beside the wine. He doesn't stay beside the wine. It's important to note this means this is not forbidding all consumption of alcohol but it's saying that you're not one who is defined by it. And I think when you add together with it the word "temperate" from above, C, you get the idea that elders must be exemplary in the way that they stand in relation to any kind of alcohol. There's no hint of being addicted or given to it or dependent on it or affected by it. And many, of course, will just abstain completely. But the Scripture doesn't call for that in every circumstance and we need to be careful not to say what God doesn't say.

I or nine, not pugnacious. Here we get back into those alpha privatives. Not addicted to wine, not pugnacious. Other translations say "not violent." Literally, the Greek word here is "not a striker; not a puncher." That's a good rule for elders, you know. You have elders that when you bother them a little bit, they just knock your lights out, you know. No, he has to move to deacon. He can only be a deacon if he's a puncher. No, but the idea is not quick tempered, you know, not someone who becomes combative or hostile in conversation, in moments where other people get heated, the elder doesn't.

He's developed a heart that is going to be as number 10 or J, gentle. He's not pugnacious, but gentle. He's not a striker, but he's gentle. Like these three, 9, 10, and 11 are I, J, and K, work together pretty nicely. Not pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, 11. Literally, that is better translated "not quarrelsome." Most translations say that. The New American Standard actually got this one, I think, not the best. Peaceable would be better translated not quarrelsome or not combative. It's another word which speaks of fighting, but this one is more military combat. Not pugnacious, number 9 was not a striker, not a puncher. Number 11 is not someone who is combative, not someone who goes to war, and in the middle of this sandwich, you're talking about not violent, not combative, not violent, not quarrelsome, but peaceable. The middle of the sandwich is this beautiful characteristic of peaceable. It means to be equitable, fair. It does picture gentleness. I'm sorry, I messed that up. Peaceable is confusing me, because it's actually, it's not pugnacious, not quarrelsome, but gentle is the word in the middle. The New American Standard translates that eleventh word, peaceable, and that confused me for a moment. I apologize. It's gentle, that's equitable, fair, and appropriate, and it has really, the root idea of this word for gentle comes from a word which means image, actually. I mean, the root of it comes from a word which means image, and the idea is that this person, rather than getting angry and fighting, he is acting in such a way as once you see it, you're like, that's the way that any godly man or any just genuine man who has control of himself should live.

That's a perfect picture of what a leader should be. Other people are getting violent in their attitudes, other people are being quarrelsome, but this man is gentle. He's able to speak the truth firmly. He's able to, as Titus 1:9 says, not only to exhort in sound doctrine, but to refute those who contradict, but he's to do so in a gentle way. He's like, Paul uses the same word in 2 Timothy 2:24 when he says the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but gentle, patient when wronged. So it's a beautiful picture of what a leader needs to be. Someone who's quickly angry, quarrels, enjoys a fight, enjoys a verbal sparring match. There's some people who just enjoy arguing, right? And I know there's some people who are skilled and gifted in apologetics, and I don't mean that. You can do apologetics, you can have discussions, you can argue a case without being argumentative. You can be convincing and compelling and earnest, but still gentle and kind at the same time and it comes from the Spirit of Christ transforming us and having his meekness. This is what Paul is saying needs to be true of the leader.

So we're now at number 12, free from the love of money. Free from the love of money. An elder must not be a lover of money. Paul's going to say in 1 Corinthians 6 that all manner of evil comes from the love of money. Now money is not the root of evil. The love of money is the root of evil and the Christians should not love money, and certainly the leadership in the church should not love money because the love of money shows that your heart is trusting not in God but in your own resources.

13. He must be one who manages his own household well. We touched on this earlier, but to manage means to stand out in front, to lead, and it's interesting here, he points out in verses 4 and 5, verse 4, manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. So he manages his whole household, but especially his children, and he keeps them under control with all dignity.

This is important because I want you to look with me, just turn a couple of books over, just a few pages, toward the back of your Bible, to Titus 1, the other list of 19 qualifications for elders in Titus 1, and I want to mention one of the qualifications which is sometimes misunderstood. Look at verse 6, "namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward." He's talking about, again, the same qualifications, the same office, overseer, elder. He says the husband of one wife, just like he did in 1 Timothy 3, he says, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. I point that out because there have been times where solid churches have disqualified men from eldership because their children were not believers. Now it seems like at first glance, when you look at Titus 1:6, that that's what it's saying. Children who believe, you have to have children who believe. But in fact, the Greek is a little more complex than that. It's a word, the word translated "children who believe" is the Greek adjective pistos, which is related to the Greek noun pistis, which means faith, believe and it could mean children who believe. But the word pistos has a broader range of meaning. Every word has a semantic range. Think about that. The word love. Look how many different ways we use the word love. I love my wife. I love the Lord. I love a good barbecue sandwich. All of those in slightly different levels, right? Actually, greatly different levels. Pray for me. The word love has a range of meaning and so this word pistos has a range of meaning. It can mean believing and so it could mean children who

believe, but it can also mean the word *pistos* comes from a root, *pathos*, to persuade and so it can also mean persuaded and under control. And so the word translated "children who believe" could be translated as legitimately "children who are persuaded or who are under control."

And you look at what he says right after that, "not accused of dissipation or rebellion," and it makes you think maybe that's what he's saying. But if you go back to 1 Timothy 3, to the parallel passage, and you look at what he's saying in 1 Timothy 3, I think it seals the deal of what God was meaning when he said that in Titus 1:5. When he says, "He must be one who manages his own household, keeping his children under control with all dignity," it's the same idea. Keeping your children under control with all dignity means that an elder must be someone whose children are not out of control. They're not just utterly rebellious while they're in his home. But it doesn't mean that if they choose to be unbelievers as adults, he's disqualified because I think the text doesn't say that.

And then you also have to let all of Scripture speak to it. Does it make sense in the light of Scripture? I mean, if it does, David's disqualified. Abraham's disqualified. Solomon's disqualified. Everybody in the Old Testament is disqualified to be an elder. In fact, we don't know enough about all our New Testament elders to know if they were or not. We don't know about Peter's sons or John's, right? But it's clear when you put it together, that he's saying it doesn't mean that they have to be believers, but it means the man must have his home in order in such a way that his children, even if they don't believe, they respect him. He's carried himself in such a way that his children have a measure of regard for him. They know he loves them, and they know that he's tried to lead them, even if they reject his Savior. I hope that makes sense and helps.

Just to give you an example, years ago, John MacArthur's church, and John MacArthur's one of my favorite preachers of all time, and Stuart Scott, a wonderful man of God stepped down from being an elder because his children were unbelievers as adults. Well, about 10 or 15 years later, Stuart came back to Grace Community Church in Los Angeles as an elder because they had reformed their position in light of this, what I just shared with you today. It's not really saying you have to have children who believe. It's saying children who are persuaded and under authority.

So that's number 13. Now number 14, it says, "not a new convert lest he become conceited and fall in the condemnation of the devil." To elevate someone too quickly, he argues against. In fact, in chapter 5, he's going to also say, "Don't lay your hands on anyone too hastily." The idea is slower is better when it comes to elevating men to the office of elder. It can endanger their souls, and that's a very strong warning, that if you elevate a new convert, he can become conceited and fall in the condemnation incurred by the devil. This is one of the things that distresses me so much when you see people get saved in the culture. You know, well-known people get saved in the culture, and the first thing everybody does is have them come and preach. It's just like totally so irresponsible for that person's soul. It's like they need to be disciplined. They need to learn. Paul, when he got saved, he spent three years before the Lord really released him to ministry. So, this is important for us to remember this. This is why an elder must be someone who's been at

the church for a significant amount of time. That's one of the things that we really dig into. But as you consider, remember this, not a new convert.

And then the 15th qualification is, "must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into the reproach and snare of the devil." That is, that if Satan can discredit the church because of a bad reputation of an elder of the church, he will do it, and it will be a snare to the church. Reproach will fall on the church because of this man's bad reputation outside the church. So, you have to do some examination of that. That's part of what the elders do as a part of vetting candidates but it's also something that you should be aware of as you pray and consider.

Character comes first. Being comes before doing. You deepen your message. God broadens your ministry. The path to leadership is not to want the office for the sake of power. In fact, if that's why someone aspires to the office, then they're disqualified by all the other lists in the qualification. The aspiration to the office should be a God-given burden and concern and a desire to serve others, not a desire to be in a position.

The Lord knows that we all need to be led, every one of us. We need leaders who are like Christ. I want to share a quote with you from a wonderful man of God in the 19th century, a man named Robert Murray M'Cheyne. He died at 30 years old. He had had a very brief ministry, but he was so mightily used of the Lord, his preaching was so powerful, he had such a humble heart, that it said that when Robert Murray M'Cheyne died at 30 years old, all of Scotland mourned. The whole country went into mourning for a man who was only 30 years old because of the impact he had had. There's a letter he wrote to a young man who was studying theology, had left his church and was studying theology, and he sent him a letter and he said, he says to this young man, "I know that you'll work hard at Greek and Hebrew but," he said, "do not forget the culture of the inner man, I mean of the heart. How diligently the Cavalry officer keeps his saber clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember, you are God's sword, His instrument, I trust, a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents that God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus."

A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. How true that is for ministers, how true that is for all elders, how true that is for every Christian. If we pursue purity and holiness and likeness to Jesus, we become awful weapons in the hand of a holy God. May the Lord grant us men like that to lead our church and help those that are already there to be more like that.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we thank You for the grace of the gospel. We understand, Lord, that we are sinners as we look at this list, see how far short I come, and I know my brother elders are challenged with the same thing. And yet, Lord, we want to be like Christ. We want to pursue holiness and godliness with an intensity that would please You, that our hearts would be like David, who had a heart after Your heart. And, Father, that You would create in this church more and more of that kind of loving faith and holiness in all of us.

We confess we're sheep, we're prone to wander. We need Your shepherding power and grace at work in our lives. Lord Jesus, keep bringing us back and helping us to help one another. We pray that You will raise up the eldership that You want at this church, that You'll give us new men, Lord, if it's Your will to take on the task, we pray that You will help the ones that are already in place to continue to become more like Christ. We pray that You'll help us all be better followers. As we saw last week, Lord, you can't be in authority unless you're under authority. Help us to be humble, teachable, loving saints of God and because we're humble and teachable and under authority, make us mighty weapons in Your hand. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.