

Introduction

In the 2016 Presidential race, I was really disappointed by what one influential Christian leader, Jerry Falwell, Jr., said about the candidate that he was endorsing, Donald Trump. He spoke about how his father had endorsed Ronald Reagan rather than Jimmy Carter. He said of his father, *“When he walked into the voting booth, he wasn’t electing a Sunday school teacher or a pastor or even a president who shared his theological beliefs; he was electing the president of the United States with the talents, abilities and experience required to lead a nation.”* Falwell went on to say that we need someone who can lead our nation and fix our problems. Falwell put capability before character. I believe that we need people of character and capability. When looking at the qualifications of a pastor, both character and capability are important. Without either one of these wheels on the bike, it will not work.

Two weeks ago we began looking at five fingers that pointed to the calling of an elder. First, there was the Holy Spirit, and this generally comes through a prophetic word. Second, there was the inward desire of the man; he will aspire to the office. Third, there was the finger of the presbytery, which would include apostles and elders. Fourth, there was the finger of the congregation. The fifth finger was the qualifications of the elder. Paul gave Titus and Timothy lists of qualifications for the office of overseer. The lists are very similar, but not identical. We have been going through the list in Titus. An elder must be above reproach, and last week we focused on being above reproach in his family life. This week, we will look at being above reproach in his character, and being able to exhort in sound doctrine. Let’s read our text.

(Titus 1:7-9) *“For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, {8} but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, {9} holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”*

Qualifications Of An Elder

1. Above Reproach
 - A. Above Reproach In His Family Life (7/28/19)
 - B. Above Reproach in His Character
2. Able To Exhort In Sound Doctrine

B. Above Reproach In His Character

An elder must also be above reproach in his character. Paul said, for the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward. Notice again that Titus is to appoint elders in every city and now he calls them overseers. They are one and the same. The KJV says “the bishop must be blameless...” A bishop is just another term for overseer, and it is another term for the same office. Paul also says as God’s steward. The Greek word is oikonomos, which is a house steward or servant. An elder or overseer is the manager of God’s house. Paul does not go into the abilities of a manager here, but it is implied by the use of the terms, overseer and steward. In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul said that stewards need to be trustworthy. In Luke 12:42, Jesus asked, “who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?” Stewards also need to be faithful and sensible or wise. God is looking for faithful and wise servants to feed His flock at the proper time.

(Titus 1:7a) “For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward...”

(1 Cor 4:2) “In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”

(Luke 12:42-44) “And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? {43} Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. {44} Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

About eight years ago I looked for an accountant to take over the accounting for our company. What was I looking for? I wanted someone that I could trust. You need someone who is honest and trustworthy handling your money. There was a man named Roger in our men’s group at church who was a CPA. I had grown to trust and respect Roger, so I asked him to come to work for us. Roger joined our company and has done an excellent job with our finances for the past eight years. You must have someone trustworthy handling your money. The church has the same need for men that are trustworthy. We need trustworthy servants handling the finances of the church, and more importantly, the true riches, God’s people.

Paul gives eleven different character qualities of a faithful overseer and steward. There are five negative characteristics that he cannot be (the NOTS), and six positive character qualities (the BUTS) that he must possess.

In 1980 I was playing the PGA Tour. I noticed that I was getting dizzy spells later in my rounds. I went to the doctor and he did some blood work. He told me that my blood sugar was low, calling it hypoglycemia. He said this could turn into diabetes if I did not address it. He gave me a list of NOTS and a list of BUTS. Under the NOTS, I was NOT to eat or drink sugar. That meant that I had to stop drinking Dr. Peppers and I had to watch my desserts. I was NOT to have any caffeine, which meant no more tea and Dr. Peppers. I was NOT to eat a lot of carbs, which turn to sugar. BUT, I was to eat more proteins and to eat more frequently, like five times a day. So, I got off Dr. Peppers in 1980 and have not had one since. I began to be more careful with my diet. A few years later I began to fast regularly and I noticed that my hypoglycemia was completely gone. God had healed me of that condition, and I did not struggle with it any longer.

Paul gave Titus five NOTS and six BUTS. The list of NOTS are detrimental and damaging to a person’s character, reputation, relationships and ability to minister to other. These are things that just won’t work in the life of a pastor. They will cause great harm to him and the flock. Then, there are six positive characteristics that will greatly enhance a pastor’s ministry and positively affect his reputation.

(Titus 1:7-8) “For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward...”	
NOTS	BUTS
1. not self-willed,	1. hospitable,
2. not quick-tempered,	2. loving what is good,
3. not addicted to wine,	3. sensible,
4. not pugnacious,	4. just,
5. not fond of sordid gain,	5. devout,
	6. self-controlled,

The first NOT is to be self-willed. The job of an overseer is to do God's will, not his own will. When Jesus came, He did nothing on His own. He did not seek His own will, but the will of the Father. (See John 5:30, and John 6:38.) When Jesus prayed, He prayed, "Not My will, but Thy will be done." (See Matthew 6:10, Luke 22:42). Elders need to follow Jesus' example and seek the will of the Father, and not be self-willed. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and elders are under shepherds. Elders need to seek the will of Jesus the Chief Shepherd, who is also the Head of the church. (See 1 Peter 5:4 and Ephesians 5:23.) Elders are examples to the flock. All of us are to pray, "Thy will be done," and to seek His will. The church needs elders that are not self-willed. A self-willed pastor brings great harm to the ministry.

On the way to church this morning, Karen and I passed a couple walking their two dogs. One dog was tiny and the other was very big. Karen commented that it was about the same size of her Great Pyrenees. She has had five of them. They are Livestock Guardian Dogs or LGDs. She loved them, but I was never very fond of them. They are self-willed. If you call them, they run the other way. In fairness to Karen, they like to have about 100 acres to guard. If you put them in a five-acre lot, they will always be trying to escape and roam around. If you try to catch them, they will keep running away. They will come home when they are good and ready to come home. But, they are self-willed. My Labrador retrievers would stay with you and come with you called, but the Pyrenees just wouldn't do that.

The second NOT is to be quick-tempered. Solomon taught that a man that is easily angered will cause strife. (Pr 29:22) He also exhorted us not to associate with a man given to anger or go with a hot-tempered man, lest we learn his ways and find a snare for ourselves (Pr 22:24-25). Since an elder is an example, we do not want others learning his ways. God wants His house to be a place of peace, not strife. He wants all of us to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of men does not accomplish the righteousness of God. The elders are to be those who set an example of being slow to anger. A quick-tempered pastor will cause great harm to himself and to the church.

(Pr 22:24-25) "Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, {25} Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself."

(Pr 29:22) "An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

(James 1:19-20) "*This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; {20} for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

My freshman year of college I was too young to drive. I had to hitch rides with a team mate every day. I generally rode with Kevin, and he had a temper. He would yell, cuss, and throw clubs. It was not long before I was yelling and throwing clubs. I learned his ways. I became a Christian that next year, and God began to transform my life. He took away that hot temper and made me slow to anger, or patient. An elder is an example to the flock and you do not want the sheep learning to throw clubs and copy bad behavior. You want them to pattern their lives after a man who is patient, gentle, and self-controlled.

The third NOT is to be addicted to wine. The Greek word is *parainos*, which means given to wine or drunkenness. God does not tell us not to drink wine; He tells us that we cannot be addicted or given to wine. Paul wrote Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach and frequent

ailments (1 Tim 5:23). At the same time, he wrote the Ephesians and said, “do not be drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Solomon wrote that he who is intoxicated by wine is not wise (Pr 20:1). He exhorted us not to be with a heavy drinker of wine (Pr 23:20). Jesus made water into wine, and He drank wine. John the Baptist did not drink wine. I believe we have freedom about drinking wine, but there are strong cautions against drinking too much wine. We saw in our study of Genesis that Noah had too much wine one evening. We saw that Jacob had too much wine one evening and did not know that he went to bed with the wrong woman on his wedding night. We have to be extremely careful with our use of wine or any alcoholic beverage. An elder cannot be one who is given to wine. An addition to wine will cause great harm to a pastor and to the church.

The fourth NOT is to be pugnacious. The KJV says he must not be a striker. The Greek word is *plektes*, which means a striker or one who is quarrelsome. A quarrelsome pastor will cause great strife, division, and harm to the church, and its witness to the world.

The fifth NOT relates to money, and this was a problem in Crete. There were men teaching things for sordid gain. An overseer must not be fond of sordid gain. The KJV says not given to filthy lucre. Elders cannot be greedy men. When Peter gave three exhortations to elders in 1 Peter 5:2-3, he exhorted them not to shepherd for sordid gain or filthy lucre, but with eagerness. Pastors need to have the right motives, and it should not be for money. The word for eagerness is *prothumos*, which means with passion. Pastors should pastor because they are passionate about it. Last week when I spoke an overseer aspiring to the office, Peter’s exhortation ties right in. An overseer should have an inward desire or passion to shepherd God’s flock. It has nothing to do with money. Peter also said that they should not do it under compulsion, but voluntarily. Some have misinterpreted this passage and taught that pastors are to do it for free, which is not correct. The word voluntarily means willfully. (See Strong’s G1596, *hekousios*.) They are passionate about pastoring and have set their will on doing what God has called them to do. They are not being made to pastor. They are not being pressured to pastor. They know that this is God’s will for their life and they do it willfully and passionately. Paul taught very clearly that pastors should be honored and paid for their work.

(1 Pet 5:2-3) “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; {3} nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

A number of years ago a Senior Pastor told me about his wages. He had counted up his hours of studying, preparing messages, counseling, etc. and divided it into his wages. He said he was only making a few dollars an hour, way under minimum wage. The man was making \$48,000.00 a year as the pastor, and for the size of his congregation, that was pretty good. But, the pastor had the wrong attitude. A pastor does not pastor for money; he pastors because he is called, and he has a passion and desire to pastor. Churches should take care of their pastors, but pastors should not be doing it to become wealthy.

Now, Paul turns to the positive list of characteristics. The first BUT is to be hospitable. Someone who is hospitable loves to have people over to his house for meals or to stay. The Greek word is *philoxenos* (Strong’s G5382), which means a lover of strangers. My daughter, Kathleen, has often told me that I have never met a stranger. I love talking to strangers. I have a desire to share the gospel and minister to others, and I strike up conversations with strangers all the time. God

wants His church to be friendly and hospitable. He wants us to invite strangers into our own homes and into His home, the church. Elders should set the example for the rest of the flock for loving strangers.

Hebrews 13:2 says that we should not neglect to show hospitality to strangers. This is really at the heart of what hospitality is all about. Many people are willing to have their family or a friend over, but how many are willing to open up their homes to strangers. An elder is one who shows hospitality to everyone.

(Heb 13:2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."

There are many pastors today who build walls around their lives. They have privacy walls and do not want people to see into their lives. Many have unlisted cell phone numbers so that other people, including church members, cannot call them. They have a select few that they let into their inner circle, and only these have phone rights. God says that an elder needs to invite strangers into his life and home. Pastors need to tear down the walls and be with the people. Overseers need to be models of hospitality, because God wants a church full of people who show hospitality. Karen and I used to have a different family over for lunch on Sunday every week. We were cooking for ten plus people anyway, what was a few extra? There is something very special about sharing meals with one another. We developed some very special relationships with people, and also had the opportunity to minister to many people through the platform of hospitality.

Overseers need to model hospitality, but the church needs to follow the example. In Romans 12:13, Paul writes that we all need to practice hospitality. In 1 Timothy 5:10, when a church is considering whether to take on the responsibility of caring for a widow, one of the considerations is whether she has shown hospitality to strangers. In Hebrews 13:2, we are commanded not to neglect showing hospitality to strangers. There is an added benefit given there, that through hospitality some have entertained angels without knowing it. Do you need or want a message from God? Learn to practice hospitality on a regular basis, and you may entertain a messenger from God.

(Rom 12:13) "contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality."

(1 Tim 5:10) "having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work."

(Heb 13:2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."

The second BUT is to love what is good. Paul wrote the Romans and told them to abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. Too often, we don't hate the things that God hates and love the things that He loves. I have asked God to help me hate what He hates and love what He loves. God is good, and He loves what is good. Elders need to love what is good. In Proverbs 6:16-19, Solomon tells us six things the Lord hates and seven which are an abomination to Him. We have to hate what God hates and love what God loves. God loves justice. God loves righteousness. God loves what is good, and an elder must love what is good.

The third BUT is to be sensible. The KJV says they must be sober. The Greek word is *sophronos*, which means of sound mind. You want those leading a church and making decisions that affect everyone to make sensible decisions. You want them to have a sound mind and make sound decisions. Seventy-five percent of pastors that the Schaeffer Institute surveyed felt they were unqualified and/or poorly trained by their seminaries to lead and manage the church. To me, I think that pastors should recognize the fact that they need the rest of the body. Pastors need the wisdom that businessmen have and should seek their counsel. Pastors need the wisdom of contractors and should seek their counsel. It is okay not to be an expert in every area.

The fourth BUT is to be just. Both the KJV and the NASB use the word just. It means to be righteous. The overwhelming characteristic of elders is righteousness. They need to be just, upright, righteous men of God. Again, these character qualities are for all of us, not just elders. They simply model them for the church. They are the pattern the church uses. In Micah 6:8, God tells us, “*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*” God wants all of us to be just and to practice justice.

The fifth BUT is to be devout. The KJV says they must be holy. The Greek word is *hosios* (Strong’s G3741), which means holy. God calls us saints, which means holy ones. All of us are to be *hosios* or holy ones. The word saint is used sixty-nine times in the Bible. God refers to us in the New Testament as saints, not sinners. He tells us to be holy just as He is holy. We are to act holy because we are holy. We are not sinners who occasionally act holy. We are holy ones whose lives should be characterized by holy living. Elders are examples of holy lives.

The sixth BUT is to be self-controlled. The KJV says temperate. We are not to be self-willed, but we are to be self-controlled. The Greek word is *enkrates* (Strong’s G1468), and it means to be strong in something, masterful, or self-controlled (in appetite, etc.). I believe that self-controlled is a very good description. Self-control is the answer to many of the NOTS. A man who has self-control will not be addicted to wine. A man who has self-control will not be quick-tempered. A man who has self-control will not be pugnacious.

One of the areas that we need self-control is in our speech. James said that “we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” If you can control your tongue, then you will be able to control the rest of your body. For pastors, who are charged with teaching and feeding the flock, this is really important. Therefore, James said, “let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.” Elders need self-control in their speech, and when they fail in this area, they face a stricter judgment.

(James 3:1-2) “Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. {2} For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.”

Solomon said that a man who has no control over his spirit is like a city that is broken into and without walls. In other words, self-control protects our lives just like a wall around a city. The pastors of a flock are to protect the flock, so self-control is even more important for them.

Proverbs 25:28 *Like* a city that is broken into *and* without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

How do we get self-control? I believe that we learn to have self-control. We learn to have self-control in our eating. We learn to have self-control in what we look at. We learn to have self-control in our thought life. Paul told the Corinthians that we take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 10:5). This takes discipline. Paul told the Philippians not to be anxious about anything but to dwell on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, excellent, of good repute and worthy of praise (Phil 4:6-8). This takes self-control in our thought life. I think that we learn to have self-control in areas of our life. I also believe that we have to make a determination in advance that we will not do certain things. Job was that way. He said in Job 31:1, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Still another way is to walk in the Spirit. In Galatians 5:16 that if we walk by the Spirit, we will not carry out the desire of the flesh. Therefore, we have to set our mind on the things of the spirit. When we do that, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23 we find that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Elders need to be men who have self-control and are walking in the spirit.

2. Able To Exhort In Sound Doctrine (Titus 1:9)

Paul has mentioned that an overseer must be above reproach as God's steward. An elder must be capable of overseeing and managing the affairs of the church. An elder must be a good steward. We looked at some of those qualities, like being faithful, sensible, wise, and trustworthy. In these last two verses, Paul addresses a different area he must be capable in – Word Ministry. An elder must hold "fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." An elder must be well grounded in God's word. He must know truth. He must be able to discern truth and error, and to refute those who contradict.

(Titus 1:9) "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul exhorts us to be diligent to present ourselves approved to God as workmen who do not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. The KJV says that we need to study to shew ourselves approved unto God, as workmen that do not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Elders need to accurately handle the word of truth. They need to be able to rightly divide the word of truth. Elders are those who have studied diligently and are workmen who have been approved by God.

(2 Tim 2:15) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

(2 Tim 2:15 KJV) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

In Hebrews 5:14, we see that solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Elders are those who have studied and practiced, and trained their senses to discern good and evil. They know how to rightly divide the word of God. They know the difference between sound doctrine and false doctrine.

(Heb 5:14) “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

Conclusion & Applications

Elders are those who should be role models for the church in how to behave. They are to be slow to anger, have self-control, and live holy lives. Elders are those who have a love for God’s people and are zealous for the local church. Elders are those who have a love for God’s word and are workmen who handle the word accurately. A church that has elders like this will be well on its way to being set in order.

How are you doing in the various character qualities? Are you patient or short-fused? Do you have self-control in your words? Do you show self-control in what you watch or what you look at? Are you living a holy and upright life? Does your life adorn the gospel of Christ?

How is your word life? Are you studying to show yourself approved to God as a workman? Are you training your senses to discern good and evil? How is your word life?

Whether you are called to be an elder or not, God wants all of us to display these traits and characteristics in our lives. Take a few minutes and write down two things that have stood out this morning that you want to work on in your life. Then, take a minute to ask God to help you grow in these areas. Let’s pray.

Introduction (Titus 1:7-9)**Qualifications Of An Elder****1.B. Above Reproach In His Character** (Tit 1:7a, 1 Cor 4, Luke 12:42)**NOTS**

1. Not self-willed (John 5:30, 6:38, Matt 6:10, Luke 22:42, 1 Pet 5:4, Eph 5:23)
2. NOT quick-tempered. (Pr 29:22, 22:24-25, James 1:19-20)
3. NOT addicted to wine. (1 Tim 5:23, Eph 5:18, Pr 20:1, 23:20)
4. NOT pugnacious or a striker
5. Not fond of sordid gain (1 Pet 5:2-3)

BUTS

1. BUT hospitable (Heb 13:2, Rom 12:13, 1 Tim 5:10)
2. BUT love what is good
3. BUT sensible or sober
4. BUT be just (Micah 6:8)
5. BUT devout or holy
6. BUT self-controlled or temperate (James 3:1-2, Pro 25:28, 2 Cor 10:5, Phil 4:6-8, Job 31:1, Gal 5:16-23)

3. **Able To Exhort In Sound Doctrine** (Titus 1:9, 2 Tim 2:15, Heb 5:14)

Conclusion & Applications