

Introduction

In recent elections there has been a divide in the church over the candidates running for office. Many people were focused on the ability of the candidates to run our nation, and they were willing to overlook some character issues. Some prominent Christians said that we are electing a president to run our country, not a pastor in a church, and that a candidate's ability to lead was far more important than some character flaws. Other people were focused on the character of the candidates, and their ability to lead our country were secondary. While the character of the candidates was bad, some determined that certain sins were worse than others and made their choice on the lesser of two evils. One noted Bible teacher emphasized the seriousness of pride and that they could not vote for a prideful person. The fact that the other candidate supported abortion and even the murder of unwanted babies at birth was not as grievous to him as pride.

We are in the midst of a short series on overseers in the church. Last week in Part 1 we looked at the need for overseers, the office of overseer, and the calling of an overseer. We saw that overseers, bishops, elders, shepherds, and pastors all refer to the same office. The various terms help us understand the office, the character, and the work of overseers. The term elder refers to the spiritual maturity of the candidate. The term, pastor or shepherd, refers to how the elder is to feed and care for the flock. The term, overseer, refers to the work, management and leadership of the elder. The terms have been misunderstood and misapplied, but they are all very helpful in understanding the office of overseer.

Overseers – Part 1

1. Need for Overseers
2. Office of Overseer
3. Calling of Overseer

Unlike our differences over the selection of government leaders, the Bible is very clear about the qualifications of those who are going to manage God's house. A person desiring to be an overseer must have excellent CHARACTER and be CAPABLE before being ordained as an overseer. When a candidate is deficient in one of these areas, we do not vote for the candidate with the least amount of sinful behavior; we simply do not raise up the candidate at that time.

There are two passages that address the qualifications of an overseer. The passages are very similar, but they come with a different objective. In Titus 1:5-9, Paul gave Titus the qualifications that he should be considering when ordaining elders in every city. In 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul gave Timothy the qualifications of an overseer that someone who is aspiring to the office should have. A person who aspires to the office of overseer should be reaching for and striving towards these qualifications. Since the two lists are very similar, we will be focusing on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 today.

In Part 2 we are going to look at the qualifications of an overseer. Second, will take a brief look at the ordination of the overseer. Next week, Joe Warner will be joining us and we will be ordaining Tom Swenson as an elder in our church.

Overseers – Part 2

4. Qualifications for an Overseer
5. Ordination of an Overseer

(1 Ti 3:1–7) “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.”

4. Qualifications for an Overseer

A. Character of an Overseer

The first character quality mentioned is that an overseer must be above reproach. He must be above reproach in his family life, his personal character, and with those outside the church. There are two different Greek words used in this passage for reproach. In verse two, the Greek word is *anepileptos* (Strong’s G423), which means not arrested. It literally means someone that has not been seized, caught, or taken a hold of. The implication is a person who has been charged with a crime, and arrested, and held captive. A man who is an elder is one that is not charged with any known crimes, offenses, or things that could discredit him or the church. He is above reproach.

(1 Ti 3:2–7) “An overseer, then, must be above **reproach**... {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.”

In verse seven, Paul uses a different Greek word, *oneidismos* (Strong’s G3680). This word means that an elder cannot be defamed, taunted, chided, or reproached. There is nothing in his life that the enemy can revile him about. An overseer must not be someone who has hands on him because of a crime, and he must not have things in his life that someone could grab hold of.

The first area a leader must be above reproach in his family life. Paul says that he must be the husband of one wife. He must manage his own household well, and he must keep his children under control with all dignity.

(1 Tim 3:2-5) "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife... {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?).”

He must be a faithful and committed husband. The husband of one wife has stirred quite a controversy in many churches. There are many who say if a man has been divorced he can never be an elder. While I do think that there is clearly a higher standard for elders, I would align myself with those who say that this is talking about the man’s relationship with his wife. I find it hard to think that a man like Paul, who had the blood of Stephen and others on his hands, can be an elder and an apostle, while a man whose wife left him cannot be an elder. I agree with the camp that says this is talking about a man whose commitment is to his wife. His eyes are not on other women. He is a faithful husband. He has moral purity.

A leader must be a good manager of his house. It says he must manage his household well. Paul asks a great question. If a man cannot take care of his own household, how can he take care of the household of God. I would say that this encompasses many areas. We will look at this more in depth under being a manager. In the context of family, he must keep his children under control with all dignity. This passage has been used to force some pastors to step down. One pastor in Virginia was removed from office because his children toilet-papered a tree. This particular pastor had written an excellent book on rearing children, but was forced to leave a large church because of this one incident. All of us have the ability and tendency to sin. We all sin, and our children also sin. The passage does not say that if a child of a pastor sins that he is unqualified. It says that he keeps them under control with all dignity, or gravity. What a church should be upset about is if a pastor is like Eli, who did not rebuke his sons for living in sin. A pastor should lovingly discipline and correct his children. A man should teach his children respectful behavior.

The second area a leader must be above reproach in is in his character. Paul gives nine specific character qualities that the man must possess and be an example to the church. He must be temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, not addicted to wine, pugnacious, gentle, uncontentious, and free from the love of money.

(1 Tim 3:2-3) "An overseer, then, must be ...temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, {3} not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money."

The first area that Paul mentions is that an overseer must be temperate. Temperate means cool tempered, calm or stable. It means that he is even keeled. He is cool tempered. He is stable and steadfast. He does not get rattled easily. The dictionary says that a temperate man is not an extremist. You need a calm person at the helm of a ship in a storm. Anyone can be the captain in calm seas, but you need a temperate man in place for the rough seas.

(1 Tim 3:2) "An overseer, then, must be ...**temperate**, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,"

The second character trait of leaders is to be prudent. Prudent means wise, cautious, or careful. A prudent man is discerning and not easily deceived or led astray. A prudent man is alert and prayerful. A prudent man stops and looks both ways before pulling into the intersections in life. The Greek word is *sophron*, which means sober in mind. There are twenty-four verses in the Bible that talk about being prudent. Fifteen of those are found in the book of Proverbs. In fact, in chapter one of Proverbs, Solomon tells us that one of the purposes of Proverbs is to give prudence to the naive. Elders need a good dose of Proverbs in their minds.

(1 Tim 3:2) "An overseer, then, must be ...temperate, **prudent**, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,"

(Pr 1:1-4) "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel... {4} To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,"

The third area of a leader's character is to be respectable, which means someone who you can respect. The Greek word is *kosmios*, which means to adorn. We get our English word cosmetics from it. The lives of a leader need to adorn the message of the gospel. The primary way that leaders are to lead is by example. The Greek word for example is *tupos* (Strong's G5179), which

has five different meanings or usages. It comes from *tupto* (Strong's G5180), which means a die, as struck. One of the meanings of example is of a public figure or statue that people would look up to as an example. The Romans would make statues of their military leaders and put them in public squares for people to look up to. The word *respectable* means someone that you can look up to and respect. When I look at leaders, I respect those who walk in integrity. I respect Billy Graham because he was a man of impeccable integrity. On the other end of the spectrum, we lose respect for leaders that lack integrity and are hypocrites. People respect leaders who walk the talk and live lives that adorn the message of the gospel.

(1 Tim 3:2) "An overseer, then, must be ...temperate, prudent, **respectable**, hospitable, able to teach,"

The next area is hospitable. A man needs to be hospitable, which means he has people over to his house for meals or lodging. The Greek word, *philoxenos*, means a lover of strangers. Hebrews 13:2 says that we should not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, which gives us a true understanding of the word. 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. 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.

(1 Tim 3:2) "An overseer, then, must be ...temperate, prudent, respectable, **hospitable**, able to teach,"

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

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."

The next area that Paul addresses is not being addicted to wine. Leaders must be sober, and not addicted to wine. They cannot be struggling with wine or alcohol.

(1 Tim 3:3) " **not addicted to wine** or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money."

Scripture does not preclude Christians from drinking wine. Jesus made wine at the wedding in Cana, His first public miracle. Later on, He said that John did not drink but that He came drinking. So, it is likely that Jesus had wine, and probably served wine at the Last Supper.

(John 2:1-11) "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; {2} and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. {3} When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." {4} And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come." {5} His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." {6} Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. {7} Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim. {8} And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it *to him*. {9} When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, {10} and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the people* have drunk freely, *then he serves* the poorer wine; *but* you have kept the good wine until now." {11} This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."

(Luke 7:33-34) "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' {34} The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"

Paul wrote Timothy to drink some wine for his frequent stomach ailments. Hence, there are medicinal purposes. But there are some warnings given about the use of wine, particularly for leaders.

(1 Tim 5:23) "No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."

In Proverbs, Bathsheba told Solomon to give wine to him whose life is bitter and strong drink to those who are perishing. We give opium to people with cancer or who are suffering. That is Scriptural. We want to comfort those who are suffering and in much pain. She also tells Solomon that it is not for kings to drink wine, lest they forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of the poor. People in authority need to be clear-minded. Even though I have the freedom to drink wine, I have chosen not to partake of any alcohol for the purpose of always being clear minded.

(Pr 31:4-9) "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink, {5} lest they drink and forget what is decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. {6} Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to him whose life is bitter. {7} Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his trouble no more. {8} Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate. {9} Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy."

A second reason for me is not to cause a brother to stumble. In Ephesians, Paul tells us not to be drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but to be filled with the Spirit. An elder must not be addicted to wine or be a drunkard.

(Eph 5:18) "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,"

(Rom 14:21) "It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles."

Even though Paul told Timothy to drink some wine, leaders need to be very careful about the use of alcohol. When I was a chaplain at the Cobb County Adult Detention Center, there were a number of pastors who were incarcerated. Most of them were there for drug or alcohol charges. In Genesis 6:9 we find that Noah was a righteous man, and he was blameless in his time. Noah was a man that walked with God. At the end of my life if they said that "Bill walked with God" I would be very pleased. But, in Genesis 9, we find the account of Noah's post-ark days. He began farming and planted a vineyard. One day he drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. When people drink too much, they lose inhibitions and self-control, which is apparently what happened to Noah. I found that many people in the prison that I worked were really nice people when they did not drink. Unfortunately, when they drank, they became violent and did things that got them arrested. We have no indication of violence, only that he uncovered himself in the privacy of his own tent. Unfortunately, his grandsons saw him. Even though he was a righteous man, his witness was damaged by having too much to drink. Leaders need to be very careful about drinking alcohol.

(Gen 6:9) "These are *the records* of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God."

(Gen 9:20-21) "Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. {21} He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent."

The next character requirement for a leader is not to be pugnacious. Pugnacious means quarrelsome. The Greek word is plektes, which means a striker, which is how the KJV translates it. It is interesting that Paul said not addicted to wine or pugnacious, as one of the negative side-effects of alcohol is to be violent. The first man that I led to the Lord in prison was a man named Steve. He was a gentle and kind man when he did not drink, but when he drank beer, he would get very violent and get into fights.

(1 Tim 3:3) " not addicted to wine or **pugnacious**, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money."

In 2 Timothy 2:24, Paul says that the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged. We are to be peace-makers, not those who sow strife. We are to be patient and gently people who can turn away strife and help people come to repentance.

(2 Tim 2:24) "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,"

The next area that Paul gives as a character requirement is that a leader must be gentle. Gentle means forbearing, equitable, fair, or reasonable. The KJV translates this as patient. The Greek word used here is *epieikes*, which means forbearing, equitable, fair, or reasonable.

(1 Tim 3:3) "not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but **gentle**, uncontentious, free from the love of money."

Jesus said for us to learn from Him, for He is gentle and humble. Without a gentle spirit, people will not be as receptive to your message. It is essential for elders to have the character quality of gentleness.

(Matt 11:28-29) "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

It is important for the overseer to correct people in a spirit of gentleness. Sheep go astray and they need a gentle shepherd to gently bring them back into the fold. When I am challenged, it is easy for me to become more forceful and authoritative. Sometimes my wife will tell me that I am leaning. What she means is that I am talking a little louder and forceful. It is a reminder for me to soften my tone and volume, and to be gentle in my speech. Sometimes there is a need to be firm, but many times we need to correct with gentleness. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he instructed him not to be quarrelsome but to be kind to all and to correct those who are in opposition with gentleness. Paul adds that our gentleness may help people come to repentance leading to the knowledge of truth. A lack of gentleness prevents that opportunity.

(Gal 6:1) "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

(2 Tim 2:24-25) "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, {25} with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,"

One year at the Dominion Open in Richmond, Virginia, I pulled a seven-iron left of the green. It went into the greenside bunker. As I approached the bunker a lady began angrily scolding me for nearly killing her. She said that I should have yelled, "Fore" to give everyone in the area warning. The lady was outside the gallery ropes, which were well left of the greenside bunker. My ball had not come anywhere close to hitting this lady. Her angry countenance made me want to respond in anger. But the Holy Spirit reminded me of Proverbs 15:1, which says that "a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." It would have been easy to respond with a harsh word at that moment. But I gave a gentle answer and gently apologized for not yelling "Fore." The lady responded just as God promised. My gentle answer had turned away her wrath. She watched me play the rest of the week and became a fan of mine. Leaders have to turn away wrath with gentle answers.

(Pr 15:1) "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

The next requirement is for a leader to be uncontentious. Uncontentious means one who avoids quarrels, strife and arguments. He is a peaceable man. Solomon tells us that strife is like letting out water, and that we must abandon the quarrel before it breaks out. We have to quickly

recognize things that will lead to strife and contention. We must learn how to abandon quarrels very early, so they do not break out. How do we learn this?

(1 Tim 3:3) "not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, **uncontentious**, free from the love of money."

(Pr 17:14) "The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out."

Solomon tells us that any fool will quarrel. We need God's wisdom to help us recognize the things that lead to quarrels, and how to abandon the quarrels. We need to ask God for wisdom. We need to spend time in His word, seeking and searching for His wisdom. An overseer has learned how to recognize and abandon quarrels.

(Pr 20:3) "Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel."

All of us need to learn to be peacemakers and how to avoid strife and contention. We saw in the church at Corinth how Paul had to address the strife that was there. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and if we want the presence of God in our midst, we must not have strife and contention.

(1 Cor 3:3, 16) "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?... {16} Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

The last area that Paul address is being free from the love of money. Being free from the love of money means that a leader is not worldly minded. He is not driven by money. In the church at large, many people in ministry have built kingdoms. They have airplanes, boats, extravagant estates, and the things that money can buy. A minister must have his heart set on the kingdom of God, not the things that are on the earth.

(1 Tim 3:3) "not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, **free from the love of money.**"

John tells us not to love the world, nor the things in the world. He goes on to say that if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. A pastor needs to be full of the love of the Father, not the love of the world.

(1 John 2:15-17) "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. {17} And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever."

In Peter's charge to pastors, he exhorts them not to do it for sordid gain, but with eagerness. The KJV says they are not to pastor for filthy lucre. The ESV says not to do it for shameful gain. Leaders must not have a love of money or greed. They must be faithful stewards of God's money, and it must not have a hold on them.

(1 Pet 5:2) “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;”

B. Capability of an overseer

We saw that the most important criteria for church leaders is character. However, a leader’s ability to manage is also an important consideration. In Exodus 18:21, Jethro counseled Moses to select out of all the people “able men.” It was not just men who fear God, men of truth, and those that hated dishonest gain, it was men who were able.

When Paul gave Timothy the qualifications for an overseer, he said that he must be able. In 1 Timothy 3:2, an overseer must be able to teach. A shepherd must be able to feed the flock. Many churches require their pastors to be seminarians. They assume that seminary will adequately prepare a pastor to teach God’s word. And, seminaries generally do a good job in helping pastors understand Greek, Hebrew, and how to put together a sermon. Seminaries give pastors tools to use and the ability to use these tools. In my opinion, they help pastors get out of the starting gate. I believe that teaching and preaching are a lifetime pursuit. Pastors don’t study for two or three years and teach from that knowledge base the rest of their ministry. Pastors must continually study the word of God. They must continually apply it to their lives. And they must faithfully teach the whole counsel of God. These are life-long pursuits.

(1 Tim 3:2) “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,”

A leader must not only be able to teach the word of God, he must be able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. He must know sound doctrine. He must be able to discern truth and error. He must be able to bring correction when false doctrine is being taught. This is a very difficult thing to do. On the island of Crete, there were not pastors in place, so Paul told Titus to ordain pastors in every city. He went on to say that there were many rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers who needed to be silenced because they were upsetting whole families with their teaching. Pastors need to be able to teach sound doctrine, and bring correction to those who are teaching false doctrine.

(Tit 1:9-11) “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. {10} For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.”

A pastor’s ability to teach is not the only area that he must be capable of leading. We find that he must be a good manager of his own household, and able to manage the affairs of the church. When we think about the church, it is not about managing assets, as a typical business owner does. It is about managing people. It is about managing relationships. He must be able to manage his relationship with his wife. He must be able to manage his children. The way that he manages the relationships in his home is an indication of whether he will be able to manage the relationships in a church.

(1 Tim 3:4-5) “*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?),”

Many times we put an emphasis in management on the management of finances. We should emphasize financial stewardship. Jesus said in Luke 16:11 that if we “have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?” I believe that a man must be a faithful steward of his money, so that he can faithfully steward the money in the church. I believe the true riches are not money, but people. I believe that faithfulness in finances is just one metric to use in looking at the faithfulness and capability of a man. But the primary thing that churches are managing are people.

(Luke 16:11) “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?”

Consider what the author of Hebrews said, “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.” The Greek word for “See to it” is *episkopeo* (Strong’s G1983). It comes from *epi*, which means over, and *skopos*, which means to see. The Greek word for an overseer, which is one of three terms used to describe a pastor, is *episkopos*. *Episkopeo* is the verb form of *episkopos*, meaning that overseeing is what an overseer does. One of the things that pastors must oversee and manage are the relationships in a church. He must see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God. He needs to have relationship with his flock, so that he knows whether they are true believers or not. He also needs to know how the relationships in the flock are doing. He needs to make sure that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble. Roots of bitterness spring up when people get offended and do not work out their problems. Many times, people need help in resolving conflict. Pastors need to make sure that people are forgiving one another. Pastors need to teach on forgiveness and resolving conflict. Pastors need to be an example of resolving conflict. Having been a pastor for thirty-five years, I know that there will be ample opportunities for pastors to lead their congregations by example. Sometimes I have done a good job, and sometimes I have not been the best example, but there have been ample opportunities. A third thing that pastors need to do is know when to step into a situation. If a pastor is aware of a situation, he should oversee the matter, and ask both parties about it. His job is to make sure that it gets resolved so that no root of bitterness springs up. If the pastor does not handle the issue properly, many people will be defiled.

(Heb 12:15) “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;”

In managing the relationships in a church, I think a pastor should plan out his message series. There should be messages about forgiveness. There should be messages about how to communicate effectively. There should be messages on humility and looking out for the interests of others. When doing series on books of the Bible, look at the themes and make sure that during the course of the year that many of these can be taught. People need help in their relationships, and this is an important area for pastors to manage and lead in.

Leaders must be capable in many areas. Here are some additional areas that I have found to be important for effective leadership:

Areas for Effective Leadership	
Administrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling • Planning • Organization • Documentation 	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Resolution • Counseling • Communication • Forgiveness and Repentance • Humility
Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting • Record keeping • Financial tools (Cash flow, Profit & Loss, Balance Sheets) • Reporting 	Small Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation • Meetings (Planning, Preparation, Agendas, Meeting notes) • Hospitality
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (Long Term, Short Term, Strategic) • Communication (Verbal and Written) • Public speaking • Delegation • Development/Mentoring 	Word Ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message preparation (outlines, illustrations, etc.) • Message delivery • Message applications • Correcting false doctrine

Part of being a good manager is being organized. A pastor must have some administrative and organizational skills. He has to keep up with a lot of details and these will all get lost in the shuffle if he is not well organized. A disorganized leader will cause frustration among others. If a pastor is weak in this area, he should make sure other team leaders that are organized help him.

5. Ordination of an Overseer

In Paul's letter to Timothy, he said, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do." Elders need to be set into the office of overseer. How do we set in overseers in a church? When the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, were on their first apostolic trip, they appointed or ordained elders in every church. They prayed and fasted, and then commended them to the Lord. These were new churches and they did not have an existing presbytery, or team of elders already established, so the apostles ordained them. Titus was an apostle and when Paul told Titus to ordain elders in every city on the island of Crete, he was doing the work of an apostle, setting things in order and ordaining pastors in the churches.

(1 Tim 3:1) "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*."

(Ac 14:23) "When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

When men or women were set in an office of the church, it was done through the laying on of hands. In Acts 6, the apostles laid hands on seven men to be deacons. They were going to serve

the widows in the church. In Acts 13:3, Paul and Barnabas were set in as apostles and the presbytery fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them.

(Ac 6:6) “And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.”

(Ac 13:3) “Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

In 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul warned Timothy about laying hands on anyone too hastily and thereby sharing responsibility for the sins of others. When we lay hands on someone, we are doing three things. We are confirming that this person meets the criteria for the office. We are identifying the person as God’s choice. Third, we are imparting a gift or anointing to that person.

(1 Ti 5:22) “Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily and thereby share *responsibility* for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”

When the presbytery laid hands on Timothy, they imparted a spiritual gift to him. Paul reminded him to kindle afresh the gift that had been bestowed on him. We do not know what that particular gift was, but I believe it was apostleship. Paul told him to pay attention to his teaching, and also to do the work of an evangelist. Apostles flow in all the gifts, so this leads me to believe that they imparted the gift of apostleship to him. Paul also refers to Timothy as an apostle in his letter to the Thessalonians.

(1 Ti 4:14–16) “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. {15} Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. {16} Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

(2 Ti 4:5) “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Conclusion and Applications

Over the past couple of weeks, we have looked at the office of overseer. An overseer is an elder and a pastor. Setting in elders in a church is an important step in planting and establishing a church. It is not something that should be done hastily. It is important to make sure that a person is called to the office. It is the Holy Spirit that makes an overseer. Overseers with a call will have a desire to pastor. That calling will also be confirmed by others, and often through prophetic ministry.

It is not enough to have a desire and have a calling, the candidate needs to be qualified. There are first and foremost, character requirements. An elder needs to be above reproach in his life, his family, and in the community. An elder also must be capable of doing the work of an elder. He must be able to pastor and feed the flock. He must be a man of the word. An elder must also be able lead and manage the affairs of the church. He must be able to oversee people and everything that goes on in the church.

When a person is called, has character beyond reproach, and is capable, then the process is for the presbytery to lay hands on the person and ordain him into the office. The application of these two weeks of teaching will take place next week when Joe Warner and I will ordain Tom Swenson as an overseer.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for all the instructions that You gave us in Your word about the government in Your church. Thank You for giving us an understanding about elders and overseers and pastors. We want to be a church that is set in order and functioning properly. We ask Your blessing and favor upon our church and our ordination service next week. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Overseers – Part 2**Introduction** (Tit 1:5-9, 1 Tim 3:1-7)**4. Qualifications for an Overseer**

A. Character of an Overseer (1 Ti 3:2–7, Pr 1:1-4, Heb 13:2, Rom 12:13, 1 Tim 5:10, John 2:1-11, Luke 7:33-34, 1 Tim 5:23, Pr 31:4-9, Eph 5:18, Rom 14:21, Gen 6:9, 9:20-21, 2 Tim 2:24, Matt 11:28-29, Gal 6:1, 2 Tim 2:24-25, Pr 15:1, Pr 17:14, 20:3, 1 Cor 3:3, 3:16, 1 John 2:15-17, 1 Pet 5:2)

B. Capability of an Overseer (1 Tim 3:2-5, Tit 1:9-11, Luke 16:11, Heb 12:15)

- Administrative (scheduling, planning, organization, documentation)
- Financial (budgeting, record keeping, financial analysis, reporting)
- Leadership (planning, communication, public speaking, delegation)
- Relationships (conflict resolution, counseling, communication, forgiveness, humility)
- Small Groups (facilitation, meetings, hospitality)
- Word Ministry (message preparation, delivery, applications, knowledge base)

5. Ordination of an Overseer (1 Tim 3:1, Ac 14:23, 6:6, 1 Ti 5:22, 4:14-16, 2 Ti 4:5)