



“Qualified... the Calling of the Under-shepherd”

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1 Timothy 3 *1 This [is] a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop*

then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having [his] children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the [same] condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise deacons [must be] reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being [found] blameless. 11 Likewise [their] wives [must be] reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling [their] children and their own houses well. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. 14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, [I write] so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

3:1

After having addressed both men and women specifically concerning their participation in the unity of the church, Paul now turns his attention to the direction of the leadership of a church. There are a lot of ideas out there as to what makes a pastor. Some think that it is a seminary education, maybe even a doctorate in religion. Others look to the intangibles.... like charisma, or popularity. Many will look to the world and *its* methods to determine whether a particular individual is the right man for a particular position. That methodology has men ‘candidate’ for a position, make application, and then people will vote. One can’t help but see that as the steps to a hireling!

Yet we find clearly that within the biblical realm, things are not to operate as they do in the world. We find that Paul, as well as God himself, has completely different idea of what is leadership, and what makes a leader. He wrote in 1Corinthians 1:27 “*But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...*”

In Ephesians 4:11-12 he wrote: “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*”

The position of “bishop” as Paul was using the term, was much different than how the title is generally used today. For “bishop” (gr) actually means “over watcher.” Thus the title can be worn by any elder, pastor, etc. whose duty it falls upon to ‘oversee’ the flock and the church operations.

Hebrews 13:17 says such a man exists and serves to “watch for your souls.” It also says that we as a flock should seek to support and obey what they are saying. That we should give them reason to serve with joy and not with sorrow. Acts 20:28 Paul reminds the elders in Ephesus to “...*guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock — his church, purchased with his own blood — over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.*”

Today the title bishop has often been relegated to yet another title men take upon themselves in attempt to exercise undo power and control over others. Another popular one is the ministerial title of ‘doctor.’ I don’t know that just because you have earned yourself a biblical doctorate in a classroom somewhere that you should go around now being called “Doctor so and so.” Where is the humility that we are called to as leaders?

Paul acknowledges that this position of bishop is to “be desired,” but only in approaching such with a pure heart, and humble spirit. It has to be more than merely a ‘trump card’ to outdo some other pastoral position. Certainly a dose of reality and understanding of God’s expectations concerning the position would be a good idea before you get new business cards!

Such a position must embrace a passionate desire to serve the Lord and others. Any other motivation would be sure to bring shame upon the church and thus upon God. One seeking such a place within the body of Christ, must feel so consumed by the call, that he can do nothing else. Paul says that those that desire such a position in fact desires a good ‘work.’ He doesn’t desire a comfortable position and income. He doesn’t desire clout or power. He desires *to work for God*. Paul describes this position in terms of the work, not in terms of the title. Many folks want the “badge” but few are willing to embrace the work...to sacrifice their hobbies, earthly desires and worldly enjoyments in order to further God’s kingdom through a particular church.

Philippians 2:13 says, “*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” God works inside of us to draw us to his service. Those who are meant to be in such position will then have a real desire... a compelling drive, to *do* for Him in order to simply bring pleasure and glory to Him. This is not the same thing as what many simply call a “burden” for some particular people or particular field of service. You may have a burden for India and pray for those people every day; but if God has never placed a desire deep inside of you to actually *go* there and *minister* to them, you do not have the call of God to India. It is easy to make such a mistake. One has to be sure to differentiate between one’s emotions and a real passionate desire to *serve in an area* with the sole reason to bring God glory.

The word “desire” is a very strong and intense word. Paul said “*woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel*” (I Cor 9:16). The call to preach or pastor, or to be an elder ...to do what brings God glory, is an intense burning passion for a specific ministry planted in one’s heart by God.

If this is not the case, as soon as the ‘bumps in the road’ come along, you will not remain at your post. As soon as the position, the title, or the paycheck is not given, you easily move on to the next thing, which totally justifies me if I was the one that didn’t give it to you!

3:2

Once again, a ‘bishop’ is nothing more than what we would call a ‘pastor’ or elder. Herein we have some qualifications of what is to be found in the life and spirit of such a man. First, he is to be **“blameless.”** This doesn’t mean perfect (thankfully!), it means “not open to censure, irreproachable.” We know that often the world will accuse even the most pure of individuals, yet we can do nothing but be sure that the accusations are not true.

A pastor or an elder is to be righteous in his living. “the husband of one wife.” This does not somehow exclude those who have been previously divorced for a scripturally permissive reason. This is speaking of the issue of widespread polygamy within the society of Paul’s day. And for today, it speaks of the need for an absolute loving commitment to one woman, to one wife, not the ditching of one for another.

“Temperate” or “vigilant”

A pastor/elder must be vigilant, always alert; for the enemy is always waiting to kill and destroy. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1Pet 5:8) This word “vigilant” is often spoke of in terms of the ‘gift of discernment.’ This is the ability to see and understand a situation beyond the obvious but rather through the eyes of the Spirit.

1Cor 2:15 “..he that is spiritual judges all things...

1 Thes 5:21 "By all means use your judgment, and hold on to whatever is good." We must watch carefully because the enemy doesn't *always* come as a roaring lion.

2Cor 2:11 warns us that if we are not watchful “Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2Cor 11:14 “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”

All of this presents a picture wherein a pastor/elder must be constantly on his toes at all times; looking, listening, and guarding against the attacks of Satan.

“sober”

This does not simply deal with the abuse of alcohol, but goes much further insomuch as it speaks also to the need for a “sound mind, and self-control.”

“good behavior”

A pastor/elder must be able to walk as he talks. There must be a life practice of obedience to the commands of God, as well as to the subtle individual direction of the Holy Spirit.

“given to hospitality”

This is not just a matter of inviting people over to your house. This is an attitude that is carried throughout one’s life and lifestyle. A pastor/elder must be a “people person.”

“apt to teach”

A pastor/elder must have the gift of teaching, and be able to exercise it. Thus he must be trained, prepared in the knowledge of the word, and be able to equip others. This takes time and maturity.

3:3

“Not given to wine”

His alcohol use must be either none, or at the level to not control him in any way...either short term or long term. A believer, especially one in a position of leadership, should not be under the control of anything other than the Holy Spirit. To do so is violating God’s command to “have no other God’s before me.”

“not violent, but gentle and not quarrelsome...”

He must not be a violent man, prone to angry loss of control. He must be a man who has his temper under control. He must practice a gentle interaction with others. This doesn't mean he is a pushover or weak to do the hard stuff that is required as a pastor. People can be and are often quite difficult...more so today than ever. But he must know when to practice unmitigated grace, and when to show someone the door.

“not greedy or covetous”

A pastor/elder must not be in the position for monetary gain. For this is not a “job” and you should not expect a paycheck or financial comfort. Paul had to work at times, and a pastor/elder must be prepared to do the same if necessary. The amount of money that is paid to some pastors is astonishing and frankly shameful. A pastor should live at the same level as his flock.

3:4-5

A pastor/elder is to have his family under control. Not HIS control solely, but the LORDS control. His family must be supportive and participatory. This does not mean that a guy’s adult children must all be born again Christians, but if they are offensive in their position against the church...yes, even *this* church, then the disruption and chaos that such presents must prohibit a man from office. But children at home...a man must do whatever is necessary to “raise up a child in the way that he should go.” (Prov 22:6)

His wife must be ‘on board’ and be an exemplary example of a servant, a woman, and a wife. Honestly, a man’s wife can be his earthly saving grace, or his ‘end’ ministerially. So if you do indeed desire to be used by God in the manner of an elder or a pastor, then I recommend you choose VERY carefully! If you cannot be the head of your home, you are not in position to be the head of the church. For much of a person’s family life is reproduced in his church/spiritual life. This includes your finances, your relational dynamic, your parenting, your vocational decisions, everything. This does not mean you are to be the bully of the house or a dictator. Rather we are to be a **leader**. Sometimes however that means insisting that the family is going “this” way, *period*.

3:6

“not a novice...” Spiritual maturity takes time, discipline, and effort. There are no shortcuts. There is no such thing as instant godliness, and *finding* such is only acquired in *practicing* such. It isn’t found in a classroom or a seminary. It’s found in the practice of it...out in the real world.

Therefore a pastor/elder must never be a new or immature convert. For most often, such a situation will be one of “zeal without knowledge.” Such an individual has not learned to *follow* yet, thus he will never be able to lead. He has not went through the breaking process bringing him to the point of humility and understanding that to be used by God means that God is in control. I have repeatedly found that there is clearly no greater enemy to anyone of us than pride. No greater issue has taken more people out of this church and out of ministry than this one thing!

When a person ceases to have a submissive and teachable spirit, it’s over for them. They become a cartoon caricature of themselves and everyone sees them for a fool except themselves. They, however, see themselves

as under-appreciated and worthy of stardom. Everyone else is wrong, and they alone are right. Sadly...this and the other issues that are laid out here are extremely abused and ignored by many churches. I know of people with marriages in turmoil... wife led homes and families... children getting pregnant out of wedlock, being arrested and threatening suicide...unbiblical doctrinal positions... and lack of any real history of service and submission, that have departed from this “mean” church and were elders or even *pastors* in another church within weeks of their departure. How can this be after even a cursory look at this passage? Clearly desperation has driven many to abuse or ignore all of this.

3:7

Now it is crucial to understanding that the people can, and will, say a lot of bad things about a man of God. But we are not to be as concerned what the world is saying as much as we are to be concerned with whether there is grounds and truth to what is being said! Is there any real and genuine accusation being made that is contrary to scripture? Frankly, the unredeemed world is at times a better judge of insincerity and inconsistency within the church than we give them credit. Especially concerning those in leadership.

Usually, the most evil and insidious things that are said about servants of God are not from the street, but rather from those who call themselves Christians that believe themselves to be above the Word of God. We must realize that not everyone who says they are a Christian is in fact a real one. Church attendance does not make anyone a Christian!

3:8-9

The fact that a church has pastors, elders, and deacons does not in any way mean that everyone else is ‘off the hook.’ All believers are clearly called to be servants and thus to serve. Often people see church attendance from the position of a customer rather than a co-worker. All Christians are to be servants. There are no exceptions. This epiphany has walked countless folks to the door of our church, because while they loved the energy, they were here to take it, not here to help create it!

If you’re trying to dance around this, then you are sinning. If a person is a follower of Christ, he or she is and is yet developing into a servant. This is following the supreme example of Jesus Himself. Yet many of us tend to be like one of the nine lepers who took off after Jesus healed them, instead of the one who returned to Him in thanks.

We cannot practice Christianity if we fail to be a servant. It is an innate part of our faith practice. And don’t tell me that your part is to tithe or to pray. That’s aspects of personal obedience. Servanthood is directed at your brothers and sisters in this community, as well as Christ.

Now there are some people who have a commitment and calling to service that allows them the ability to make decisions and direct traffic because they have proven themselves. These are given the position of deacons. A deacon is one who deals more with the physical and material issues ...the needs of the church and the church body, while the elder is one dealing with the spiritual needs.

We see the first deacons appointed in Acts 6:2-3. The qualifications for deacon are very much the same as those of a pastor/elder, except in the area of teaching. But even though spiritual issues are not the deacon’s focus, spiritual qualities are still demanded of him.

“reverent”

This means serious minded about that which is under his or her concern and responsibility. He or she is not flippant or shallow. They are not to be clowns. They understand the importance of what they do, and the necessity of it. They are serious about their service and they are faithful to it, as well as to God and the church.

“not double-tongued”

Meaning he is not to give a story to one person one way, and to another person another way. He is not to say one thing and mean another. He must say what he means, and mean what he says. He must do what he says he will do and be a man of his word. These guys don't “talk out of school” nor do they have loose lips. They aren't gossipers or “whispers.” They “back the show.”

“holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”

“A pure conscience” means it is not enough for such an individual to be a public Christian, but he must have a “pure conscience” that reflects a private and personal devotion. He must be a man of integrity in the light, *and* in the dark.

3:10-13

“first be tested (or proved)”

This is one reason why elsewhere in scripture we are instructed to “lay hands on no man quickly”, as far as appointment to position is concerned. Any individual being considered for a position within the church needs to first be tested. This is not talking about some sort of quiz, but rather a time factor of consistent and godly service.

This passage does not say he must be sinless, but *blameless*. That speaks of heart, motives and intent. It's does not mean a deacon will never drop the ball spiritually, but it means he is not to actively involve himself in sinful ungodly practices. He is to be beyond transgression: a “knowing sin situation” of which he does not remove himself.

To do and be otherwise would bring “blame” upon the deacon and the church in which he serves. In the testing of “time”, one finds out the truth of an individual, and the truth of a situation. Time tells us whether an individual is really blameless. Once again, all these that God calls, and man appoints, are affected by their wives. Many men are knocked out of service positions by a wife that fails to meet the requirements of verse 11. Once you are married, two roads, two lives have converged into one. Thus, her life must match his in integrity and godliness.

Notice the high standard required; **“faithful in ALL things.”** Here is the same instructions given to the elders. Families must be in order. A “good standing” means a good “place” of service and position in Christ. We will one day be judged for that which we have done as a believer. Were we faithful? Did we serve? Did we make good use of the time? Did we use the gifts that were given to us to use?

3:14-16

Paul was seemingly as daunted by the whole of this task as I am. In 2 Corinthians 2:16 he asks “*who is adequate for these things?*” He went on to say in 3:5-6 that we are not adequate in ourselves, but our adequacy is from God...who made us adequate as servants of this new covenant.

The church is herein called “the pillar and ground of the truth.” That is an incredible statement concerning any church. Are we living up to such a title? Paul says he wrote these things so we would know how to conduct ourselves here in the church community. This is our instruction. Our “marching orders.”

“without controversy”

What Paul has told us is undeniable truth, indisputable fact. It is not open to change or modern interpretation. For God... manifested in the flesh in the body of Jesus Christ, showed us how it was to be done...