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C1130 – September 7, 2011 – 1 Timothy 5:17-25

Charge: Uphold Biblical Principles

Today 1 Timothy 5:17. We are moving closer to the end of our course on Church Leadership. We have looked at Elders and Deacons and we have a bit more to do there but in the next few weeks we're going to turn our attention to the congregation to see how they ought to conduct themselves with regard to the leadership. The congregation has responsibilities too and we wouldn't want to leave out that side of the equation. Then, we'll look at some common questions that the study has raised. But tonight we are embarking on the passages where the elders are given a parting charge, an exhortation to rule well and we will look at two or three of these in the following weeks. One we already looked at in Acts 20 when Paul met the Ephesian elders at Miletus. That is one of the greatest parting charges ever given in the history of the world and Paul is saying I'm leaving and I'm not coming back so I can't hold your hand forever and solve all your problems. God gave you the Holy Spirit and this book and you are going to have to step up and lead the church of God. And it's a powerful, powerful charge. And tonight Paul is charging Timothy who is at Ephesus to put some things in order. So it's interesting that after Paul had given his parting charge to the Ephesian elders, now Timothy is there and it's obvious there is a problem. Someone is in office that shouldn't be in office and now Timothy has to deal with it, which is a very difficult thing to do. And now that the apostles and their deputies have passed from the stage of history I think this responsibility is carried out by the elders in the local assembly. And this is a charge to do it, a charge to do some very hard things but things which must be done, which is why I always say, anyone that wants to be an elder either has no clue what being an elder is or he has been called of God to want it. Because it is not all fun and games, it is a high responsibility that takes a lot of biblical wisdom to do well, it involves dealing with people's dirty laundry and all the rest of it so just be prepared in advance if you're going to enter this office that you are going to

learn all kinds of things about people and all of them have to do with the same three letter word, S-I-N. So I'm just warning you now, don't be naïve, things are not always what they appear and so when something comes out in the open don't be shocked, and if you're honest in your own heart you won't be too shocked because you know what goes on.

Let's start in 1 Tim 5:17 and 18 where the issue of financial support for certain elders is discussed. **The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.** 18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS WAGES. Verse 17 is the command; verse 18 is the Scriptural basis of the command. Always you must have a Scriptural basis for what you're saying. Verse 17, let's look at the command. **The elders who rule well**, the Greek word for **elders** is *presbuteroi*, the plural form; Paul assumes a plurality of elders at the church of Ephesus.

So the passage does deal with the office in contrast to verse 1 which uses *presbuteros* in the general sense of "an older man." Those in the office may be older or they may be younger. Timothy was younger, so age is not an issue. The issue is spiritual maturity, how well do you know this book and how well do you apply this book. So we have **The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially** and from that word **especially** it is sometimes maintained that this is dividing elders into two classes; class one being the ruling elders and class two being the teaching elders. The problem with that interpretation is that it is highly unlikely and it is not supported by the original text. What gives people that impression and has given me that impression over the years is the word **especially**, it is thought it indicates that you can consider ruling elders for double honor but even more so those who are teaching elders. However, that divides the elders into two classes, which is very unlikely this early in church history. And so the word **especially**, *malista* should be translated, "that is," to equate those who rule with the way they rule, by **working hard at preaching and teaching**. So there are not ruling elders and teaching elders but there are elders who rule well *by* preaching and teaching. And those who do, Paul says, should **be considered worthy of double honor**. Double in contrast to "single." Single honor is due to every elder. Single honor would be giving

them honor, respecting them, double honor would be giving them honor and an honorarium.

So his point here is to single out a principle I have mentioned several times in this class and that is the principle of *first among equals*. We might say it this way, all elders must be apt to teach but maybe only one or two take the first place in doing the work of preaching and teaching. This is a biblical principle. There's nothing that requires every elder to preach and teach an equal amount of time or with equal ability. Some elders preach and teach some, others elders preach and teach a lot. Some have the ability to put a lesson or two together; others have the ability to put whole series together and to do it very well. Those differences are probably due to some elders having the spiritual gift of teaching while others do not. There is no requirement that elders have the spiritual gift of teaching, the requirement is that they are apt to teach. But it should not be taken so far as to divide the elders into two classes, ruling elders and teaching elders. All elders rule but not all elders rule well by working hard at preaching and teaching. Those who do are the *first among equals* in this department and should be considered worthy of double honor. So the double honor is the honor or respect they deserve and an honorarium. And some commentators hold that the honorarium is the joy, the joy of preaching and teaching but others consider the honorarium to be financial support from the congregation.

But from vv 17-18 it is very clearly financial support; it could be by providing a parsonage, it could be by providing goods and services, it could be financial compensation. Whatever is decided upon it is clear that those who work hard at preaching and teaching the word should make their living by means of it. What did Paul say in 1 Cor 9:14, "...the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." And Paul insisted that he had the right to financial support. He didn't always take advantage of his right but he did have the right. Gal 6:6, "The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him." That passage is discussing financial compensation for the teacher. And 1 Thess 5:12, "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work." Both sides of the double honor are exhorted here, high esteem, which is the honor, and appreciation which is the financial support that should come in tandem with

the honor. And the reason is because they are working hard in the word of God to teach it well.

So if you notice verse 17 again, there are qualifications for double honor. **The elders who rule well**, that's the perfect tense of **rule** which means they have been ruling and are ruling well. So there's a track record of them ruling well, directing, leading, guiding the church by means of **preaching and teaching** the word. But it's not just preaching and teaching, it's those who work hard doing it, those who do it well, those who grow weary doing it, this is spiritual labor and it is exhausting. After I've buried my head in the original text and identified every part of speech, translated, done word studies, worked through the relationships, seen how it relates to the other parts of the paragraph and put it all back together, read commentaries, taken notes, made more observations and gone through a text over and over and done this for about seven hours I'm exhausted, not physically exhausted, but spiritually and mentally exhausted. Just try it sometime, try it for 30 minutes and see how exhausted you are. So if your pastors or teachers are not doing this exhausting work then they don't qualify for double honor. Maybe single honor but not double honor. And those of you who have gone on vacation or travelled and visited other churches know it's evident who is putting in the work and who isn't, all you have to do is listen for five minutes and you'll know. I get two or three reports back from people each week and I can tell you that I have never had a good report, not a single good report and I've been here for over seven years and I wish I could get a good report but I realize there's not much out there, there are some out there, don't get that impression, but not in many cities. Bible teaching is like everything else, you can tell from the product what is going on in the shop behind closed doors. And if the product is sorry then there's a whole lot of laziness going on behind closed doors. And when you think about buying a product do you want to throw your money into a stupid sorry product or do you want to throw it into a fine product, something that has high quality? Obviously, Paul is saying look at the quality of teaching and when you see its high quality, that's where you want to put your money. And I think that if Christians were more discerning in this department and they said, my criteria for giving is right here in v 17, those who work hard at preaching and teaching, then those who work the hardest would be more prominent and their voice would be heard in their communities and in their states and in their country and it would change everything in the country. Instead they waste it on a bunch of

idiot pastors that fill pulpits in America, pastors that wouldn't have the first idea what a perfect tense is, wouldn't have a clue what a *hiphil* verb is, morons when it comes to this book they're supposed to be teaching. And it's to our own destruction. What did God say in the OT? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Let me tell you something: back at the time of the Revolutionary War there arose a group nicknamed the Black Robe Regiment. You know who they were? They were the American clergy. The British gave them the nickname. Because at the time the American clergy were powerful Bible teachers and they informed everybody on what was going on from a biblical frame of reference; and they criticized what King George was doing and they criticized what was going on in Parliament and they criticized what British soldiers did last week over in Virginia and the people in the pews were getting stirred up by it. So the British concluded that if we could get the American clergy to shut up then we can get all the people settled down. So the Bible teachers of the time got nicknamed the Black Robe Regiment, and it's those kind of men verse 17 is talking about, **elders who** have a track record of ruling **well**, they teach the word of God with conviction and integrity before God, and Paul says they should be, imperative verb, they should be **considered worthy of double honor**. Why? Because they work hard **preaching and teaching** but it doesn't say preaching, preaching is the noun *euangelion* and the noun here is *logos* and means "speaking" and it should be translated "speaking." They are men who work hard at speaking and teaching the word of God.

For, verse 18 gives the Scriptural basis, **For the Scripture says**, and we have two quotes, both Scripture, one from Moses and the other from Jesus, which shows you that Jesus' words, which come from the Gospel of Luke, was already considered Scripture on the same level as Moses before 1 Timothy was written. So the first one is Moses and if you look in your margin where does it come from? Deut 25:4, **YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING**. The idea in the Mosaic Law was that there was respect for animals. Animals were to be treated humanely. And the farmer who would harness his ox and take him out to tread over grain but muzzled him so he couldn't eat any of the grain was not treating his ox properly. You were supposed to leave them unmuzzled so the ox could eat some of the grain. That was humane because the ox was doing the work and

even the animal who works deserves some food as payment. Now transfer that idea to a man who works hard **speaking and teaching** the word of God. You shouldn't deprive him of his wages. He has worked hard, toiled over the word of God to speak and teach it. And now you deprive him? Nonsense. Then the second quote, if you look in your margin where does this one come from? Luke 10:7, this is an exact quotation of part of Luke 10:7 which shows you that Luke's Gospel had already been written and that Paul already considered Luke's Gospel to be the inspired word of God. He didn't need to wait for Constantine in 325BC, the Gospel of Luke was in the canon when it was penned and it was recognized by Paul here in AD62. Now what Jesus said in Luke's Gospel is exactly what is quoted here by Paul, so it should be in all CAPS, it is a direct quote, **"THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS WAGES."** And it's the same principle as the ox, if there is work done then there are wages to be paid. And in Luke 10 Jesus is specifically referring to those who minister His word and He's commissioning the 70 to go to the cities of Israel, and when they go to a city if some house receives them then stay and eat and drink. Why? "Because the laborer is worthy of his wages." That's the original context and Paul says that's a principle, the elder who works hard speaking and teaching the word of God should be paid.

So the principle of financial compensation for those who work hard is found in the OT and it continues in the NT. This is nothing new, this is something old that still applies. And the principle holds for all kinds of work; whether it's physical work, mental work or spiritual work, and a little of each isn't a bad idea. It will give you balance in life. You are not just a mind and you are not just a spirit and you are not just a body, you are body, spirit and mind and each aspect needs to labor. That's why the rabbi's recognized that all mental work is bad for a man and will lead to destruction. They wouldn't even let a man just study Torah. As important as Torah is they said no man can only study Torah, he also has to work in the field, do some manual labor and the reason is because that is how man is made and it is simply good for him. It's the same thing for someone who manually labors all day, it's a bad idea to only do that, he also needs to work his mind and his spirit by study in the word of God, that's how we are designed.

Now let's turn to verses 19-21 where we have another issue that may arise and a difficult situation to handle. Talk about difficult, this is one of those situations that people are not itching to get involved in, that's why we have

elders to do it, spiritually mature men who know this book and are going to do whatever it takes to honor this book, even if it gets 500 people bent out of shape. The elder has to be the kind of man who says, I don't care if you get bent out of shape, I've been appointed to lead you, to shepherd you, and someone has to lead the way, so I'm going to do what is right, I'm going to do what pleases God. Now that doesn't mean to deliberately do things to make people mad, that's not the point. The point is that he has some very hard things to do at times and he's going to have to confront issues. Verse 19, **Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.** 20**Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.** 21**I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.** Now here's a passage that puts the elders on the same plane as every other believer in the local church. They may have authority but as authorities they are not exempt from church discipline. They have an office and it's an office of service, not an office of exemptions and free passes. It's one of those principles that is critical to sound governing. And such principles should begin in the church and work their way out into the governing of states and nations. It would be nice if it were so because it's simply a gross error for those governing to be above the laws by which they are governing.

And Timothy is saying an elder is subject to the same church discipline as any other member of the assembly. What we really have here is an abrupt form of Matt 18:15-17. And Matt 18:15-17 applies to all members of the congregation alike, whether elder or deacon or male or female, it applies across the board. But this would be more difficult to apply in the case of a sinning elder because these are men who you are closely associated with and are probably close friends and they hold this office wherein they are supposed to be above reproach. So to bring charges against an elder is a very difficult thing to do. But understand that this is an abbreviated form of the procedures of Matt 18. First, someone has already brought an **accusation against an elder** and has tried to get him to repent. The elder didn't repent and so second, the accusation is brought to **two or three** and shared with them, they research the matter and discover if indeed the elder has committed some sin. Through their research they become witnesses. They try to get him to repent. Then step three, verse 20, **Those who continue in sin,**

and it doesn't say continue, that's an interpretation of the present tense, it should be translated, **Those who commit sins, rebuke in the presence of all**, Step three is to come before the whole church, not all the elders, but all the church, **so that**, purpose clause, **so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning**, the rest being the rest of the congregation. Now this is a very hard thing to do which is why Paul is going to solemnly charge Timothy to do this "without bias" in verse 21. But it is an absolutely necessary thing to do because if you don't do this then you are going to create a false hierarchy in the church, you are going to have the leadership standing above the word of God, exempt from following it, and everyone else under the word of God, and subject to it. And what would happen over time is justice would be violated because if another leader sins then the leadership turns a blind eye and this leads to corruption and oppression of the congregation. And this is ultimately what Paul is warning against. He does not want the eldership, which is a valid office, to become hierarchical because that is going to crush and destroy people. So to avoid all that, no one is above the word of God; everyone: elder, deacon, male, female, are all subject to the word of God and even an elder must be **rebuked in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning**. It's that end result in v 20 that has a tremendously purifying effect on the body of Christ. Church discipline is designed to purify the body of Christ because it produces fear that does, to an extent, dissuade sinning. I mean, who likes to be called on the carpet for their sin? And that's the point. When the people see that hey, not even the elders are exempt from being called on the carpet, then they realize, maybe for the first time in their lives, that this body of Christ thing is serious and I can't just run around and do whatever I want. There are consequences, very embarrassing consequences to the attitude that I can sin and raise hell and do whatever I want. Oh no you can't, you can't I can't, elders can't so hey, if we can't get away with it maybe we just ought not do it.

But this is a hard thing to do: to call an elder on the carpet for some sin, and verse 21 is highlighting that regardless, you better do it because God is watching. **I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ and of His chosen angels**; you know, let's not forget that we are being watched at all times. Don't be naïve and think you are getting away with something by turning a blind eye to an elder's sin, you are being watched all the time by God and Christ and His elect angels (for elect angels perhaps see Job 4:18) and you are going to be held accountable for it. You are not being

just if you don't do it, you are being partial. And Paul says **I solemnly charge you...to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.** The word **without bias** means without pre-judging the matter. It would be the case when the charges are brought against an elder and you say, no, that elder would never do that, I haven't ever seen him do anything like that and what you are doing is pre-judging and Paul says don't do that and he's going to tell us why in v 24. What you perceive is nothing more than your present perception and is not the whole story. Who do you think you are to think that you know everything about a man's heart anyway? You better slow down and re-evaluate the arrogance of pre-judging matters and not accepting an accusation that comes on the basis of two or three witnesses, two or three that can attest that indeed this elder has done this sin. You have to give up pre-judging because that is going to blind you to justice. Everyone must be evaluated the same way; you can't brush aside an accusation because you think you know the man.

This is to keep everyone on the same level in the church and not create this hierarchy of super-spiritual people up here who never sin. Paul says uh, uh, uh, and underneath his teaching is the doctrine of depravity; everyone still has a sin nature, don't fool yourself, they may have been a believer for 50 years, they may have grown spiritually, they may have taught Bible classes but that doesn't mean they don't have a sin nature and they don't commit sin. When it comes to sin we have to evaluate each believer evenly. Paul says **doing nothing in a spirit of partiality** or what he really says is "doing nothing according to inclination." You have your inclination, this is what I think we should do, this is what I think and Paul says, don't follow your inclination; your inclination is going to tip the scales the wrong way. Your inclination is going to lead to injustice. Do what is right, follow this book, forget what you think, you are supposed to be a man who is humble, meaning you submit your reason to what God says. That's what it means to be humble of mind and an elder must be humble of mind, which means that finally, whatever God has to say trumps whatever my mind says. And if I have to go against what my mind is saying then I have to do that because the word of God is greater than my mind, it's God's mind. And it may be hard to rebuke a fellow elder in the presence of the whole church, he may be a friend and it will be hard to do that but Paul says, don't forget, you are in the direct sight of God and Christ and the chosen angels. So you have to do it.

Now to avoid ever getting into that situation Paul writes vv 22, 24 and 25, there are certain things elders can do to avoid this kind of situation. Verse 22, **Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.** And the main thing is being very careful when choosing who to install in office. The laying on of hands is the formal ceremony where an elder is installed into office. It's not some mystical, ooey, gooey, thing, it's a formal ceremony held publically before the congregation where the elders lay hands on the new elder to show what? That we hereby recognize this man as an elder, as having equal authority with each of us. We are all equals and serve in this office. Now doing that, putting a man in the office of elder by laying on of hands is a very serious thing because if you do that too hastily and this new elder runs off and sins then guess what? Paul says you **become a partaker of his sins!** And you are to **keep yourself free from sin.** Now, this is a very interesting thing and I want to go into it on more than a surface level. The word **free** in the expression **keep yourself free from sin** is a word that means "free from ceremonial defilement," and in this context it hints at a distinction between sinning yourself, intentionally doing a sin and being a partaker of someone else's sins, unintentionally being involved in a sin but nevertheless being held on a certain level responsible for someone else's sin. And I think we can all see the difference. For example, in our law there's a difference between murdering someone and driving the get away car. Our law has defined one as a murderer and the other as an accomplice to murder. That's a biblical distinction and that's the kind of distinction being made here. It's a kind of distinction that begins in the OT and continues in the NT, though it's largely unrecognized in the New. But in the OT, for example, let's say a woman had a period, her time of the month, during that time she was considered sinful and was ceremonially unclean. That was unintentional. I mean, what could she do about it? But nonetheless, it caused her to be ceremonially unclean and she could not go down to the Temple. Or if someone died in your house and you had to carry them out, you touched a dead body so you were ceremonially unclean, that was sinful; even if you sat down where the dead body was laying, that defiled you and you couldn't go down to the Temple because you were ceremonially unclean. Now those were technically "sins" but they were unintentional sins and not of the same category as an intentional sin. And it's that distinction that still holds in the NT. Here in 1 Tim 5 is an example of an unintentional sin, you put the guy in office and then he goes out and sins and now you unintentionally are involved in his sin

because you put him in the office, you laid hands on him. So you share responsibility in the sin to a degree, on a certain level. So what do you do about that?

Well, turn to 1 John 1:9 because most people who are familiar with 1 John 1:9 aren't too familiar with the end of the verse. They've heard the verse a thousand times but so far as thinking through parts of it they don't know what this last part means. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins AND to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We know the first part, confess our sins, yeah, He forgives us our sins, instantaneously, a wonderful promise. But what is the rest of the verse talking about, "cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So some people decided that what it means is the unknown sins, you know, I confess the one's I do know and then the last part of the verse means God will take care of the one's I don't know. While I think it's true that God does that it's not what this is talking about. This is temple imagery, the word cleanse is a ceremonial word. Now we don't live in the OT times and we don't have to go up to the Temple in Jerusalem and go through the ritual sacrifices and all of that. But the temple hasn't disappeared. Where is the temple now? We are the temple. And the Holy Spirit indwells us. And we can become ceremonially unclean by these unintentional sins; there still are unintentional and intentional sins just like in the OT. And one of those unintentional sins is being highlighted in 1 Tim 5:22, when you lay hands on a man too hastily and he goes out and commits sins then you unintentionally become a partaker in his sin and that is unrighteousness. It's not the same as an intentional sin, granted, but we are still held responsible for it and it still has to be confessed according to 1 John 1:9 and the promise is that if we confess our sins and our unrighteousnesses then we will be forgiven and cleansed respectively, that's intentional and unintentional sins in that verse.

Now for a final point on verse 22, the laying on of hands too hastily. Presupposed in the entire argument is what? That the office of elder is a lifetime appointment and not a rotating office. The idea of a rotation of office, every one or two or three years, whatever a church decides, is unbiblical. It doesn't fit the biblical model at all because for one, the man who is an elder has to first aspire to be an elder (1 Tim 3:1), he has to want to be one. So why, if a man wants to be an elder, is a group of elders going to give him the boot after one or two years? But someone will say, elders get tired of being

elders and so it makes sense to give them a break. But what did Paul say, “Do not grow weary of doing good.” (2 Thess 3:13). So if an elder is getting tired of doing good then the answer is not to quit but to follow Paul’s command. Besides, some other elders can help by relieving him if he is overburdened. And of course there are times when an elder may need to attend to other things like family. We’re not saying those times in life don’t come, but they can be given time to take care of things for a temporary period of time; that’s not a problem, but booting him out of the office is a problem. And third, what’s the real underlying reason for having a rotating office? I suspect, since most books on eldership address this question, it’s for the same reason mentioned in all the books, namely, well, if we get a guy on the elder board who is a real trouble maker then we don’t have to do anything about it, no confrontation is necessary because in six months he’s going to roll off anyway and then we just won’t ask him back. Paul says the answer for that problem is not to have a rotating board of elders but to **not lay hands upon anyone too hastily!** And that is a very different approach. That approach is saying, slow down, take your time, evaluate, not over breakfast one morning, but over years and years of a man’s life, even if you know him well or think you do. There is something in v 24 that Paul reveals that we tend to forget, especially when the people are our friends. All the arguments against lifetime appointments are pragmatic arguments not biblical arguments.

Now verse 23, and after all of this you can imagine why Paul would throw this in there. All this is addressed to Timothy and are these easy things Timothy is going to have to do? No, they’re very confrontational, and I think we can assume that some problems with an elder have already surfaced at Ephesus and so Timothy is going to have to handle it and he is under a lot of stress and stress causes stomach problems. Notice the verse, **No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.** Now the verse presupposes that Timothy was an abstainer. He was drinking **water exclusively**. And water is good for you but Paul instructs him to **use a little wine for the sake of his stomach**. This was for medicinal purposes. Wine was commonly used and is still used today to treat an upset stomach. My grandmother, who is a Baptist, was told by one of her doctors to drink some wine for her stomach problems, of course, she didn’t, but it can help prevent stomach ulcers and the like and Timothy was apparently frequently sick and so Paul says, take a **little wine**. He’s going to come under stress and his ailments are going to

flare up so he might as well try to minimize it by drinking some wine. So while the verse seems out of place it's not, it's part of the situation in the passage.

Verse 24, **The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.** 25 **Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.** Now these two verses connect back to verse 22 and explain why elders should not lay hands upon anyone too hastily. For one, verse 24, **The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment.** That much is obvious, some men have sin patterns that are obvious and they get judged, by the church and he says, yeah, that's true for some men and you wouldn't consider those men for office, but that's not true for other men. He says, **for others, their sins follow after.** That is, they have sin patterns that don't show up for a long time, they're kept hidden away and they don't get judged, men can't see them at first and so that's why you have to watch for a long period of time because sooner or later they will surface and if you appointed him too hastily then you've got the problem of an elder coming into office and then committing sins and you becoming a partaker of his sins. And we're supposed to keep ourselves free from sin. So bad idea. Better to wait and watch.

Verse 25, **Likewise, also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.** The point here is to say the same thing as verse 24 said not about sins but about good deeds. That's why he says **Likewise.** So you have some men's deeds which are very obvious, everybody sees them and they should obviously be considered for the office of elder, but that is not the case with all men and he's saying do not write off certain men for the office of elder just because you don't see good deeds, they may be there but not showing up yet, it can take years for some good deeds to show up, and that's why the end of the verse says, **and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed,** that is, those which are not quite evident, cannot finally be concealed, eventually they will show up because they can't be kept hidden forever, they will rear their head. And so Paul gives two reasons not to be too hasty in laying hands on a man One is because sometimes sin patterns lurk in the background and are not detectable and you wouldn't want to put a man like that in office. The other is because sometimes a pattern of good deeds lurks in the background and is

not detectable and you would rather put a man like that in office. So if we take time to get to know the men then we will discover both the bad sin patterns and the good deed patterns and then we will be in a position to lay hands on the right man and avoid getting implicated in another man's sins and having all these confrontations and problems.

That's the exegesis of the passage and I want to put together four principles from this first charge to elders. This is how they should serve in the office. First, there is a first among equals in the speaking and teaching function of elders. While all elders must be apt to teach, one or two elders may be especially gifted to teach and if they work hard at speaking and teaching then they should be given financial compensation. Second, elders are subject to church discipline like any other member of the church. They are not above the people in a hierarchy; they are equal in status before the Lord but distinct in their office. And their office does not exempt them from church discipline. The procedures of Matt 18 are the same for elders and non-elders in the congregation. Third, what elders do is in full view of God and of Christ Jesus and of His elect angels. This is a sobering reality and therefore we ought to do everything in conformity with these principles and not according to what we think, our own inclinations which will lead us to commit injustice. Fourth, elders should never lay hands upon anyone too hastily. The results at Ephesus were tragic and Timothy was going to have to get involved in some pretty stressful confrontation. It is better to avoid this from the start by taking quite a bit of time to get to know the men, those who have hidden sin patterns will come to light and those who have hidden good deed patterns will also come to light.

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