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**C1207 – February 15, 2012 – Titus 1:5-9**  
**Selection Of Elders**

Last week we talked about Titus 1:1-4 – the Salutation. We said that this is about authority – Paul’s authority, the authority of the Word of God, and Titus’ authority. It referenced 3 positions Paul had – Slave of God, Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Steward of the Gospel. As a slave of God he was bound to absolute allegiance and obedience to God. As an Apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul had the duty to proclaim the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles. As a Steward, he had the duty to preserve and preach the gospel with which he had been entrusted. He couldn’t change it or distort it in any way. He was to preach the message as it was revealed to him. In doing these things, he had God’s authority backing him up. Paul’s authority, as a slave of God, apostle of Jesus Christ, and Steward of the gospel, came to him directly from God.

Because the message was entrusted to him by God, the message itself, the content of the gospel, has inherent authority because it is God’s Word. Men don’t give the message authority. It is authoritative because it is God’s Word. We accept it or we don’t. But if we don’t accept it - doesn’t make it any less authoritative. It just makes us arrogant and rebellious. Like Satan, we want to be the authority, to take it away from God. That’s pretty arrogant – not to mention stupid. But, to one degree or another, we have all done it.

Now, remember, the letter was addressed to Titus, but it was intended to be presented to the Cretan churches. I believe the reasons it was addressed to Titus directly include:

1. First, Paul always had to deal with attacks on his authority. Crete was probably not an exception. Paul had to confirm his authority and the authority of the gospel.

2. Second, since Paul couldn't be there, he appointed Titus to carry out his instructions. Titus was an "apostle legate", Paul's deputy, his agent, his authorized representative. Paul delegated certain tasks to Titus, which gave Titus the authority of Paul in carrying out Paul's instructions in the letter. Titus was instructed to appoint elders, deal with false teachers, and instruct the churches in Crete. These people needed to know that Titus had the authority to do what he was doing. A letter addressed to Titus from Paul, giving specific instructions from Paul, confirms Titus's authority. If anyone questioned what Titus was doing, the letter would resolve the issue.

3. Third, there weren't any elders in the churches, yet. Titus was left in Crete to appoint them. There was not any church leadership to address the letters to – other than Titus.

Now we are going to move on to the next section of the letter which explains why Paul left Titus in Crete, and what he is supposed to do. Paul has instructed Titus to put things in order and I imagine Paul's letter to him letting everyone know that Titus is acting for Paul, was a critical tool Titus needed to be able to get the churches to obey him. Let's read the passage - Titus 1:5–9 (NASB95) - **<sup>5</sup> For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, <sup>6</sup> namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. <sup>7</sup> For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup> 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.**

Let's start with the first clause - "**For this reason I left you behind in Crete**". It's pretty clear from this that Paul had previously been in Crete with Titus. However, for some reason, Paul had to move on, and he left Titus behind with specific instructions. For what reason did Paul leave Titus behind?

Look at the next clause - **“that you would set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city”**. The idea is that there are some things that have not been done, that still need to be done. Paul had to leave before everything that needed to be done with the churches had been done. He left Titus there to get these things done. The phrase may mean that the “things that are lacking” are the elders. Paul may be saying that elders are the only things lacking and that the appointment of elders is all that is left to be done. Or, he could be saying that the appointment of elders is only one of the things that needs to be done in order to put things in order. If so, what other things might need to be done? Paul may be referring to the other things that are going on in the Cretan churches – namely the false teachers. These false teachers had infected the Cretan churches and these churches were at risk of getting derailed. So, dealing with the false teachers may have been another thing that Titus needed to do to put things in order. In Titus 1:11 and 13, Paul instructs Titus to silence and “severely reprove” the false teachers who are upsetting the churches. In Titus 2:1, Paul tells Titus to “speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.” False teachers certainly had to be dealt with. So - there were probably several things going on in these churches that Titus needed to “set in order”, with the appointment of elders and silencing the false teachers at the top of the list.

Let’s look a little more at the instruction to **“appoint elders in every city”**. “Appoint” means to assign someone to a place of authority, put in charge. “Each city” means each city gets elders, not that a group of elders is appointed over all the cities. And, at that time, although the church in a city may have met separately in different homes, these separate home groups were not split up on doctrine – like in our culture – and they occasionally all met together. They were not considered different “churches”, but one church. And Paul is telling Titus to appoint elders, plural, in each city (singular) – meaning each church gets elders. Not that a group of elders is appointed over a group of churches.

Notice also that Titus is the one who is instructed to do the appointing. There is a question about whether this precludes selection of the elders by the congregations. I think the best view is that the congregation was not involved. This is consistent with Acts 14:23 where Paul and Barnabas were the ones who appointed the elders in the churches they established in the First Missionary Journey.

A few of the commentaries suggest that the church may have followed the procedure the apostles used to select the Seven in Acts 6 to administer the daily serving of the widows – nomination by the congregation, examination, prayer, and finally appointment - and that both Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5, are describing the final step – the appointment – after the Acts 6 procedures have been followed. This equates the Acts 6 process with the appointment of elders. However, the Seven who are appointed in Acts 6 function like deacons, not elders. So, the model of Acts 6 should apply to the selection of deacons. However, since Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:6 describe selection of elders by the initial leaders of the church (Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14, and Titus (acting on Paul’s instructions) in Titus 1:6, the Acts 6 procedure should not be applied to the selection of elders. The elders of the local church should identify and appoint elders.

Practically, how would Titus go about doing the appointing? He would have to know the people well enough to be able to find out whether or not they qualified. Notice that Paul did not give him any suggestions. Maybe Paul hadn’t been there long enough to know. We don’t know how long Titus had been in Crete, but apparently Titus had been there long enough to know them. I suspect Titus was familiar enough with the churches to have an idea of who would qualify. Also, remember, Titus had been through a lot with Paul, had traveled with him, and probably had observed Paul appoint elders before (if he had not participated in the selection). Paul obviously had confidence in Titus that Titus could do it.

Now, let’s look at the last clause in vs. 5 - **“set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you”** – **“as I directed you”**. This tells us that Paul had previously given Titus these directions. The word translated “directed” means to give someone detailed instructions as to what must be done. Paul had previously given Titus instructions about setting things in order and appointing elders. This clause – “as I directed you” is interesting in the Greek. There is an emphasis on the “I”. ἐ γὼ σοι διαταξάμην - Paul is emphasizing that this instruction is his instruction. This gives the instructions to Titus more weight, which helps him to persuade the churches to conform to his direction.

Now, let's step back a bit and consider the instruction to appoint elders a little more. Remember Paul's pattern – Turn to **Acts 14:21–23 (NASB95)** <sup>21</sup> **After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,** <sup>22</sup> **strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”** <sup>23</sup> **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.**

If you remember our “whirlwind tour” of Paul's life – when did this occur? Acts 14 is early in Paul's ministry, and this occurred during his First Missionary Journey. Remember he went through Iconium and they tried to stone him, then he went to Lystra and they did stone him. After Lystra, he went to Derbe? What did they do when they got done in Derbe? They went back the way they came to the churches they had started strengthening them, encouraging them and - appointing elders.

Although Acts doesn't expressly say anything about the appointment of elders after this, since this occurred during Paul's First Missionary Journey, and knowing how Paul and his assistants frequently visited the churches they started during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys, I think it is a good bet that Paul made sure that elders were appointed in most of the churches they started - and things were not in order unless elders had been appointed. There were elders in the Jerusalem church (See Acts 15:2). James, in the book of James written around 45 AD to Jews in the Diaspora (the 12 tribes scattered among the nations), presumes that these churches have elders in giving his instructions in James 5. 1 Pet. 5:1 presumes that there were elders in the churches of Asia Minor (the areas to the east of the Mediterranean) - like Galatia and Bithynia<sup>1</sup>. In Acts 20, we see there were elders in Ephesus. All this confirms that elder rule is the Biblical model for the local church. The local church should be led by a plurality of elders. There is no other leadership model for the church in Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Pe 1:1.

In Titus 1:6, the group is referred to as “Overseers” - Are Elder (vs. 5) and Overseer (vs. 6) synonymous? For our purposes, yes. - When these terms are used in the context of the leadership of the local church, they are the same. They are referring to the same thing. The term “Elder” (which is the English translation of the Greek word **πρεσβύτερος**) describes an official position – it emphasizes Position. “Elder” is an official position of leadership in the local church. The term Overseer (which is the English translation of the Greek word **ἐπίσκοπος**) also describes the position, but it emphasizes Function. An Overseer is a guardian, overseer, supervisor. He has the responsibility of safeguarding or seeing to it that something is done in the correct way. It’s pretty much the same thing as a Steward. Or a Shepherd. An Overseer is entrusted with the care of something, just like a Shepherd is entrusted with the care of his sheep.

Look at how these terms are used in **Acts 20:17–32**. – **Turn to Acts 20:17–30**. In this passage, Paul is on his way back from his Third Missionary Journey and is headed to Jerusalem. He did not have time to visit Ephesus on his way back, but he wanted to talk to the elders of Ephesus – he wasn’t sure he would ever see them again and he wanted to say goodbye and give them instructions regarding the care of their church. So he stopped at Miletus on the coast near Ephesus and called them to him: Look at Verse 17 - **17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders (πρεσβύτερος) of the church.** Now skip down to verse 25 - **25 “And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 “Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (ἐπίσκοπος), to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

Notice how the terms Elder and Overseer are used in this passage. He called the Elders to him (shows their position) and he tells them that the Holy Spirit has made them Overseers (shows their function) to shepherd the church of God. It's not theirs, it's God's church, He purchased it Himself with His own blood - (Notice that he says church of God which He purchased with His own blood – another confirmation of the deity of Christ). And he uses the analogy of a shepherd and his flock to illustrate their function. The church is God's flock and they are Shepherds charged with the care of God's flock. And they have been made so "by the Holy Spirit". God put them in care of His flock. And they are accountable to Him for the kind of job they do.

Back to Titus. So we have concluded that the terms "Elder" and "Overseer" are synonymous when they refer to the group – they are referring to the same group - with "Elder" more of an emphasis on the Position or Office, and "Overseer" more of an emphasis on the Function or Responsibilities.

Let's move on to Titus 1:6 - Now we get into the qualifications of an elder. Before we get into the specific qualifications, let's consider a couple of things.

First, these qualities are things that all believers should be – not just elders. It isn't like – well, an elder has to be this way, but everyone else can be slackers. No – everyone must be this way. These qualities are consistent with godliness, which is required of all believers – remember Titus 1:1 in the Salutation we talked about last week – one aim of Paul's apostleship is the **"knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness"**. A good deal of the letter to Titus deals with godliness of the believer. Later, we will talk about the instructions to older men, older women, young women, young men, and slaves in Titus 2:2-10, and the instructions to everyone in Titus 3:1-2. Some of the same qualities required of an Elder pop up in these passages. Believers are not held to less of a standard of godliness because they are not elders - we are all expected to be godly. However, believers are also at different levels in their spiritual maturity, and unfortunately, some are even carnal believers who live according to the flesh – and the spiritually immature and carnal do not qualify to be Elders. However, the spiritually immature and carnal are expected to be godly and will be held accountable if they do not grow and mature.

Also, these qualities are character traits – these are things that you could say characterize a person. None of us is perfect, we all sin – so being a sinner doesn't disqualify you from being an Elder. If so, no one other than Jesus Christ would qualify. The question is “do these qualities characterize the person”? Or to put it another way “would it be out of character for this person to act this way.”

Finally, in case anyone was wondering, to qualify as an elder, a person must be male. By the specific terms of Scripture, women cannot be elders.

Ok. Let's start with the first qualification. To qualify as an elder, a man must be “**above reproach**” – This is a key quality and most of the other qualities can be viewed as traits that make a man “above reproach”. What does “above reproach” mean?

This word is “**ἀνέγκλητος**” and it means what it says – “blameless”, “above reproach”. This term has a legal connotation to it in the sense that no one can accuse him. There is nothing against him. The thought is that the man must have a clean reputation, both inside and outside the church. Jeremy put it well in a previous lesson he taught, when he described it as “there are no obvious flaws in his character that could bring justified criticism.” This is the key quality and most of the other qualities listed in this passage are somehow related to being “above reproach”.

You should realize that a man is to be considered based on his current situation. In other words, what is he like now? Not what was he like when he was a teenager, or before he became a believer, but what is his character now. Could he have been a scoundrel in the long ago past and still be an elder? Yes. Look at Titus 3:1-3 - **<sup>1</sup> Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, <sup>2</sup> to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.** Notice this next part - **<sup>3</sup> For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.** This describes life before a person becomes a believer. These are the ways of everyone before they believe. And the people who Titus will appoint as elders will have once been like this. But the ones he will appoint have become believers and things have turned around - to the point that now



they are considered “blameless” and “above reproach”. What a change! But this change takes time. It takes a lot of time to acquire a good reputation, a very short time to lose it, and after you have lost it, a really long time to get it back. And remember, this reputation has to be real – he must really be “above reproach” – not have fooled everybody into thinking he is “above reproach”. That’s a hard task for those, like Titus, who are charged with selecting the elders – they can’t let themselves be fooled. And some people are really good at that. That’s why, in **1 Timothy 5:22**, Paul instructed Timothy not to lay hands on a person too quickly. They need to be around a while. Time will tell how they really are.

**“Husband of One Wife”** – in the Greek this means a “one woman man” – If a man is married, he must be faithful and devoted to his wife. He is certainly not “above reproach” if he is unfaithful. Also, if he is not faithful to his wife, with whom he is one flesh, how can you expect him to be faithful to the church? Let me also point out that this doesn’t mean that an elder must be married – just that, if he is married, he must be faithful to his wife.

**“Having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion”** - The “children” are children that are still a part of his household, under his authority. The thought is this - If a man cannot manage his household, he should not be in charge of managing God’s household – the local church. Paul’s instructions to Timothy at Ephesus in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 expressly says that. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 is another listing of the qualities of an elder and 1 Timothy 3:4-5 is the part of the 1 Timothy listing that parallels our passage in Titus. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 says: <sup>4</sup> **[an overseer must be] one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity** <sup>5</sup> **(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”**

Let’s dig down into this a little bit, just to make sure it is clear. “Having children who believe could mean one of two things: children who are “trustworthy, faithful, dependable”, or children who are believers. How do you figure out which one of these things it is? Let’s look again at the parallel passage - **1 Timothy 3:4-5**. Again, it says - <sup>4</sup> **He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity** <sup>5</sup> **(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”** All this

passage says is that the elder must manage his household well, keeping his children under control. Nothing about his children having to be believers. Neither this passage in 1 Timothy, nor the other elder qualifications in 1 Timothy say that an elder's children must be believers. And this makes sense. We are not in control of who believes and who doesn't believe. That's up to God. Unfortunately, as sad as it is, parents can be the best parents in the world, manage their household very well, but not have children who believe. It is not up to the parents. So, if you use 1 Timothy 3:4-5 to help interpret our passage in Titus, you come to the conclusion that "having children who believe" should be translated "having children who are trustworthy or faithful". It is not belief that is at issue, it is behavior. A parent cannot control belief, but he can control behavior. And this is what Paul is telling Titus to look for. The elder's children are not required to be believers, but are required to be trustworthy or faithful to their father. Also, Titus 1:6 requires that the children cannot be open to charges of debauchery (wild living) (ἀσωτία) or be undisciplined, disobedient or rebellious (ἀνυπότακτος). They must be faithful and under control.

Also, it is not required that an elder have children, just that if he does have children, his children must be faithful, obedient, and under control.

Let's move on to Titus 1:7 and 8 – These verses give us more information about some things that are considered "blameless" or "above reproach". Look at the first part of **Titus 1:7 (NASB95)** <sup>7</sup> **For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward.**

**"For the overseer must be above reproach"** – this means what it says – it is necessary, required, that the overseer have a "blameless" reputation. It isn't optional. And it goes on to tell us why - Because he is "God's steward". We talked about this earlier. A steward is a person who has been entrusted with something. Remember in last week's lesson when we were talking about Paul's position as a steward of the gospel. He was entrusted with the gospel and was responsible for taking care of it, preserving it, making sure that it wasn't distorted. Well this is the same concept - a steward is a person who manages something for someone else – like a person who manages an estate for the owner. He runs the estate – takes care of the property and does what needs to be done with it. Remember our definition of "overseer" earlier - **one who has the responsibility of safeguarding or seeing to it that**

**something is done in the correct way.** Overseer and Steward go hand in hand. An overseer is a steward. He is a guardian. He has been entrusted with safeguarding the church. Not only that, but look at who he is doing it for. God. He is God's steward. He is taking care of God's property. And he better take care of it, because – guess what – if he doesn't take care of it, he is responsible to God for it. That is a fact – and a very sobering fact if you are an elder. You are supposed to manage the church for God, the way God says to do it, and if you don't you get to meet with God and suffer the consequences. You get to stand in front of Christ and you will be held accountable for how you took care of His church, His body. This is big, big, big responsibility. We elders better make sure we diligently study the Scriptures, so that we can know what God expects, and pray every day that we have the guts to obey and be proper guardians of His property. This is very serious.

The other thing about being God's steward is that whatever the overseer does directly reflects on whom? God. So, once again, if the elders don't do right, God's reputation, His glory, suffers. And we are accountable for that, too. If a person who isn't blameless is appointed as an elder, then this not only reflects on the reputation of the church, but it is a direct reflection on God.

Starting in the middle of vs. 7 and continuing through the end of vs. 8, Paul lists 5 negative traits that disqualify a person from being an elder, and 7 positive traits to look for. The negative traits are:

- a. “not self-willed” - μή αὐθάδη – an overseer cannot be self-willed, stubborn, or arrogant – Another way of saying this is that he must be “gentle, kind and gracious”, as described in 1 Tim. 3:3. He is a team player, considerate of other's opinions, and doesn't have to have his own way. This doesn't mean he isn't firm or confident, but he is humble, kind and gracious in debate, and can accept it that someone may know better or have a better idea.
- b. “not quick tempered” - μή ὀργίλον – here's a good description – which I think came from Aristotle – “quick-tempered persons lose no time being angry, and do so with those they ought not, over things they

ought not, and far more than they ought<sup>2</sup> – an overseer deals with people and problems, if he doesn't have patience in these situations, he can do much harm to the church.

c. “not addicted to much wine” - μὴ πάροινον – this means what it says – an overseer can't be an alcoholic. By implication, this would also mean he can't be a drug addict or other kind of substance abuser.

d. “not pugnacious” - μὴ πλήκτην – this basically means an abusive person, whether physically abusive or verbally abusive. A bully.

e. “not fond of sordid gain” - μὴ αἰ σχροκερδῆ - “shamelessly greedy for money”. This was “one of the legendary flaws of the Cretans (Polybius 6:46),<sup>3</sup> A person in authority who will do anything for money - will do anything for money.

At best, he will put his financial gain over the interests of the church.

At worst, he will use his position to make money.

Those were the 5 negative traits. Here are the seven positive traits:

a. “hospitable” – φιλόξενος – in the ancient world, this was an important virtue. It is a willingness to open the home and help those in need. Here's a quote from one of the commentaries: “In the Roman Empire the dangers of travel, poor conditions of inns, and pressures on Christians who often existed as refugees made hospitality indispensable for the church ..... Furthermore, ‘hospitality was to a large extent a presupposition for the Christian mission’ ..... For worship to take place homes had to be opened and provisions made ..... Consequently, the application of this virtue to the church leader is

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<sup>2</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 721.

<sup>3</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 162.

natural, since the burden of providing hospitality to travelers and those in need would fall on him <sup>4</sup>.

b. “loving what is good” – φιλάγαθον – This is a selfless attitude and desire for what is inherently good -.<sup>5</sup> . He loves and desires the things that God says are good.

c. “sensible” – σώφρων – this means prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled. A person who avoids extremes, is moderate in lifestyle, and gives careful consideration to responsible action. A “balanced demeanor characterized by self-control, prudence and good judgment. <sup>6</sup>” Notice that this virtue shows up later in Titus in the instructions to the various groups in the churches, and it also shows up in the instructions to all believers in Titus 2:11–12 (NASB95) - <sup>11</sup> **For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, <sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age”**

f. “just” – δίκαιος – this means “righteous”. The overseer must live in accordance with God’s standards. He must be a principled man who makes fair and just decisions for the church. This quality is also referred to in Titus 2:12.

g. “devout” - ὅσιος – he must be devoted to being holy and pleasing to God. He is firmly committed to God and living in obedience to Him.

h. “self controlled” - ἐγκρατής – He must be self-disciplined. He can keep his emotions, impulses and desires under control. He can make

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<sup>4</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 163.

<sup>5</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 163.

<sup>6</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 184.

himself do what ought to be done, and he can keep himself from doing what ought not to be done.

The 7<sup>th</sup> positive trait is in vs. 9 - Titus 1:9 (NASB95) **“<sup>9</sup> 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.**

**“holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching”** – means he completely accepts and is firmly devoted to the Word of God. He is interested in it. He diligently studies it. He hungers for it. The reason he must be firmly devoted to the Word of God is that he must be able, meaning “be equipped” – have the knowledge and the commitment - to do 2 things.

First, if he is firmly devoted to the Word of God, he will be able to “exhort in sound doctrine”. “The word for “exhort” is used broadly for giving encouragement; it suggests instruction with a practical bent, something more than simply detailing facts and doctrines, and it carries an element of persuasion and even command <sup>7</sup>” Another word for “exhort” is “urge” even “strongly urge”. If the elder is not devoted to Scripture, he doesn’t know sound doctrine well enough to urge people to conform. Several places in Titus, Paul instructs Titus to exhort the Cretans. Look at **Titus 2:6 (NASB95) - <sup>6</sup> Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;** – the word translated “urge” is the same word as “exhort”; and **Titus 2:15 (NASB95) - <sup>15</sup> These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”** This is something the elders are responsible for doing. However, If you don’t know the Word, you aren’t equipped to exhort or to strongly urge people to obey.

If he is firmly devoted to the Word of God, not only will he be able to exhort in sound doctrine, but he will also be equipped **“to refute those who contradict”** – “those who contradict” means those who contradict, or oppose, the Word of God – false teachers. The term “refute” is too narrow because

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<sup>7</sup> I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 167.

“refute” has the connotation of a debate, without consequences. The Greek term can mean “expose”, “convict”, “reprove”, or even “punish” or “discipline”. I think all those ideas come into play here. Look at what Paul instructs Titus to do with the false teachers in Crete – Turn to **Titus 1:13 (NASB95) - 13** **This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith.**” In this passage the same word translated “refute” in Titus 1:9 is translated “reprove” and he’s supposed to do it “severely”. And that is probably what is intended by Titus 1:9 – devotion to the Word of God enables the elder not only to refute, but to expose”, “convict”, “reprove”, and “discipline”, false teachers.

To sum the qualifications of an elder up – He must be a man, who has a blameless reputation, is faithful to his wife, and has children who are faithful and obedient to him and who are not wild or rebellious. He must not be self-willed, quick tempered, an alcoholic, addict or substance abuser, a bully, or greedy. He must be hospitable, love good, sensible, just, devout, and self-disciplined. He must also be completely devoted to the Word of God.

You should notice that these qualifications are necessary, they are not optional. Titus 1:7 tells us the overseer “must be” these things. In the Greek it says “it is necessary”. These are requirements, not suggestions.

Notice something else about these qualities – they give you clues about the responsibilities of the elders.

He is referred to as an “overseer” and “God’s steward”. This tells us he is supposed to be a manager, guardian, shepherd of the local church. He is supposed to care for, guard and protect the local church, for God. He has the authority to do it, and he is responsible to God for the job he does.

He must be hospitable. This tells us that he is the first in line to open up his house and provide assistance when needed.

He must be completely devoted to the Word of God so that he is equipped to exhort in sound doctrine and rebuke false teaching. This tells us that he is responsible for being a dedicated and diligent student of the Word of God, and knowing and being able to properly handle it. It also tells us that he is responsible for exhorting the church to conform to sound doctrine. This will

probably involve some kind of teaching or instruction, maybe not on Sundays or Wednesday nights, but maybe smaller groups, or even one on one. This also tells us he is responsible for identifying false teaching, not letting it into the church, correcting it when it appears, and disciplining false teachers. Look at the first verse of the passage we will get to next week – Titus 1:10 – this gives us one reason why it was very important that men who are devoted to the Word of God be appointed – this is the situation in Crete - **Titus 1:10-11 (NASB95) - <sup>10</sup> For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, <sup>11</sup> who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.** The elders Titus appointed were going to be responsible for dealing with these false teachers. Paul wasn't there, Titus couldn't be there all the time. In fact, Titus was going to leave Crete. These new elders were going to have to deal with these false teachers after Titus left. They had to be able to handle the job. Just like, 2000 years later, we need to be able to handle the job.

One final thing we need to observe are the differences between the elder qualities in Titus, and the list of elder qualities in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. This is a chart showing the differences.

<b><u>Titus 1:5-9</u></b>	<b><u>1 Timothy 3:1-7</u></b>
Above Reproach	Above Reproach
Faithful to His Wife	Faithful to His Wife
Faithful Children Who Aren't Wild or Rebellious	Manages Household Well, Keeping Children Under Control With All Dignity
Not Self-Willed	Gentle?
Not Quick Tempered	Peaceable?
Not Addicted to Wine	Not Addicted to Wine
Not Pugnacious	Not Pugnacious
Not Fond of Sordid Gain	Free From the Love of Money
Hospitable	Hospitable
Loving What is Good	---
Sensible	Prudent
Just	----



Devout	----
Self Controlled	Temperate
Holding Fast the Faithful Word so that He is Able to Exhort and Rebuke	Able to Teach
	Respectable
	Not a New Convert
	Good Reputation with Those Outside (the Church)

What I have done here is take the Titus qualifications in the order they appear in Titus and then tried to relate them to the corresponding qualities in 1 Timothy 3. As you can see, most of the qualities are either the same, or correspond very closely to each other – they may be different words used to describe the same quality, or they may be a positive quality that corresponds to a negative quality. However, there are a few of them that appear in one list, that don't appear in the other list. What does this mean?

It is an indication that these lists are not exhaustive. They are not exhaustive in that they don't list every quality that could make a man "above reproach". Titus lists some that Timothy didn't list, Timothy lists some that Titus didn't, and there are other specific qualities that could have been listed, but weren't – like gluttony, for example. So – because Titus and Timothy tell us that elders must be these things, an elder must have all these qualities. But you don't look just at these lists. And you don't look at them legalistically. For example, you can't say, "well Paul didn't specifically include gluttony on the list, so an elder can be a glutton". That's legalism. We need to look at letter and the intent of the passages. And the overall intent is that an elder be "above reproach as God's steward". Whatever may keep him from being "above reproach" will disqualify him, whether it is specifically on the list or not.

The only thing on Timothy's list that is not on Titus' list - and is not a character trait that could also be included under the general qualification of "above reproach" is "not a new convert". This could have been included by Paul because of a particular problem in the church in Ephesus that Paul needed to specifically address, or it could reflect the relative maturity of the two churches, or it could be some other reason. We are not told. For example, if the church in Crete was relatively immature, then Titus may have had to

appoint someone who was a “new convert”. This would not be unheard of, since Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the new churches founded during the First Missionary Journey. By definition, they would have all been new converts. By contrast, the church in Ephesus might have been around much longer than the church in Crete and therefore, there were relatively mature believers who would qualify as elders. [One indication that the church in Ephesus had been around longer than the churches in Crete may be the fact that they already had elders (See Acts 20), - also 1 Timothy addresses the qualifications of deacons (which is not addressed in Titus)]. This may indicate that the churches in Crete were newer and smaller than the church in Ephesus. But, this is just speculation, because the church in Crete could have been started long before, with the return of the Cretan Jews who were at Pentecost and heard Peter speak in Acts 2, or when Paul passed through on the prison ship on his way to Rome, or some other time). If the church was not new, it was foundering and leaderless, and probably had been for a while.

I am tending to think that the church in Crete was relatively new. If, and this is my speculation – if the church in Crete was new, then this may explain leaving “not a new convert” off the list to Titus. It might also explain the absence of instructions about deacons in the letter to Titus.

But this begs the question about whether “not a new convert” is a requirement (a “must”) or an option (a “should”). 1 Timothy says it is a must. So – for our purposes, we must consider it a “must”. Maybe it was a “should” for Titus because of the circumstances. And maybe it is an indication that, with new churches in the mission field, where there is nothing but new converts, it is more important to have some leadership than none. Obviously, in whatever case, the elder must be “above reproach”. But, let me make this clear, since we don’t know why it was not on the list to Titus, and since it is on the list to Timothy, and it is considered a “must” for Timothy, it is a “must” for us.

Next week we are going to talk about one of the reasons it was very important for Titus to get the elders in place - the false teachers in Crete.

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