

I. Elders and Deacons Must Be Wise and Self-Controlled Leaders (3:2-3; Titus 1:7-8)

- A. Sober in Thought and Discernment (Sober-Minded in 3:2; 3:11; Titus 2:2)
- B. Self-Controlled In All Areas of Life: Self-controlled, Respectable, Not a Drunkard, Not Violent (Titus 2:3; Eph 5:18; Prov 23:29-35)
- C. Church Leaders Live Out and Pass On Biblical Wisdom (Prov 4)

II. Elders and Deacons Must Be Peaceful Leaders (3:3)

- A. A Peaceful Disposition: Not Violent, but Gentle, Not Quarrelsome (Matt 11:29; Isa 42:3; Titus 3:2)
- B. Elders and Deacons Seek the Peace, Purity, and Unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-3; 2 Tim 2:23-25; Titus 3:9-11)

“A sober-minded man is ‘free from every form of excess, passion, or rashness.’ He is wary, circumspect, even cautious. The word ‘sober-minded’ describes the way a person walks late at night in a city: not paranoid, necessarily, but alert. This is necessary for the protection of the church. A vigilant elder notices spiritual needs and warns of spiritual dangers.” –Philip Ryken

“Men of points and pugnacity are very annoying in a session or congregation, and they may rise to the terror of presbyteries and other church courts. They may love the truth at heart—and we believe they often do—but they love fighting too. . . . A carping, censorious spirit is to be watched and prayed against in all of us: it is often the precursor or companion of backsliding in doctrine or life.” —David Dickson

“Do you promise to seek the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church?” —Fourth Vow for Elders and Deacons, OPC Form of Government XXV, 6. b. (4)

Reflection Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. Which virtues in 1 Timothy 3:2-3 describe your character? Does one virtue stand out as your greatest area of strength or weakness?
2. What does it mean to be wise according to the Bible? What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Is wisdom demonstrated only in big and difficult decisions, or in the many small decisions that make up day-to-day life?
3. Why must elders be gentle? Does gentleness require compromising on the truth or being soft on error?
4. What does it mean to “seek the peace, the purity, and the unity of the church”? Is it ever necessary for the church to divide for the sake of peace or for the church’s purity?