

## Elders as Examples to the Flock (Leadership Week 3)

### READING:

1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

### Role Models:

Newsweek June 27, 1993: In the brusquely forthright words of Barkley: "I'm not paid to be a role model. I'm paid to wreak havoc on the basketball court."

Who are the Role Models in your life? Was Lance Armstrong one of your heroes??

- Celebrity? Tim Tebow, Taylor Swift.
- Co-Worker – who uniquely shines the light of Christ on the job?
- Parent – Great Mom who inspired you to be a great Mom?
- Bible Character – King David? Nehemiah – man of prayer, Apostle Paul Teacher

### Outline:

As we take yet a deeper look at the character and function of effective Christian leadership, let's consider the function of leaders as "EXAMPLES" in the church:

- The ultimate example of Christ,
- The example of the Apostles
- The example of effective Elders in the church
- The example that the church displays to the watching world.

### The Example of Christ:

Let's begin our journey in the Upper Room on the night that the Lord Jesus was betrayed. He understood that this would be the last Passover he would spend with the Disciples.

John 13:1, **Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

- You know the story, after the disciples had gathered, Jesus girded himself with a towel and picked up a basin and washed the feet of all of his disciples.
- This was a task normally performed by the lowest, the least of the servants in the household, BUT this night the basin and the towel were held by the very one who upholds the Universe by the word of his power.
- After washing the feet of all of the Disciples Jesus said:

John 13: 13 **You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.**

- There is no greater example, no higher Role Model than the Lord Jesus.
- Certainly this same image of Christ as the servant of all would have been Paul's inspiration when he wrote to the church at Philippi:
- Background, There at Philippi there were a few individuals who were at odds with one another. In a beautiful way, providing correction Paul points to the example of Jesus.

Philippians 2: 3 **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** 4 **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.** 5 **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,** 6 **who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,** 7 **but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.** 8 **And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

- Anyone who has the Spirit of God dwelling in them, at odds with his brother, should be MOVED to repentance by the example of Christ.
- Paul encourages the Ephesian Believers to think of themselves as beloved children who are naturally driven to imitate their mom and dad.

Ephesians 5:1 **Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.** 2 **And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

- When Paul commanded the Ephesian Believers to imitate the Lord he was simply commanding them to DO WHAT HE HIMSELF WAS DOING.

Now we move from the example of Christ to the example of the Apostles:

In devotion, humility, in faithfulness and zeal for the Lord Paul exhorted his fellow believers to follow his example:

Phil 3: 17 **Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.**

Phil 4: 9 **What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

- What kinds of things were they to imitate?

#### WORK ETHIC:

When Paul lived among the believers he displayed an exemplary work ethic for the church to emulate.

- Certain believers at Thessalonica were confused when they heard about the imminent return of Christ. Some refused to work and Paul reminded them of his example.

1 Thessalonians 3: 7 **For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,**

- Paul taught every day and labored at his craft of tent making so that his needs and the needs of his team would be met and they would not be a burden on the blossoming church.
- Elders – Generally work full time jobs and care for the flock of God full time

Paul's example of LOVE ruling over personal freedoms.

When it comes to personal freedoms: eating and drinking always being considerate of how your conduct will affect the people around you. Paul is a good example of putting others first and he exhorted the Corinthians to imitate him.

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.**

- As one who sought to imitate Jesus the Apostle Peter exhorts the Elders to be examples to the flock of God.

1 Peter 5: 2 **shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;**

3 **not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.**

Moving from the Apostles to the next generation of leaders in the church, The idea of living an exemplary life is passed from Paul to Timothy.

Paul reminded his young friend Timothy (Pastor) that though he was young he was called to live as an example to the church.

1 Timothy 4: 12 **Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.**

- The same with Titus:

Titus 2: 7 **Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.**

- Good works, integrity, dignity, soundness of speech..... and all of these at a level so that those who want to accuse you, don't have a leg to stand on.
- How wonderful would it be if the newspapers, CNN, local News could report NOTHING negative about the church and it's leadership.

The godly character that is exemplified in the elders is really NO DIFFERENT from the character that should be seen in the lives of ALL believers.

- With that in mind, Elders then should be models or examples to the church.
- BUT the church should be displaying the character of Christ for the whole world to see.

1 Timothy 3:2, Elders must be Above reproach / Blameless

- This word could actually also be used to describe my favorite pots and pans – The ones that have Teflon coating. Nothing at all sticks to them.
- Literally (anepilempton) “Not to be taken hold of” it describes an individual against whom it is impossible to bring any charge of wrong doing.
- If this described a perfect man there would have only been ONE elder in the history of mankind, the Lord Jesus.
- But the word describes a man who has walked with the Lord for a period of time, a man in whom there is observable evidence of the grace of God. He is a man in the process of being transformed into the image of Jesus, displaying the fruit of the Spirit.
- Elders are to be examples BUT the same character qualities should be growing in all. ALL believers have become partakers of the divine nature and are in the same process of being transformed. “Blamelessness” is evidence of Christ's righteousness.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

The standing that we have before God by virtue of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross is “Blameless.”

- Accusations fall away in light of the cross. Not that we have yet reached moral perfection but by the grace of God we have become the recipients of Christ’s gracious gift of righteousness and the Holy Spirit is at work making us what God has declared us to be.

Jude 1: 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

1 Timothy 3:2, Elders are to be the Husband of one wife.

- This does not infer that an elder must be married, nor does not mean that if an elder’s wife should pass away that he is required to stop serving the church.
- The word that Paul uses (GUNALKOS) literally means “A one woman’s husband.” This infers that the elder is not a “Ladies’ man,” it speaks of purity in a man’s moral conduct. An elder cannot be flirtatious. He is fully committed to his wife.
- Paul gave Timothy advice as to how he should relate to women in the church:

1 Timothy 5:2 (Treat) older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.

When Jesus was asked about marriage he went back to the book of Genesis and declared:

Matthew 19: 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Hebrews 13: 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

- Marriage among ALL believers must be held in high honor.
- In a society where 53% of all marriages end in divorce the CHURCH should stand as a beacon of hope for the broken hearted. Sadly, the divorce rate in the church mirrors that of the world.

1 Timothy 3:3, An elder is NOT to be a drunkard.

- Literally this means, “Not sitting beside wine” not lingering at the cup. This is not necessarily a complete abstinence from alcohol but a definite prohibition against drunkenness.
- This standard is no different from that which is held for all of the saints.

Romans 13:13, **Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.**

Eph 5:18 **And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,**

WHO IS WATCHING YOU, to whom is your life an example? Children, grandchildren, co-workers, neighbors,

- Has anyone ever come to you and asked why you don't use foul language?
- Why you don't indulge yourself with the rest of your co-workers on a business trip?
- Why you excuse yourself when the conversation turns toward a dirty joke.
- DO people ask you how you have been able to stay married to the same man for 30 years?

1 Peter 3: 15 **but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;**

While we are asking the Lord to provide qualified men to serve as elders our greater desire is that ALL of us would:

- Grow in the grace of God and mature in the faith
- Living exemplary lives in this world so that our generation would be confronted with a living example of God's redeeming power.

Shall we pray: