

INTRODUCTION

1. We're looking again tonight at the list of qualifications for elders found in Titus chapter one.
2. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Titus chapter one as we look at verses 8-9.
3. In our last time together we looked at the qualifications that involved family leadership and general character.
4. In family leadership, Paul says that an elder is to have faithful and submissive children.
5. In verse 7 we began our look at those general character qualities—first what an elder is not to be and now in verse 8 what an elder is to be.
6. Paul says in **Titus 1:8-9 (NASB)** ⁸ but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹ 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.
7. These two passages show what an elder is to be and do.
8. One focuses on his character while the other focuses on his ability or function.
9. The honor code for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point is as follows: "A cadet does not lie, cheat, or steal; nor tolerate anyone who does." This honor code is so stringent that even one violation at any time during the four

years of study, including even the day before graduation, requires automatic expulsion of the guilty party.¹

10. If a school takes seriously its standards of conduct, how much more the church.
11. We are currently looking at the qualifications of those who lead the church.
12. We have already looked at verses 6-7 which speak of his public reputation, sexual morality, family leadership, and general character.
13. Now we're looking at verses 8-9 which also speak of his general character and teaching skill.
14. We concluded our time together at verse 7 where we saw what an elder is not to be.
15. Now let's look at verse 8 and learn what an elder is to be.

¹Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Bilical Preaching : Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

I. The Appointment of Elders (v.5)
II. The Qualifications of Elders (vv.6-9)

- A. Public Reputation (v.6a)
- B. Sexual Morality (v.6b)
- C. Family Leadership (v.6c)
- D. General Character (vv.7-8)

- 1. What an elder must not be (v.7)
- 2. What an elder must be (v.8)

Paul began v. 8 with the adversative particle “but” (*alla*), thus indicating a contrast between the preceding five negative traits and the six positive traits that follow.²

It could be translated, “Otherwise, on the other hand, but” (NASB Dictionary).

- a) “Hospitable” (*philoxenos*). This is composed of two Greek words: *xenos* (stranger) and *phileo* (affection). It means “to love strangers.” “In an official capacity this is the duty of keeping open house” (Rienecker).

“Christians travelling from one place to another were received and forwarded on their journey by their brethren” (JFB).

²Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, electronic ed., The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1992). 284.

So the term “hospitality” meant housing, feeding and treating graciously travelers needing a place to stay. (Christian travelers, like Jewish ones, normally carried letters of recommendation attesting that they could be trusted.)³

John MacArthur says, “A person who is hospitable gives practical help to anyone who is in need, friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever. He freely offers his time, his resources, and his encouragement to meet the needs of others.”⁴

- 1) All believers are to be hospitable
 - a) **Romans 12:13 (NASB)** ¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.
 - b) **Hebrews 13:2 (NASB)** ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

³Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Tit 1:8.

⁴John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 39.

- c) **1 Peter 4:9 (NASB)** ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
- 2) Examples of hospitality
- a) Genesis 18:1-8 records the hospitality that Abraham showed to God and two angels

Genesis 18:1-8 (NASB) ¹ Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. ² When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, ³ and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. ⁴ "Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; ⁵ and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant." And they said, "So do, as you have said." ⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it* and make bread cakes." ⁷ Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave *it* to

the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed *it* before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

- b) Job said in **Job 31:32 (NASB)** ³²
"The alien has not lodged outside,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler.

- c) Luke records the hospitality that Lydia showed to Paul and Silas in **Acts 16:15 (NASB)** ¹⁵ And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

- d) The apostle John talks about the hospitality of Gaius in **3 John 1:5-8 (NASB)** ⁵ Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially *when they are* strangers; ⁶ and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. ⁷ For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸ Therefore we ought to support such

men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

- b) “Loving what is good” (philagathos) appears only here in the whole New Testament. It describes someone who not only loves good things but likes to do them as well.⁵

In other words, It “denotes devotion to all that is best” (Rienecker) or literally “having a strong affection for that which is intrinsically good” (MacArthur).

Moulton and Milligan cite a late second-century A.D. papyrus document and render the word “a lover of virtue.”⁶

The AV translates this as “A lover of good men” while the NASB says, “loving what is good.”

⁵Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 272.

MM J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. London, 1930.

⁶George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992). 292.

An elder is to be a man who is devoted to that which is good and beneficial, whether in men, deeds, or things.

William MacDonald says, “His speech, his activities, and his associations should reveal that he is separated from all that is shady, questionable, or wrong.”⁷

Jonathan’s love for David in 1 Samuel 18:1 is a good example of one who is *a lover of good men*. It says, “Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.”

An example of *loving what is good* is Philippians 4:8 which says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

- c) “Sensible” (sophron) is translated “sober-minded” in the NKJV. It means “of sound mind” (Kittel) and refers to “discipline or self-control. This word “describes a person who is sober-minded and coolheaded” (MacArthur). He is “well-balanced,” and has

⁷William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Tit 1:8.

a “properly regulated mind.” He is “discreet and prudent” (Hiebert).

Titus 2:2 says that “the older men” are to be “sensible”. Verse 5 says “the older women” are also to be “sensible” while verse 6 also says “young men” are to “be sensible.”

Verses 11-12 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bring salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Having a properly regulated mind is the responsibility of all of God’s children, not just elders.

- d) “Just” (dikaios) means “righteous” (Kittel). It’s a “state of being right or right conduct” (Vine). “It denotes that which is proper, right, and fitting” (MacArthur).

An elder is to be upright in his dealings with men. His conduct in relation to others conforms to what is right.

- e) “Devout” (hosios) is translated “holy” in the NKJV. It refers to being “pure, unpolluted, free from the stain of sin” (Hiebert). “It speaks of the individual who keeps himself free from that which stains him in the eyes of God” (Rienecker).

Paul told the Thessalonians in **1 Thessalonians 2:10 (NASB)**¹⁰ You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers.

There is a behavior about us that must be devout, upright, and blameless. This should not only be display before an unbelieving world but also toward believers.

- f) “Self-controlled” (egkrates) means, a “complete, self-mastery, control over one’s self.”

This is the type of self-mastery “which controls all passionate impulse and keeps the will loyal to the will of God.”⁸

Galatians 5:23 lists it as the fruit of the Spirit.

In 2 Samuel 11:1-4 gives an incident in David’s life where he did not exercise self-control over his desires and it cost him dearly.

2 Samuel 11:1-4 (NASB)¹ Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But

⁸ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976, 1980). 652.

David stayed at Jerusalem. ² Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. ³ So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

Alexander Strauss says, "To qualify as an overseer, a man must be characterized by self-discipline, self-restraint, and self-control in every aspect of life—particularly over physical desires (Acts 24:25; 1 Corinthians 7:9; 9:25). Solomon warns against an undisciplined man's vulnerability in Proverbs 25:28: *Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.*

During Solomon's time, walls were a strategic part of a city's defense system. A strong and secure city fortified its walls (Isaiah 26:1). A man's stability can be likened to such fortifications. Without stability and self-control, a person is exposed to attack and becomes easy prey for an enemy.

An undisciplined man has little resistance to sexual lust, provocation, anger, slothfulness, a critical spirit, or other desires that seek to control him. He is easy prey to sinful desires and the devil. Self-discipline is an essential part of the Christian life. Leaders who lack discipline frustrate their fellow leaders as well as those they lead. Not only are they poor examples, but they cannot accomplish what needs to be done. Consequently, the flocks they shepherd are poorly managed and cared for.”⁹

E. Teaching Skill (v.9)

“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.”

1. He clings to the Word he has been taught

The words “holding fast” (*antechomai*) means “to cleave to” (Kittel) or “hold on to” (Rienecker) or as Kenneth Wuest says, “holding firmly to.”

“Faithful” (*pistos*) is the same word we saw last time in verse 6 translated “believing” in the NASB and “faithful” in the NKJV. Here it is the “faithful, trustworthy, reliable” (Rienecker) word.

God’s Word is faithful. It can be trusted.

⁹ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, revised & expanded (Littleton, Col.: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1995), 179.

- a) **Psalms 119:86 (NASB)** ⁸⁶ All Your commandments are faithful.
- b) **Psalms 12:6 (NASB)** ⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.
- c) No wonder David says in **Psalms 119:50 (NASB)** ⁵⁰ This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.

The word “taught” (didache) refers to “teaching.”

An elder clings firmly to the faithful, trustworthy, and reliable word that he has been taught.

He doesn't stray to the left or the right but keeps “watch over [his] heart with all diligence” (Prov.4:23).

Elders are to be two sides of the same coin—skilled in teaching and teachable.

1 Timothy 3:2 says, “able to teach.” Those three words mean that he is skilled in teaching and teachable.

“An elder must cling firmly to, be devoted to, and adhere wholeheartedly to God's Word (cf. Matthew 6:24). This implies strong conviction and commitment to the Word...Elders who are uncertain or half-heartedly committed to Scripture can never protect the flock from wolves or guide it

to better pastures...Paul indicates that the only word an elder ought to consider faithful is the message that measures up to and is 'in accordance with the teaching' they received from him as the apostle and teacher sent to the Gentiles. There is only one apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:5), one standard, and one teaching. Anything else is false (Titus 1:10ff; Galatians 1:8,9)."¹⁰

2. He exhorts and convicts those who contradict

“The shepherd must be able to tend the sheep, and to drive away the wolves” (Hiebert).

Craig Keener says, “Elders had to be trained to refute current false teachings before they were appointed.”¹¹

Paul tells Titus why an elder is to cling to the faithful word?

He says, “So that.” This is a hina purpose clause which means “for the purpose of.”

¹⁰ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, revised & expanded (Littleton, Col.: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1995), 180.

¹¹ Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Tit 1:9.

An elder clings to the trustworthy Word for the purpose of exhorting believers in sound doctrine and to refuting those who contradict it.

His grounding in Scripture is the dunatos, the ability or the power for both exhorting and refuting.

- a) The word “exhort” (parakaleo) primarily means “to call to a person, to admonish, exhort, urge some course of conduct” (Vine).
 - 1) Paul used this word in **Ephesians 4:1 (NASB)** ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.
 - 2) He also used it in **Philippians 4:2 (NASB)** ²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

Here in Titus 1:9 Paul is saying that an elder is to “exhort” or “implore or urge” in “sound doctrine.”

In other words, he urges some course of conduct with “sound doctrine” (“sound” [hugiaino, to be sound, to be well, to be in good health, healthy] “doctrine” [didaskalia, teaching, doctrine]).

- b) “Sound doctrine” is “healthy teaching.” It is “wholesome, sound, correct, or true doctrine”

[which] is in direct contrast to false doctrine, which is diseased, corrupt, defiled, and abominable” (Strauss).

“The congregation’s health and well-being depends upon elders who continually ‘exhort in sound doctrine.’ No individual qualifies for eldership unless he is able to use God’s word in such a manner” (Strauss).

- 1) Paul told Timothy in **1 Timothy 1:8-10 (NASB)** ⁸ But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰ and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.
- 2) He told him in **2 Timothy 4:3 (NASB)** ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.
- c) The word “refute” (elegcho) means “to bring to light, expose, set-forth” (BAGD).

“Those who contradict” are those who “speak against, oppose, object” (Rienecker) sound doctrine.

Acts 20:28-31 indicates that it is the overseers duty to protect the people from false teachers—those who speak against “the faithful word.”

Paul says to the elders at Ephesus in **Acts 20:28-31 (NASB)** ²⁸ "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, 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.

CONCLUSION

1. His public reputation is blameless.
2. His sexual morality – he is a one-woman man.
3. His family leadership – his children are faithful.

4. His general character – He is not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled.
5. His teaching skill – He is devoted to the faithful Word, exhorts believers in sound doctrine and refutes those who contract sound doctrine.
6. These are the kind of men who are to lead the church.
7. What kind of person are you?
8. Do these qualifications mirror that of your elders?
9. Pray for those who lead this church and for those whom God has called to be part of the eldership.
10. If that is you, we want to hear from you what God is doing in your life.
11. Let's pray.