

Introduction:

1. The past several weeks, we have been discussing the topic of elders from many different angles.
 - a. Elders are members who fulfill a specific role.
 - b. Elders have certain responsibilities to the congregation.
 - c. The congregation has specific responsibilities to the elders.
 - d. The elders have authority in all areas which affect the souls of the members.
 2. The past couple weeks, we have begun to discuss the qualifications of elders as laid out in the Bible.
 - a. Elders must be men.
 - b. Elders must be older.
 - c. Elders must be Christians.
 - d. Elders must be blameless.
 - e. Etc...
 3. Today, we will again look at the qualifications for elders mentioned in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
 - a. One thing I would like you to remember is that it is possible that Paul lists areas wherein the elder is to be blameless.
 - b. This really means that these men are the cream of the crop of the congregation in these areas.
 - c. With that in mind, let us look at some more qualifications.
- I. An Elder Must be Patient (I Timothy 3:3).
- A. What is patience?
 1. Patience is the idea of longsuffering.
 2. Patience is willing to work a long time with someone or something before expecting the desired result.
 - a. When I was a kid, I used to like to put together model cars.
 - b. My problem was I did not have patience. I wanted things done quickly.
 - c. As a result, the cars I put together looked terrible, had smeared paint, and globs of glue dried and smeared all over it.
 - d. I was not showing patience in putting those things together.
 3. Patience also includes the idea of endurance.
 - B. How can you tell if a man is patient?
 1. Is he willing to take the extra time needed to accomplish goals?
 2. Is he willing to endure difficulties, knowing that there is an end in sight?
 3. Does he suffer long with people, even when many others would have given up in frustration?
 4. Think of Job.
 - a. He went through terrible trials (loss of property, loss of children, torment from friends and spouse), yet suffered through it, knowing there was a greater goal.
 - C. Why should an elder be patient?
 1. Some people are projects.

- a. While some people understand and respond to the truth of the gospel immediately, other people take weeks, months, and even years to convert!
 - b. Elders must show this kind of patience because of the importance of the gospel and of people's souls.
 - 2. Some Christians have different personalities.
 - a. Not everyone is the same.
 - b. Some people have more "abrasive" personalities than others.
 - c. The elder must be willing to put up with these people for the sake of their souls.
 - d. Sometimes it takes a long time to get a point across to people (even Christians), so the elder needs to be patient with them and help them as they try to learn and grow.
 - 3. If the elder was impatient, he might give up on teaching those who would eventually obey, but need more time and attention to do it.
 - 4. An elder must be patient because many projects take a while to complete.
 - a. We have discussed trying to have Vacation bible School sometime in the coming years.
 - b. This is not something that can just be thrown together at the last minute and still be effective.
 - c. It takes patience, planning, and preparation to do these things right.
 - d. Patience will help an elder be more effective both within and without the church.
 - D. All Christians are commanded to be patient.
 - 1. Be patient towards all men (I Thessalonians 5:14).
 - 2. The reward for patient continuing in well-doing is eternal life (Romans 2:7).
 - 3. Be patient (James 5:7-8).
 - 4. In patience possess ye your souls (Luke 21:19).
 - 5. Follow after patience (I Timothy 6:11).
 - 6. Let us run with patience the race which is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).
 - 7. Add to your knowledge, temperance, and to your temperance patience (II Peter 1:6).
 - E. So why is this qualification for all Christians listed in the qualifications for elders? Shouldn't that have gone without saying?
 - 1. Again remember that elders are to exemplify these qualities.
 - 2. All of us have some level of patience, elders are to be among the most patient men in the congregation.
- II. An Elder Must be a Lover of Good Men (Titus 1:8).
- A. What does "lover of good men" mean?
 - 1. The phrase is actually one Greek word: Philagathos.
 - a. It comes from Phileo – to like, as in a friend.
 - b. And Agathos – good.
 - c. So, literally, it is "a friend of good."

2. The ASV translates it "a lover of good."
 - a. The Coverdale Bible (1535) says "one that loveth goodness."
 - b. McCord says "a lover of goodness."
 - c. NKJV – "a lover of that which is good."
 - d. You will notice that the word "men" is not in these other translations, for the idea is broader than just "lover of good men."
 3. The idea is that this man loves those things which are good, according to God's standard.
 - a. He is a friend to all those who are doing the will of God.
 - b. He likes to surround himself with things which are good.
 - c. He appreciates the good qualities of others and focuses on them.
 - d. He will encourage good behavior in other people.
 4. If one loves the good, then he should also hate the evil.
 - a. In such case, the man will not have things which are evil.
 - b. He will not allow sinful things to have influence on him.
- B. How can you tell if a man is a lover of good?
1. Does he seek to exemplify the good characteristics which can be found in the Bible?
 2. Does he encourage others who are showing good traits?
 3. Does he surround himself with things which are good?
 - a. Are his entertainment choices in line with God's will?
 4. Remember that in these categories, the elder must be blameless.
- C. Why must an elder be a lover of that which is good?
1. Because elders watch for the souls of the congregation.
 2. He must encourage those good traits in people so that they will seek to grow them.
 3. He must serve as an example to the rest of the congregation about what they should surround themselves with.
 4. He must also be a lover of those things which are good because he seeks to convert lost souls to Christ.
 - a. Imagine a man who surrounds himself with evil things (alcohol, pornography, rap music) trying to convince someone to turn to God (who is completely GOOD).
 - b. If you are a Christian, you WILL seek to follow after good things.
- D. All Christians are commanded to follow after good.
1. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2).
 2. The fruit of the spirit includes goodness (Galatians 5:22).
 3. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things (Luke 6:45).
 4. Cleave (cling) to that which is good (Romans 12:9).
 5. Speak that which is good (Ephesians 4:29)
 6. Follow that which is good, both among yourselves and unto all (I Thessalonians 5:15).
 7. Follow that which is good (III John 11).

8. Dwell on the good things (Philippians 4:8).
 - E. Elders are to exemplify this characteristic.
- III. An Elder Must be Just (Titus 1:8).
- A. What is "just"?
 1. Just means fairness.
 2. It means not overreacting, but fair-minded in a dispute or discussion.
 3. It is acting without partiality.
 4. This is why we call it a travesty of justice if someone is not given a fair, unbiased trial.
 5. This is why it is said that "justice is blind," meaning that it only weighs the facts and not the opinions or emotions.
 6. The word in Greek can also be translated righteous or equitable.
 - B. How can you tell if a man is just?
 1. Does he give preferential treatment to certain people if a disagreement comes up?
 - a. Perhaps his family, even if they are wrong?
 - a. How many people automatically take the side of their family members in a conflict without any concern for the facts of the case?
 - b. One old radio show had a man accidentally show up at the wrong place at the wrong time.
 - a. He thought he'd be able to prove he was innocent until he heard who the judge was going to be.
 - b. His words were: "Oh no, I'm gonna hang tonight!"
 - c. This judge was obviously biased against him before hearing any of the facts of the case.
 2. Is he open to hearing both sides of an issue (even if he is involved)?
 3. Is he willing to look objectively at things?
 - C. Why should an elder be just?
 1. Problems within the congregation must be taken care of by the elders.
 2. I would hope that you would want a just, impartial person dealing with the problems.
 3. When an elder takes sides (based on something other than the facts of the matter), then more strife in the congregation is a result.
 4. An elder must be ready to show where both sides may be wrong (because usually there is not just one side in the wrong).
 5. One who is recognized as fair in his dealings will bring matters to a close a lot easier than someone who is known to take sides before hearing the facts.
 - D. Are all Christians to have this characteristic?
 1. We are to emulate Christ, who was just (I Peter 3:18).
 2. There are only two choices: just or wicked (Matthew 13:49), which one do you think we ought to be?
- IV. An Elder Must be Holy (Titus 1:8).
- A. What is holy?

1. Holy means devoted to God, set apart for His service.
 2. One who is holy is dedicated to the Lord His work.
- B. How can you tell if a man is holy?
1. Can you tell his dedication to the Lord?
 2. Can you tell his dedication to the Lord's work?
 3. Is that man dedicated to being separate from sin?
- C. Why must an elder be holy?
1. If he is to lead by example, and the goal is to get other people to separate themselves from sin, then he must be separate from sin.
 2. He is to be the example of how we should live our lives for God.
 3. An elder must be holy because we want leaders who are dedicated to the cause of Christ!
 - a. We do not want leaders who are half-way, wanna-be Christians.
 - b. We want, we need, leaders who are truly devoted to the cause of Christ.
 - c. This gives us sincere leaders as well.
- D. All Christians are commanded to have this characteristic.
1. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation (I Peter 1:15).
 - a. This means every aspect of our lives should be set apart for God.
 - b. This means every aspect of our lives should be separate from sin.
 2. We are to be holy because God is holy (I Peter 1:16).
 - a. If we are to be godly (like God), we must be holy.
 3. Holiness leads to everlasting life (Romans 6:22).
 - a. Shouldn't this make us WANT to be holy?
 4. God has called us to holiness (I Thessalonians 4:7).
 - a. Holiness is the kind of life God has called us to!
 5. Without holiness, we will not see God (Hebrews 12:14).
 - a. Simply put, if you are not holy, you are going to hell.

Conclusion:

1. Again, all of these qualifications for elders are also qualifications for Christians as well.
 - a. Are you patient?
 - b. Do you love the good things (according to God's standard)? Or are you one who surrounds himself with evil things (entertainment, friends, etc...)?
 - c. Are you fair in your dealings with others (just)?
 - d. Are you holy?
2. If the answer to any of these is "no," then you need to repent immediately and get right with God!
3. Yes, God expects the elders to meet these qualifications, but he expects the same of all Christians!