

Eldership Series

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Outline pg. 2

#1 The Eldership: God's Government For His People pg. 7

#2 Qualifications (1) pg. 14

#3 Qualifications (2) pg. 22

#4 Qualifications (3) pg. 30

#5 Qualifications (4) pg. 37

#6 Qualifications (5) pg. 43

#7 Qualifications (6) And Elders' Wives pg. 48

#8 Duties Of The Congregation To The Elders pg. 55

#9 Duties Of The Elders To The Congregation pg. 58

#10 Similarities And Differences In Duties Of Elders And Preachers
pg. 62

Chart: Elder/Preacher Similarities And Differences pg. 70

Eldership Series

General Outline

#1 God's Government For His People

I. The Need For This Study

- A. Encourage Our Elders To/In Their Duties
- B. Encourage Our Members To/In Their Duties
- C. Encourage Families To Develop Elders
 - 1.) Husbands And Wives Together
 - 2.) Train Toward It From Youth
- D. Lack Of Understanding

II. How God Has Organized The Church

- A. Congregations
- B. Under Elders, Bishops/Overseers, Pastors/Shepherds
- C. Importance Of This Pattern

III. Pitfalls In Church Government

- A. No Elders
 - 1.) Business Meeting Forever
 - 2.) Preacher Rule
 - 3.) No Rule
 - 4.) All Aged Are Elders/Elder Not An Office
- B. With Elders
 - 1.) Not Enough Authority
 - a.) Puppets Of Preacher/Wife/Another Elder
 - b.) Advisors/Examples Only
 - c.) Just Leaders Of The Congregational Meetings
 - 2.) Too Much Authority
 - a.) Cannot Legislate Changes In New Testament Teachings
 - b.) Aren't Solely Responsible For Wrongs In Congregation
- C. Committee Rule
- D. Inter-Congregational Rule

#2 Qualifications (1)

I. Why More Men Aren't Qualified

- A. Lack of Concern By Potential Candidates
- B. The Office Is Not Used
- C. The Office Is Not Honored
- D. Lack Of Teaching And Preaching
- E. Seeking To Disqualify

II. Type Of Work Determines The Qualifications Necessary

- A. Bible Terms
- B. Prebuteros: Elders
 - 1.) Aged
 - 2.) Jewish Officials
 - 3.) Christian Officials
- C. Presbuterion: Presbytery Or Eldership
 - 1.) Jewish
 - 2.) Christian
- D. Episcopos: Overseer Or Bishop
- E. Poiman: Shepherd Or Pastor
- F. Other Descriptions
 - 1.) Ruler/Leaders
 - 2.) Teachers
 - 3.) Examples

III. Dealing With The Qualifications

- A. The Great Job At Hand
- B. Improper Attitudes Towards The Qualifications
 - 1.) No One Can Live Up To All This
 - 2.) A Man With Most, But Not All Can Qualify
 - 3.) Appoint The Best We Have, Even If Lacking Yet
 - 4.) Once You're Qualified, You're Always Qualified
 - 5.) Actions Decades Before Disqualify Now
- C. Proper Attitudes
 - 1.) Not Perfect, Or Sinless, But Fully Mature
 - 2.) All Qualifications Are Musts
 - 3.) Qualifications Are Met Before Appointment

IV. Quick Look At The Qualifications

#3 Qualifications (2)

I. Willingness

- A. Aspires/Desires **1 Tim. 3:1**
- B. Apt To Teach **1 Tim. 3:2**
- C. Holding Fast The Faithful Word **Tit. 1:9**
 - 1.) To Exhort
 - 2.) To Refute Those Who Contradict

II. Domestic

- A. Man
- B. Husband Of One Wife **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6**
- C. Runs A Good House **1 Tim. 3:4,5; Tit. 1:6**
 - 1.) Rule House Well **1 Tim. 3:4**
 - 2.) Children Under Control **1 Tim. 3:4**
 - 3.) Children Who Believe **Tit. 1:6**
 - 4.) Children Not Engaged In Evil **Tit. 1:6**
 - 5.) Reason: Can't Rule House, Can't Rule Church **1 Tim. 3:5**

#4 Qualifications (3)

III. Experience

- A. Elder
- B. Faithful Children
- C. Not A New Convert **1 Tim 3:6**

IV. Reputation

- A. Blameless/Above Reproach **1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7**
- B. Respectable/Orderly/Dignified **1 Tim. 3:2**
- C. Good Reputation With Those Outside **1 Tim. 3:7**

V. Character

- A. Prudent/Sober **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**
- B. Gentle/Patient **1 Tim. 3:3**

#5 Qualifications (4)

V. Character

- C. Free From The Love Of Money **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**
- D. Not Self Willed **Tit. 1:7**
- E. Not Quick Tempered **Tit. 1:7**
- F. Loving What Is Good **Tit. 1:8**

VI. Good Habits

- A. Temperate/Vigilant **1 Tim. 3:2**

#6 Qualifications (5)

VI. Good Habits

- B. Hospitable **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**
- C. Just/Upright **Tit. 1:8**
- D. Holy/Devout **Tit. 1:8**
- E. Self Controlled **Tit. 1:8**

#7 Qualifications (6) And Elders' Wives

VII. Other Habits Elders Must Avoid

- A. Not Addicted To Wine **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**
- B. Not Pugnacious **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**
- C. Uncontentious/Not A Brawler **1 Tim. 3:3**

VIII. The Elder's Wife

- A. Explicitly: None Mentioned
- B. Implicitly
 - 1.) Qualifications Drawn From Family
 - 2.) Qualifications Drawn From Type Of Man Husband Is
- C. Inference: Same As Qualifications Of Deacons' Wives **1 Tim. 3:11**
 - 1.) Dignified
 - 2.) Not Malicious Gossips
 - 3.) Temperate
 - 4.) Faithful In All Things

#8 Duties of the Congregation To The Elders

- I. Esteem, Don't Grieve
- II. Obey
- III. Give Just Regard
- IV. Receive Instruction, Guidance and Help
- V. Inform

#9 Duties of the Elders To The Congregation

- I. Oversight
 - A. Of One Congregation (And All Of It)
 - B. Of Finances
 - C. Of Doctrine and Teaching
 - D. Rule It Well
- II. Be Examples
- III. Give Voluntary And Willing Service
- IV. Watch
 - A. Keep Watch Out For The Church
 - B. Keep Watch Over Themselves
- V. Holding and Building On Word of God

#10 Similarities And Differences In Duties Of Preachers And Elders

- I. Character
 - A. Elders: Mature Character
 - B. Preachers: Mature Or Maturing Character
- II. Example
 - A. Elders: Is (And Must Remain) Example
 - B. Preachers: To Become (And Stay) Example
- III. Teaching
 - A. Elders: Teach
 - B. Preachers: Preach The Word
- IV. Applying The Gospel Standard
 - A. Elders: Take Heed To The Flock
 - B. Preachers: Apply The Teaching
- V. Looking After The Members
 - A. Elders: Shepherd
 - B. Preachers: Watchman
- VI. Oversight
 - A. Elders: Oversee
 - B. Preachers:
 - 1.) Inherent Oversight In (And Over) Own Teaching
 - 2.) Other Areas: No Oversight
- VII. Location of Work
 - A. Elders: Authority Over (Oversight Of) One Congregation
 - B. Preachers: Can Teach Anywhere

#1 The Eldership

God's Government For His People

This is the beginning of a 10 part series on the work of elders, their qualifications, and their relationship with the church, and ours with them. This study will be lengthy because of the wealth of Biblical teaching on the subject and its great importance to us.

I. The Need For This Study

A. Encourage Our Elders To/In Their Duties

1 Tim. 5:17-22 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

18 For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of *sinning*.

21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit* of partiality.

22 Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily and thus share *responsibility* for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”

Consider how many instructions there are concerning elders just in this one text.

1.) Hold them in honor, even double honor. if they preach and teach.

2.) Don't receive accusations against them, unless it is clearly established.

These lessons should not be seen in any way as an attack on the eldership, or a study with a double purpose – the stated one, as well as a way to make rebukes and air things subtly.

I know of no accusations or rebukes that need to be made against the eldership.

At the same time I know of no group who does not need encouragement and exhortation, especially if they have a hard job to do.

We have an example of such an exhortation directed to a preacher, and we will do so for the elders also.

Col. 4:17 “And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

3.) If any sin, rebuke them.

Although this is not directed right at elders, it would be especially needful if any of them were obviously involved in sin. Nothing would be more disheartening to the membership or more destructive to the church's work than unrebuked sins among its leaders.

So all who sin must be rebuked as a lesson to others.

4.) The preacher must not be partial – even in regard to the elders. He is to be neither overly harsh nor overly lenient in dealing with them. If they are his dear friends or if he is at odds with them, he must treat all the same. He must also not be partial in appointment of elders.

5.) Don't install any into any office hastily – be truly confident in them. If they sin because of it, and it should have been foreseeable, you are partly responsible.

There are many things to take note of. We will do our best to examine this, and all other texts, regarding elders in this study.

B. Encourage Our Members To/In Their Duties

Honor

1 Tim. 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

Appreciate, Esteem

1 Thess. 5:12,13 “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,
13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

Be Peaceful (for your sake and for theirs)

Obey And Submit

Heb 13:17 “Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

C. Encourage Families To Develop Elders

1.) Husbands And Wives Together

The qualifications of an elder include the type of people his wife and children must be. If a man wants to be qualified, it will be a family effort.

So look at what is required and start toward it now.

2.) Train Toward It From Youth

We need men who will take on all the works of the church. Most, not all for sure, but most who are leaders as preachers, participants in worship, or who become elders, got off to a good start in their own families.

There they learned the values and saw the examples that started them down the good path.

Develop the mind and abilities to be able to be “apt” the teach.

This is a good work, its never too early to think about it.

D. Lack Of Understanding

Many uninformed think of the preacher as a Pastor.

They come to the preacher about decisions not made by him.

Or they assign too much, or too little importance to the elders' work.

II. How God Has Organized The Church

A. Congregations

The Roman church was made up of “saints.”

Rom. 1:7 “to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

First you have your relationship with Christ, and then you join a local body of His people.

Often, the first one is by default; it's where you were baptized or near your house.

But then you might go someplace else and need to find a different group.

Hopefully you won't have the trouble Paul had.

Acts 9:26-28 “And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord.”

And so many today give up a local church for such foolish reasons.

Paul was “trying to associate with the disciples” and later “he was with them.”

The disciples met and were taught in the local church.

Acts 11:26 “and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

B. Under Elders, Bishops/Overseers, Pastors/Shepherds

These are all names for the same office.

Church Offices Defined

Eph. 4:11,12 “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”

There were “elders” at Ephesus.

Acts 20:17 “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.”

Acts 20:28 “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.”

These elders were “bishops” and they “pastor” (shepherd) the flock.

This is always a **Plurality** of elders in all of these verses.

Every instruction and example has a plurality of elders. There is no one-man rule in the Lord's church; this prevents abuse of power.

C. Importance Of This Pattern

We must be just as careful with the organization of the church as we are with the doctrines of the church and with the morality of the members.

To change the pattern is to change the Law.

Heb. 7:12-14 “For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.”

Moses was WARNED not to change the pattern.

Heb. 8:4,5 “Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.”

How much more attention must we pay to the pattern given by Christ?

III. Pitfalls In Church Government

A. No Elders

1.) Business Meeting Forever

These can become endless sources for frustration, lack of action and evil.

Every man, from weakest to the most spiritual has the same vote.

Some congregations give all men equal votes – so the weak can outvote the strong. Or one man can get several weak men behind him and push through what he wants.

To avoid this, some congregations won't do anything if anyone objects. But in this way, everyone can stalemate everyone else.

One congregation that has this rule only got some needed things done when the one who objected to everything missed the meeting.

I know of one case where the continual objector was out of town, so someone objected for him, knowing how he would vote.

Other times the business meeting has become the place where factions are endlessly deadlocked.

Now we know that at times we must have business meetings when there is no eldership, and there are not two who are qualified and willing to serve. But some keep elders out because they like having some voice and don't want to submit to the elders that others wish to appoint. One man said that he objected to elders because "He didn't want to give up his vote in the business meeting."

Something is definitely lacking when there are no elders.

Tit. 1:5 "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you"

2.) Preacher Rule

Sometimes this is deliberately stated – intentionally going towards a denominational "pastor" system, or is advocated as "Evangelistic Oversight."

At times the preacher just naturally takes over.

He should have some leadership skills, sometimes the most knowledgeable (not always, to be sure) and should have some confidence about him.

So in some places it's all left up to, or deliberately turned over to him.

In some cases it is the preacher who makes sure that it gets turned over to him.

It often seems the smaller the congregation the more likely this is.

3.) No Rule

No one is in charge and so nothing gets done.

Months go by before anything is decided.

The new sign that was finally bought leans up against the building for months while it is decided who is to hang it, and where. (I have actually seen this.)

Or the preacher doesn't want to lead and be like the pastor, but no one else steps up either, so nobody leads anybody anywhere.

4.) All Aged Are Elders/Elder Not An Office

This flatly contradicts the scriptures. What does the word "overseer, bishop" mean?

1 Tim. 3:1,2 "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*."

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach"

Peter tells us what the elders' job is.

1 Pet. 5:2 "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

Would we apply this reasoning to say that there is not an office (officially recognized place and responsibility) of "overseer" to Jesus?

1 Pet. 2:25 "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."

"Guardian" is the same word as other places translated as "Bishop." Jesus certainly has office and authority over us.

B. With Elders

1.) Not Enough Authority

a.) Puppets Of Preacher/Wife/Another Elder

Sometimes one man or woman holds sway.

One elder I knew of never made a decision on the first hearing of anything. He'd go home, get his instructions and then come back with the answer.

Soon it grew to the point that the wife exercised authority on her own.

This split the church.

Other elderships make no move without the preacher, or are completely dominated by one of the elders. All of these are wrong.

The preacher has a job, to preach.

The elders have a job, to oversee.

The elder must be his own man to do it.

b.) Advisors/Examples Only

Some think that the elders authority is limited to just offering advice and being a good example.

But this is not what the scriptures say.

Heb 13:17 "Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

c.) Just Leaders Of The Congregational Meetings

Some have argued that all decisions by the eldership must be put before a congregational meeting, even if there are elders.

The contention is that anything short of this is "lording it over" the flock.

Consider this line of reasoning by a brother in Christ:

"My contention is only this: the whole church participated in the decision-making process...this passage says they were involved, informed, approved of it, and participated in the choosing.

God has said that we must take care of widows who are needy among us. But where did any man or group of men decide for a congregation how this (or any other command) was to be carried out? One example will suffice!"

(private letter) [Thankfully, this brother no longer holds to this contention.]

There are examples that disprove what this contention.

Acts 6:1-7 is an example.

The apostles said, "Pick 7 to do this work"

The congregation is to be included in deciding who will serve it as deacons, but those with oversight decided what was to be done.

Also **Acts 21:17-26** is another example.

The elders in Jerusalem tell Paul how to clear up a misconception that many of the Jews in Jerusalem had concerning him. Paul submitted to the elders' decision. It doesn't even say that they consulted him.

Compare that to this same writer's (former) arguments on this point:

Do you really feel that an elder has the authority to make decisions without communicating with the congregation before hand? Would you feel comfortable scripturally under an eldership that made decisions for you without your input? ...Where is the plain passage that teaches that a woman (or a man for that matter, if there are elders) should not even be consulted before a decision affecting the congregation is made?

Also consider this from an institutional church's bulletin:

All-Church Meeting 1/27/2002

The Elders have called a "Town Hall Meeting" on Sunday evening January 27 at 6:30. The new budget will be presented and some plans for the future discussed. Also, we need to vote (as required by our bylaws) on the sale of some real estate that was donated in the "Arise and Build in Faith" campaign. Plymouth Park Church of Christ Local Bulletin
Selling donated property certainly seems to be something elders should be able to do. Especially when they all know what the money will be going for – the new building – but their "by-laws" prohibit it. Very strange indeed. They should have paid as much attention to scriptures as they did their own by-laws.

This is not to say that congregational meetings are never to be had to give reports in detail, to have conversations with the members all at once, or to seek advice before major decisions. But this is not the way for everyday decisions to be made.

2.) Too Much Authority

a.) Cannot Legislate Changes In New Testament Teachings

Elders cannot change the day or type of observance of the Lord's Supper.

They cannot decide that women can preach and teach publicly.

They cannot decide that the church can participate in institutionalism.

All these things are evil and must be rebuked.

The word of God overrides these decisions whether made by the eldership or the preachers or even all the members if they agree.

If they persist in this, they will simply no longer be recognized as faithful.

1 Cor. 14:37,38 "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

38 But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized."

Elders do not have legislative authority. They are to lead and direct others servants of Christ in His way, not make new ways of their own.

Matt. 20:25,26 "But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them.

26 It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant"

b.) Aren't Solely Responsible For Wrongs In Congregation

You cannot say, "Well, it's the elders' decision" if they had no right to decide it.

Eph. 5:11 "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them"

This is the rule whether men say it's OK or not.

What you fellowship you are responsible for.

You cannot let the leaders (elders or preachers) decide things that God has decided in His word.

This is giving them too much authority.

1 Cor. 4:6 "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other."

There would be a duty in that case to leave it for purer pastures.

2 Cor. 6:16,17 "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

17 Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.”

C. Committee Rule

This is a wrong done both in place of elders and when elders are present.

A committee is formed for everything – all oversight is dealt out to the committees.

This is especially common when elders oversee social and educational works that the Lord hasn't authorized.

They find that they cannot oversee all the work that they have decided to do, so they must change the organization of the church to suit their desires.

God's government is designed to oversee God's people doing God's things, but stretch out beyond that and you'll have trouble.

Search committees for preachers

Bible class committees

membership committees

transportation committees

etc.

These things have a way of becoming permanent, authoritative and taking on a life of their own.

There is nothing wrong with delegation, but permanent delegation to those not closely overseen is not the Lord's way.

D. Inter-Congregational Rule

Each church had its own elders.

Acts 14:21-23 “And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

22 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.”

23 And 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.”

Tit. 1:5 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you”

Philippi had their own elders and deacons.

Phil. 1:1 “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons”

Elders were over **the** singular flock (congregation that the Holy Spirit directed them to have. That was Ephesus and only Ephesus.

Acts 20:28 “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.”

The Holy Spirit never directed for any elder to have any more congregations than one to oversee.

Each eldership is over the flock “among them” and nothing more.

1 Pet. 5:1-4 “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

#2 The Eldership Qualifications (1)

Let us set some groundwork before examining the qualifications themselves.

I. Why More Men Aren't Qualified

A. Lack Of Concern By Potential Candidates

Many men simply don't put the proper energy into spiritual development.

They spend time in worldly pursuits.

They don't study and become familiar enough with the scriptures.

They don't spend the time they should with their wives and families to develop them into what they should be.

B. The Office Is Not Used

When churches are ruled without elders and people are content to subsist forever without them with business meetings instead of them, they do not encourage men to develop into leaders or take the lead.

If we can get by without them, why develop them?

Some get used to this arrangement and stand in the way of any attempt to put men in authority over them.

These have gotten used to having an equal say, or more than equal say if they are domineering, in the business meeting and don't want a change.

These discourage or shoot all down those who would serve.

These types do not have the insight of Paul.

Tit. 1:5 "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you"

He knew that something was lacking, wanting. These don't mind that it is.

C. The Office Is Not Honored

If members are going to abuse and misuse elders when we get them, why should a man want to be one?

Heb. 13:17 "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

Making things unnecessarily difficult for the elders by carping and giving them grief will not encourage others to join their ranks.

The ultimate example of this is when men seek to pull down elderships when they disagree with them.

1 Tim. 5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

D. Lack Of Teaching And Preaching

In some places there has been a complete lack of teaching on the subject.

I know of some places where the attitude is, "No one is qualified here, why preach on it?" Well, maybe someone will eventually be qualified.

Other times other things seem more pressing.

Others avoid teaching on qualifications because of differences in application among various members of the congregation, or some think that the elders will get mad if you preach about it.

Additionally, some preachers eschew detailed studies of Bible texts, both in classes and in sermons. These are not eloquent presentations based on just 2 or 3 passages, or stories and anecdotes.

Systematic studies like this are seen as tedious by these types. But such teaching is absolutely necessary.

E. Seeking To Disqualify

Some members (and preachers) use the qualifications in such a way as to insure that no one can even live up to them. And if you do ever get that one “magical” fellow, you’d never be able to find a second one at the same place and time so that you could form an eldership.

One notable preacher, upon hearing a member describe their congregation as having “three good elders” replied, “Three good elders, I’ve never met three good elders.”

This is a very dim view of elders and it is no surprise that in a lifetime of work this preacher has seldom worked with elders and never appointed any.

II. Type Of Work Determines The Qualifications Necessary

A. Bible Terms

1 Pet. 4:11 “Whoever speaks, *let him speak*, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, *let him do so* as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

But in terms of the eldership we often see confusion because of corruptions from the religious world.

Neh. 13:23,24 “In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

24 As for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod, and none of them was able to speak the language of Judah, but the language of his own people.”

But just as we don’t always understand them (or have to have two lexicons in our head – the Bible’s and man’s), when we speak in Bible terms many don’t understand us.

1 Cor. 2:13,14 “which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.”

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

B. Presbuteros: Elders

(Strg. 4245) **πρεσβυτερος** *presbuteros*

1) elder, of age b) advanced in life, an elder, a senior, a term of rank or office

2a) among the Jews, members of the great council or Sanhedrin

2b) among the Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (or churches) The NT uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably

The definition of this word does not necessarily have to have the idea of authority with it, but context often shows that it is used that way.

1.) Aged

Jn. 8:9 “And when they heard it, they *began* to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.”

Acts 2:17 “AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS”

1 Tim. 5:1 “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, *to* the younger men as brothers”

2.) Jewish Officials

Matt. 26:47 “And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people.”

Matt. 26:57 “And those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.”

Acts 4:8 “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people”

3.) Christian Officials

Acts 11:30 “And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

Acts 14:23 “And 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.”

Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17,19; Tit. 1:5; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1

C. Presbuterion: Presbytery Or Eldership

For those who contend that elders are not officers, or that there is no such thing as the office of elder, this word destroys that usage.

This word speaks of a body of ruling elders – authority is inherent in it.

(Strg. 4244) **πρεσβυτεριον** *presbuterion* KJV - elders 1, estate of elders 1, presbytery 1; 3

body of elders, presbytery, senate, council a) of the Jewish elders b) of the elders of any body (assembly) of Christians

1.) Jewish

Luke 22:66 “And when it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying”

Acts 22:5 “as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.”

2.) Christian

1 Tim. 4:14 “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.”

NIV - “body of elders”

NKJV - “eldership”

All of these are correct ways to translate this word.

D. Episcopos: Overseer Or Bishop

This word appears only 5 times.

(Strg. 985) **επισκοπος** *episkopos*

1) an overseer 1a) a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent

1b) the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church

My NASB is almost universally consistent with translating this word Overseer, but once Guardian.

The ASV is completely consistent in translating this word Bishop.

The KJV uses Bishop 6 times and Overseer once.

The NKJV uses Bishop mostly and Overseer twice.

Acts 20:28 “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.”

1 Tim. 3:1,2 “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach”

Tit. 1:7 “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”

1 Pet. 2:25 “For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

This is a word of authority, of a political or secular or religious office. A good synonym is superintendent.

E. Poiman: Shepherd Or Pastor

The root of the idea is to feed, or be the feeder.

Noun form:

(Strg. 4166) *ποιμεν poimen*

1) a herdsman, esp. a shepherd 1a) in the parable, he to whose care and control others have committed themselves, and whose precepts they follow

2) metaph. 2a) the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head of the church

2a1) of the overseers of the Christian assemblies

2a2) of kings and princes

Verb form:

(Strg. 4165) *ποιμαίνο poimaino* 1) to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep 1a) to rule, govern 1) of rulers 2) to furnish pasture for food 3) to nourish 5) to supply the requisites for the soul's need

Eph. 4:11,12 “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”

Acts 20:28 “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.”

1 Pet. 5:1,2 “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd [feed - KJV] the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness”

F. Other Descriptions

Not titles, but descriptions. These also shed light on the work that is to be done.

1.) Ruler/Leaders

1 Tim. 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

1 Thess. 5:12 “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction”

Heb. 13:7 “Remember those who led you [rulers - KJV, have the rule over you - ASV], who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith”

Heb. 13:17 “Obey your leaders [rulers - KJV, have the rule over you - ASV], and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

2.) Teachers

1 Tim. 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

Tit. 1:9-11 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach*, for the sake of sordid gain.”

Consider the work of James the Lord's brother, an elder at the church in Jerusalem.

He stood up after Peter, Paul and Barnabas to teach about circumcision, refuted those of the circumcision, and suggested the further course of action.

Acts 15:13-20 “And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me.

14 Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

15 And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

16 AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT,

17 IN ORDER THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’

18 SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM OF OLD.

19 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.”

3.) Examples

1 Pet. 5:3 “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

III. Dealing With The Qualifications

A. The Great Job At Hand

To shepherd, lead, teach, superintend, be an example to, and oversee God’s people by acting as shepherds under the Great Shepherd, we need some pretty good guys.

We need more than just business managers.

More substance than motivaters, but motivate.

More practical men than professors, but knowledgeable.

More heart than accountants, but can account for God’s resources.

More honesty and backbone than politicians, but can get things done.

We need men who can wear a bit of all of these hats.

This is the fully mature, successful, faithful and completely dedicated man of God.

We must have men like this to lead us.

B. Improper Attitudes Towards The Qualifications

1.) No One Can Live Up To All This

We are appointing men, not supermen.

The Lord gave these qualifications to appoint men among us.

2.) A Man With Most, But Not All Can Qualify

We can’t overlook any qualification.

1 Tim. 3:2 “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach”

If they really aren’t necessary, why did God have them listed? And not just listed once, but twice in different places?

3.) Appoint The Best We Have, Even If Lacking Yet

We want to appoint our best, but our best from among the qualified, not the unqualified.

4.) Once You're Qualified, You're Always Qualified

This is not an appointment to a federal judgeship.

We know the arrogance and separation from reality that this can bring.

If it is possible to fall away, its certainly possible to disqualify yourself from staying an elder.

5.) Actions Decades Before Disqualify Now

I'm glad the Lord didn't have that attitude toward Peter.

Some things might cause one's reputation to be permanently damaged both inside and outside the church, but often things that are brought up are from the dusty bin of history that only life long local residents could possibly even know.

C. Proper Attitudes

1.) Not Perfect, Or Sinless, But Fully Mature

Most of these qualifications are relative, not absolute.

It is not a matter of judgment if he is a man, but how much "aptness" is needed in order to be "apt to teach?"

Yet, this type of reasoning cannot be used to say that any requirement is not required.

2.) All Qualifications Are Musts

1 Tim. 3:2 "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach"

3.) Qualifications Are Met Before Appointment

IV. Quick Look At The Qualifications

Combined List of Timothy and Titus

- 1.) man
- 2.) aspires/desires
- 3.) above reproach
- 4.) husband of one wife
- 5.) temperate
- 6.) prudent
- 7.) respectable
- 8.) hospitable
- 9.) able to teach
- 10.) not addicted to wine
- 11.) not pugnacious
- 12.) gentle
- 13.) uncontentious
- 14.) free from the love of money
- 15.) manages his own household well, children under control
- 16.) children who believe
- 17.) not a new convert
- 18.) good reputation with those outside

- 19.) not self-willed
- 20.) not quick-tempered
- 21.) not pugnacious
- 22.) loving what is good
- 23.) sensible
- 24.) just
- 25.) devout
- 26.) self-controlled
- 27.) holding fast the faithful word to refute those who contradict

Listed By Groupings:

Willingness

- 1.) aspires/desires
- 2.) apt to teach
- 3.) holding fast the faithful word to refute those who contradict

Domestic

- 1.) man
- 2.) husband of one wife
- 3.) manages his own household well
- 4.) children under control
- 5.) children who believe

Experience

- 1.) elder (age is implicit)
- 2.) raised good, believing children
- 3.) not a new convert

Reputation

- 1.) respectable
- 2.) not addicted to wine
- 3.) not pugnacious
- 4.) uncontentious
- 5.) good reputation with those outside

Character

- 1.) prudent
- 2.) gentle
- 3.) free from the love of money
- 4.) not self-willed
- 5.) not quick-tempered
- 6.) loving what is good
- 7.) sensible

Habits

- 1.) temperate
- 2.) respectable
- 3.) hospitable
- 4.) just

- 5.) devout
- 6.) self-controlled

#3 The Eldership Qualifications (2)

Now we begin to consider the lists in the texts. We will not take them in order; this would be especially hard since we have two similar, but not identical lists. Instead, we will group them by general category.

I. Willingness

A. Aspires/Desires **1 Tim. 3:1**

KJV If a man desire the office of a bishop
 ASV If a man seeketh the office of a bishop
 RSV If any one aspires to the office of bishop
 NASB If any man aspires to the office of overseer
 NIV If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer
 NKJV If a man desires the position of a bishop

“desire” - longing, stretching out for.

This is a healthy ambition if it is for the right reasons.

None can be drafted, and are not even to be imposed upon to take the job.

But this does not mean that men should not be asked or sought. We don't have to wait for them to nominate themselves. Modest men probably won't do that anyway.

But they must have a desire to do it.

This not the desire to be first, to be in charge, to push some project or doctrine, to be a Diotrephes.

So this is not running or campaigning of office, but if you don't have a desire to lead and take the responsibility, you will never prepare yourselves properly for it, nor be able to take it with a willing mind.

1 Pet. 5:2 “[shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness](#)”

We all know the attitude of those who have been shackled with responsibility that they do no want. This is not the type of leadership that we need.

Rather we need those who are willing to serve honestly, conscientiously, honorably and faithfully.

The mature Christian man who sees the need and isn't willing isn't as mature as we thought.

B. Apt To Teach **1 Tim. 3:2**

KJV Apt to teach
 ASV Apt to teach
 RSV An apt teacher
 NASB Able to teach
 NIV Able to teach
 NKJV Able to teach

The elder certainly doesn't have to be a preacher, but he needs to be willing and able to teach others the gospel.

He must be ready to do it and be able to when the need arises.

1 Pet. 5:2 “[shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness](#)”

You have to know what to feed and be willing to do it to feed them.

Here is the ability teamed with the willingness to do it.

This is the same as is said of preachers.

2 Tim. 2:24 “[And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged](#)”

C. Holding Fast the Faithful Word **Tit. 1:9**

- KJV Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught
 ASV Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching
 RSV He must hold firm to the sure word as taught
 NASB Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching
 NIV He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught
 NKJV Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught
 He must know that book in order to teach and lead others in it.

The book of God is what the elder needs to know fully.

Acts 20:32 “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.”

- KJV That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers
 ASV That he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers
 RSV So that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it
 NASB That he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict
 NIV So that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it
 NKJV That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict

1.) To Exhort

As those who keep watch over the souls of brethren, many times they will need to exhort and encourage.

Heb. 13:17 “Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

They have to deal with the wayward. They must know the scriptures to instruct them.

2.) To Refute Those Who Contradict

It is not only the preacher’s job to warn about false doctrine. Sometimes the false doctrine that must be refuted is from the preacher.

Other times it may even come from a fellow elder or member.

Acts 20:29,30 “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.”

The preacher is to do this,

2 Tim. 4:2-4 “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

and so is the elder.

This is an area of dual responsibility.

II. Domestic

A. Man

No woman can be husband and father.

Until she can, she can't be an overseer.

1 Tim. 2:11,12 “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

B. Husband of One Wife **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6**

KJV The husband of one wife

ASV The husband of one wife

RSV The husband of one wife

NASB The husband of one wife

NIV The husband of but one wife

NKJV The husband of one wife

He is not to be a bigamist or a bachelor.

To state this in another way, he must have abided by God's law on marriage.

The norm is that he married, and stayed married, to the wife of his youth.

But “husband of one wife” and married only once are not the same thing.

If a spouse dies, one is free to remarry.

Rom. 7:2,3 “For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

3 So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.”

Remarriage under this circumstance does not make one adulterous or polygamous.

If a man loses his children to untimely death would he cease to be qualified being elder? So why does he cease to be qualified if he loses his wife?

If he chooses to remarry a faithful women whose life is in keeping with his station, this too, seems to not effect his qualifications.

C. Runs A Good House **1 Tim. 3:4,5; Tit. 1:6**

1.) Rule House Well **1 Tim. 3:4**

KJV One that ruleth well his own house

ASV One that ruleth well his own house

RSV He must manage his own household well

NASB *he must be* one who manages his own household well

NIV He must manage his own family well

NKJV One who rules his own house well

The elder is to rule his house. He is in charge of it, and ultimately responsible for what goes on in it.

Obviously anyone in charge of anything will delegate some responsibility to capable assistants, and the home is no different.

Ruling well would have to be rule in conjunction with a willing and helpful wife.

1 Tim. 5:14 “Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach”

KJV guide the house

NKJV manage the house

NIV manage their homes

NRSV manage their households
 ASV rule the household

2.) Children Under Control **1 Tim. 3:4**

KJV Having his children in subjection with all gravity
 ASV Having *his* children in subjection with all gravity
 RSV Keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way
 NASB Keeping his children under control with all dignity
 NIV And see that his children obey him with proper respect
 NKJV Having his children in submission with all reverence

The children must be taught to respect authority.

The first authority is that in the home.

Eph. 6:1-4 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise),
3 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

A quick note – it matters not that these children are natural or adopted, so long as they are his.

They must be taught to do this. The father must teach them this.

Unruly children prevent a man from exercising authority in the church.

God has always disapproved rebellious and insolent children.

2 Kings 2:23,24 “Then he [Elisha] went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!”

24 When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.”

Note on the Number of Children

What about the man with one child? Does he have children? Yes.

“Children” is all inclusive, regardless of number.

If we ask, does this man have children?

I, with 4, answer “Yes.”

A man with 1 child answers the same, “Yes.” He does not say, “No, I have a child.”

A man with no children answers “No.”

Or consider this instruction, “Children must be accompanied by parent.”

Can only children go in without a parent? No, the sign applies to all, whether 1 child or many in the family.

Is this only our figure of speech or, is it common in the scripture?

Old Testament Example 1

Gen. 21:5-8 “Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.”

7 And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

8 And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.”

We know that they had ONE child, as is pointed out in vs. **5, 7** and **8**.

But what did Sarah say? “Children.”

Old Testament Example 2

Gen. 30:1-6 “Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die.”

2 Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

3 And she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children."

4 So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her.

5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.

6 Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan."

Without regard for the fact that the son was brought by a handmaiden, Rachel asked for children, vs. 1, and was "vindicated" with "a son," vs. 5.

Old Testament Example 3

Lev. 25:40,41 "He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee.

41 He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers.

Did the man with only one child have to leave that child behind? Or could any and all children go?

Old Testament Example 4

Prov. 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Does this verse apply to only those with 1 child, or to those with several also?

Other Verses

Gen. 46:7 "his (Jacobs's) sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt." (He had only one daughter)

Gen. 19:29 "Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived." (Lot lived in only 1)

Gen. 8:4 "And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat." (Ark on only 1)

New Testament Example 1

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

Those with only one child could love them more than Jesus, but not if they had several? No.

New Testament Example 2

Eph. 6:4 "And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

This applies to all fathers, or only those with multiple children?

New Testament Example 3

1 Tim. 5:4 "but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God."

Only children don't have to support their parents and grandparents, but those with brothers and sisters do?

New Testament Example 4

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

Only for those with multiple children?

3.) Children Who Believe **Tit. 1:6**

KJV Having faithful children
 ASV Having children that believe
 RSV And his children are believers
 NASB Having children who believe
 NIV A man whose children believe
 NKJV Having faithful children

Not only are they to be taught respect for authority, but they must be shown it.

Prov. 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

If well trained this general truth is normally seen.

But it is not absolute.

Some having been trained and taught and shown good examples, still choose evil.

This is no more surprising than some who have been trained, taught and shown evil, choose good.

To deny that it can happen in one direction is to deny that it can happen to the other.

Some are believers – with absolutely no credit to their parents.

Some are unbelievers and unfaithful – with absolutely no fault to their parents.

Ezek. 3:17-21 “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

18 When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

19 Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

20 Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he shall die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

21 However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself.”

Acts 20:26,27 “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.”

Not even Paul or Ezekiel could make the stubborn obey.

Some become unfaithful through no fault of the parents.

Parents are only responsible for what happens while the children are under their authority. (One is only responsible for what they are responsible for.)

If at 33, I turn to evil, does that reflect on my father, now that I have been out of his house for 15 years? Would that reflect on my upbringing? Or would most folks recognize that what I did was in spite of my upbringing?

It may be that my action are so gross, or happen so close to my leaving his house, or if most or several of my father’s children do the same thing, it would cast grave doubt on his ability to parent, and ruin his reputation by association. His child might disqualify the man through no fault of his own.

But this is not automatically so.

We should examine the whole situation in these cases and make decisions based on good judgment then.

Finally there are those who demand that every last one of a man’s children be faithful (some even say faithful at all times). Where does the word “all” appear in the text? Is this not a naked addition?

4.) Children Not Engaged In Evil **Tit. 1:6**

- KJV Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly
 ASV Having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly
 RSV And his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate
 NASB Having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion
 NIV A man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient
 NKJV Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination

Remember Eli's problems with his sons?

1 Sam. 2:22-25 "Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

23 And he said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

24 No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating.

25 If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death."

Eli was the high priest, but any who examined his family would know that he was not qualified to be an elder.

Father's are given a great deal of responsibility.

They have the authority to meet these responsibilities if they will wield it. To please God they must wield it. Yet the sad life of Eli is one that is repeated today by timid parents who have good inclinations within their heart yet fail to properly discipline and lead their children.

Prov. 29:15 "The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."

Examine all things to make sure the house was ruled well. If the later unfaithfulness was truly in spite of all the patient teaching, good examples of proper conduct that could have been given, we might conclude that the man is still qualified because he did rule his house well (and if he has other believing children.)

5.) Reason: Can't Rule House, Can't Rule Church **1 Tim. 3:5**

KJV (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

ASV (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

RSV For if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?

NASB (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)

NIV (if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

NKJV (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

Here is why the great emphasis is on family.

The proving ground for the elder is not serving as a preacher, a deacon, or other.

It is not in running a successful business or in having become a good manager.

It is in the family – the place that God has given a man authority to exercise in raising children, living faithfully and imparting the truth to them.

His family life and its fruits are to be judged because this is the best indicator of how he will lead the church.

For in the church he will have authority, but not dictatorial powers.

He will teach, but must also lead by example.

He must discipline and correct, but with an eye towards reconciliation and obedience toward God.

He must be loving and concerned – like that of a parent for a child.

1 Thess. 2:7-11 “But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children.

8 Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

10 You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

11 just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children,”

So an elder must have a successful family, not a successful business or career. Certainly these take skill, but his home, where little ones are molded into his image by his example and teaching, and his private actions produce their fruit, is what we are to consider.

Too many otherwise successful men make their careers successful in ways contrary to Christian principles.

But truly, very few have successful homes if the principles they live at home run counter to the gospel.

#4 The Eldership Qualifications (3)

I. Willingness

II. Domestic

III. Experience

A. Elder

Elder denotes a mature, older person.

The biggest farce on this is “Mormon elder” who are uniformly 19 to 22.

While not necessarily aged, this person is seasoned and knowledgeable by *experience*, not just books.

B. Faithful Children

The young preacher may have all the facts from the book of God dealing with all manner of issues of life, but that is a far cry from having the experience gained by having implemented them.

The elder, by age, experience and life lessons learned by having done them, and dealing with numerous types of people for so long, is much more prepared to deal with people, and is thus much more fit to lead.

Great experience is gained by leading men to the Lord, especially if they have been with you from birth.

The young can and must act, and experience must be gained, but we are speaking of those who are entrusted with the leadership and guardianship of men’s souls.

So here is the proof by doing, not just “book learning.”

***Practical Note on Age: It would almost seem that a man would need to be about 45 to minimally qualify on this point.

He needs to have had the time to rear a child, or several, to the point of faith, and his family rearing accomplished to the point that we can see how’s he done it, not just doing it, or in the middle of it. That does not mean that his youngest must be a Christian yet, but that he’s done most of the rearing necessary and we can see how its gone.

I, for instance, am 33 with children from 7 to 1. To get James to 20, Sarah to 18, Abby to 16 and Jake to 14, I’d be 46. At that age, would you know enough about my children and my raising to know if I was qualified to be an elder? In the best case, probably so. But another 5 or 10 years would let you know much more.

C. Not A New Convert **1 Tim 3:6**

KJV Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil

ASV Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil

RSV He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil

NASB and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil

NIV He must not be a recent convert or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil

The novice, recent convert, is one who is a good, moral, mature man, might seem to have all the other qualifications, but this one will disqualify him.

Such quick advancement from outsider to leader might give this one a false idea of the nature of Christianity and the congregation.

Anyone with any authority can be subject to the temptation of pride, and quick promotion may well exacerbate the problem.

This man may have great potential as leader, and may exercise rule in the secular world, but in the new world of Christian doctrine and morals, one needs time to grow and mature.

Heb. 5:12-14 “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

The elder is not only eating the solid food, he must be able to give it also.

However, like so many other qualifications, judgment and discernment is needed to know when one is no longer a new convert. 1 year – probably all would agree he’s a “new convert”, 5 years – we might have more leaning to qualified than not, but some might expect 10 years.

IV. Reputation

A. Blameless/Above Reproach **1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7**

KJV blameless/For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God

ASV without reproach/For the bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward

RSV above reproach/For a bishop, as God’s steward, must be blameless

NASB above reproach/For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward

NIV above reproach/Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless

NKJV blameless/For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God

The elder has be a man of notable character. His character is unblemished.

In Timothy - (Strg. 423) **ανεπιλεπτος** *anepileptos* blameless 2, unrebukeable 1; 3

1) not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of

2) that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable

this is one against whom no evil charge can be maintained.

In Titus - (Strg. 410) **ανεγκλετος** *anegkletos* blameless 4, unproveable 1; 5

that cannot be called into to account, unproveable, unaccused, blameless

One who cannot be accused or likely to be called to account.

So he must be one that cannot be charged and accused with various things and people always doubting his character.

The elder needs to be a person that we trust implicitly.

The gossip and the tale-bearer are always present, doing their destructive work.

Prov. 18:8 “The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.”

Prov. 16:28 “A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.”

But when we tale-bearers turn their attention to the elder we should reflexively say, “No, that can’t be.” The elders should not be men that we are made to entertain doubts about.

His character is examined closely when he is appointed.

1 Tim. 5:22 “Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily and thus share *responsibility for the sins of others*; keep yourself free from sin.”

Then he is assumed to have this good character until proven conclusively otherwise.

1 Tim. 5:19 “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”

This requirement is not that the elder is perfect, or that he never makes mistakes, but that he is a man in whom we can have the utmost confidence.

An elder without character is a not a qualified one.

Let us note before leaving this that “blamelessness” is not an unapproachable standard, nor is it reserved for elders alone. Many others must also be “above reproach.”

It also is to be true of:

Deacons

1 Tim. 3:10 “And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.”

Preachers

1 Tim. 6:14 “that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Saints

1 Cor. 1:8 “who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Who is this speaking to?

1 Cor. 1:1 “to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours”

Col. 1:22 “yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach”

Widows

1 Tim. 5:7 “Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.”

This lets us know that “blamelessness” is a reachable goal for mature Christians. Some seem to think that if they can come up with anything against an elder (or potential elder) then they are not blameless. If we apply this standard to the one who makes such an objection certainly they won't be “found blameless” either, thus failing to reach the standard by which we can go to heaven. If the objector has a different standard for “blameless” for himself and the elder/candidate, then read **Matt. 7:1**.

B. Respectable/Orderly/Dignified **1 Tim. 3:2**

KJV Of good behaviour

ASV Orderly

RSV Dignified

NASB Respectable

NIV Respectable

NKJV Of good behavior

(Strg. 2887) **κοσμιος** *kosmios* modest 1, of good behaviour 1; 2

1) well arranged, seemly, modest

Here is a person of decency and decorum.

His leads a life that we all should seek.

1 Tim. 2:1,2 “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

He is a dignified and chaste person.

His place of leadership and guidance will automatically make him an example.

We should be able to follow it without hesitation.

Jesus gave an example.

Jn. 13:15 “For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”

Paul gave an example.

Phil. 3:17 “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.”

The preacher is to be an example also.

Heb. 13:7 “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

If the members are told to follow the example of those who teach them, they they must be role models for them.

Tit. 2:6-8 “Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;
7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified,
8 sound *in* speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”

C. Good Reputation With Those Outside **1 Tim. 3:7**

KJV Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

ASV Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

RSV Moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

NASB And he must have a good reputation with those outside {the church}, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

NIV He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap

NKJV Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

This man's good example and character is not to be recognized only by those in the congregation, but the community at large.

Not only must the church have confidence in the man, but others. Why? Because anyone who has a responsibility and position in a group is a representative of it.

When we are at cub/boy scouts, we appeal to the boys to act right because they are in uniform and represent the group.

Coaches and employers do the same thing.

You represent that which you are a part of – because you are a part of it.

This is even more so if you are a leader.

Let us consider that men may have different reputations in different places.

We know many who are good employees or business owners, etc. – BUT when it comes to the church, they are worthless.

In the same way, one might be of good behavior and conduct at church because he doesn't want to disappoint wife, family, expectation, etc. But on the job, or other outside activities, his worthlessness in those areas is well known.

So what if this man becomes an elder?

Or consider another man, now honest and upright, but before his conversion or reformation, his conduct was wicked, scandalous, and sordid?

Though he might well be forgiven, live righteously, be fine from his conversion on, his former conduct and the reputation earned then, might disqualify him.

So why can't this man become an elder? The devil will use it to his advantage.

Satan will attack all that is good. He may use the former, or outside faults of the elder to smear the church.

He might provoke the elder by ruining his reputation.

So in this case, we must not use the man in a leadership role. That does not mean that the man is useless for everything, but that in this one thing he needs to sit out.

Like in baseball – you sit your left-handed power hitters down when Randy Johnson (left-handed power pitcher) pitches. They are still very useful men, but they have to be protected from that guy.

So is the Christian whose reputation is not good generally. He can still do things, but not this.

V. Character

A. Prudent/Sober **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**

KJV Sober

ASV Sober-minded

RSV Sensible/Master of himself

NASB Prudent/Sensible

NIV Self-controlled

NKJV Sober-minded

(Strg. 4998) σοφρον *sophron* sober 2, temperate 1, discreet 1; 4

1) of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses

2) curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate

He is calm and even tempered.

Here is the man who can be serious about the serious business of a serious responsibility.

This should be the quality of all who are mature.

All the older men are to be sensible, not just those in the office of elder. Also the older women are to possess enough of it to teach the younger women.

Tit. 2:2-5 “Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.”

Not that he is humorless, but he is not given to foolishness, silliness, or childishness.

1 Cor. 13:11 “When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”

So here is someone who has the good sense to exercise good sense and seriously take care of his and the Lord's business.

As the shepherd and guardian of the flock, the elder needs to have a serious mind.

Think of the dangers that they would face.

Acts 20:28-31 “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.”

B. Gentle/Patient **1 Tim. 3:3**

KJV But patient

ASV But gentle

RSV But gentle

NASB But gentle

NIV But gentle

NKJV But gentle

(Strg. 1933) **επιεικες** *epieikes* gentle 3, patient 1, moderation 1; 5

1) seemingly, suitable

2) equitable, fair, mild, gentle

Here is a man who is courteous, polite, not coarse or harsh in dealing with people.

Prov. 15:1,2,4 “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.

4 A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit.”

When we think of the elder as a shepherd, we should automatically see the picture of gentleness.

Jesus spoke of shepherds being like this.

Jn. 11:3-5 “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.

4 When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

5 And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

To the sheep the shepherd is gentle and protecting and sacrificing.

Matt. 18:12-14 “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

13 And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

14 Thus it is not *the* will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.”

Also consider another example of the gentle nature of the spiritual leader.

Jesus was most gentle.

Matt. 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

30 For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

But what was Jesus to the scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites? Who made the scourge of cords and drove out the money changers, twice? Who put the questioners to shame so they were afraid to ask anything else? Now, apply that to our gentle elders.

In the same way that meekness is often misunderstood for weakness, gentleness can be mistaken also.

To the sheep, the elder is a shepherd, but to the wolf that would come, he is the protector of the sheep.

1 Sam. 15:33-37 “Then Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are *but* a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.”

34 But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock,

35 I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued *it* from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized *him* by his beard and struck him and killed him.

36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”

37 And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

The problem comes when the bear and wolf are treated like sheep instead of the danger that they are.

Isa. 56:9-11 “All you beasts of the field, All you beasts in the forest, Come to eat.

10 His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber;

11 And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.”

Or the shepherd feeds on the flock himself.

Prov. 28:15 “*Like* a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.”

To be gentle to the flock, shepherds MUST be death to the wolves, for they are death to the sheep.

Acts 20:28-30 “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.”

Tit. 1:9-11 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach*, for the sake of sordid gain.”

#5 The Eldership Qualifications (4)

- I. Willingness
- II. Domestic
- III. Experience
- IV. Reputation
- V. Character

A. Prudent/Sober **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**

B. Gentle/Patient **1 Tim. 3:3**

C. Free From The Love Of Money **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**

KJV Not greedy of filthy lucre/not covetous

ASV No lover of money/Not greedy of filthy lucre

RSV And no lover of money/Or greedy for gain

NASB Free from the love of money/Not fond of sordid gain

NIV No lover of for money/Not pursuing dishonest gain

NKJV Not greedy for money

This requirement is actually stated twice, in different terms.

(Strg. 866) *αφιλαργυρος* *aphilarguros* not loving money, not avaricious

(Strg. 146) *αισχροκερδες* *aischrokerdes* eager for base gain, greedy for money

25 times in the New Testament the warning is given in some form or fashion.

1 Tim. 6:9-11 “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

11 But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.”

Here the warning came in the midst of a discussion about preachers.

Now elders are to avoid it also.

We often want to trust in money because we can see it, see the advantages and good things of it, and it seems secure. But it is not.

1 Tim. 6:17 “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

Did anyone own any Enron stock? Or anything that ended in “.com”?

Why repeat the qualification twice?

1.) The need. *Twice for Emphasis?* Elders are responsible for the finances of the Lord’s people. They may assign a deacon to the daily handling of it, but they are ultimately responsible for its collection and distribution.

How would you like to be in need of salary or support as a preacher or charity in a desperate need and have to deal with a greedy man?

- 2.) The double description in very similar terms shows that their meanings aren't absolutely synonymous. Money is the primary object of desire in both of these words, but these both can be more broadly applied. So the repetition makes us think of all the possible meanings of these words and broadens our scope to include the others things men are greedy for. Possessions, power, position, honors, etc. Remember it was to elders that Paul said:
- Acts 20:33-35** "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.
34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.
35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- 3.) Or that one deals with the love of money, the other deals with the means used to get it. Concerning the love of money:
- Col. 3:5** "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."
- Concerning wrong ways to get it:
- Eph. 4:28** "Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have *something* to share with him who has need."

D. Not Self Willed **Tit. 1:7**

KJV Not selfwilled
 ASV Not self-willed
 RSV He must not be arrogant
 NASB Not self-willed
 NIV Not overbearing
 NKJV Not self-willed

(Strg. 829) **αυθαδεις** *authades* self-willed 2; 2 1) self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant from *autos* – "self" and *hedomai* – "please" (from which we get "hedonist")

The elder is not a person who pleases himself.

This leads to the attitudes of stubbornness, headstrongness, arrogance, and pride.

When the person in charge uses his authority for himself and to please himself there will be constant friction.

1 Tim. 6:4,5 "he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

The elder cannot be Diotrephes.

3 Jn. 9-11 "I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.

10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire *to do so*, and puts *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

We see the great contrast between being self-willed or God-willed.

The self willed speak and act in ways that they should not.

2 Pet. 2:9-12 "*then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed”

The elder holds the office in conjunction with other men. How could this man lead in a group?

Now consider the opposite of self-willed – the God guided will.

This is was the attitude and summation of the life of Jesus.

Matt. 26:42 “He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done.”

Heb. 10:7 “THEN I SAID, ’BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.”

This is what Jesus taught us to pray.

Matt. 6:10 “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”

This is accomplished by knowing and living the word of God.

Ps. 40:8 “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart.”

Ps. 143:10 “Teach me to do Thy will, For Thou art my God; Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground.”

This man can lead and sustain a congregation.

E. Not Quick Tempered **Tit. 1:7**

KJV Not soon angry

ASV Not soon angry

RSV Or quick-tempered

NASB Not quick-tempered

NIV Not quick-tempered

NKJV Not quick-tempered

(Strg. 3711) *οργιλος* *orgilos* soon angry, prone to anger, irascible

Here is the man who does not fly off the handle. He is not quick to anger and speak and does things that do not make problems worse than they otherwise would be.

Prov. 14:17 “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated.”

Prov. 14:29 “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.”

Prov. 16:32 “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”

Often men do not control themselves, especially their tongues.

Ecl. 5:6 “Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?”

The elder will have special temptation in this as they face many in sin; must deal with many things that people will not like and a great number of things that God does not like, in dealing with the brethren, the rebellious and the wayward.

But they will have to deal with all of it properly.

Eph. 4:26,27 “BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.”

This does not mean they must never be angry. Every godly man dedicated to truth and righteousness will have righteous indignation.

This is just as the Father and Son – they are angry when men will not repent.

Ps. 7:11 “God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.”

Mark. 3:4,5 “And He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored."

But this anger is not quick, selfish, or outside the will of God.

Matt. 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother [without a cause - KJV, NKJV] shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell."

The malicious or unreasonable anger of man destroys camaraderie and respect.

Think of a boss or supervisor of any type who uses anger to control, motivate or browbeat his underlings.

This type of thing will not work in the church. It is both ineffective and sinful.

1 Cor. 13:5 "[Love] is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

F. Loving What Is Good **Tit. 1:8**

KJV A lover of good men

ASV As lover of good

RSV A lover of goodness

NASB Loving what is good

NIV One who loves what is good

NKJV A lover of what is good

(Strg. 5358) *φιλαγαθος philagathos* loving goodness

This is used only here.

The negative is also used once in the New Testament.

2 Tim. 3:2-4 "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"

The elder must be the opposite of worldly people.

They must love good people, good deeds, good words, good objects, good books, good in general.

One of the best ways to measure a man is to know what he loves and what he hates.

Is he excited and consumed with what is noble and uplifting?

Is his time and energy spent in things relating to the Lord and His church, or does he love the things of the world?

1 Jn. 2:15-17 "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Does he love truth or wickedness?

2 Thess. 2:10-12 "and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,

12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

Here is the good to think on.

Phil. 4:8 "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, let your mind dwell on these things."

Does the man do it? If not, he should not be an elder.

If he does as a young man, he might be an elder later.

If he does as a mature man, you might be looking at your next elder.

And our own elders should be doing so right now.

Truth revealed by God is the certain and ultimate good. *Let us love it.*

1 Cor. 13:6 “[Love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth”

Love God’s people.

1 Cor. 16:24 “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus”

1 Pet. 2:17 “Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”

1 Jn. 3:14 “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”

Elders should love all good and hold to it.

Rom. 12:9 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Those who so love good will encourage good in others.

VI. Good Habits

A. Temperate/Vigilant **1 Tim. 3:2**

KJV Vigilant

ASV Temperate

RSV Temperate

NASB Temperate

NIV Temperate

NKJV Temperate

(Strg. 3524) *νεφάλεος nephaleos* AV - sober 2, vigilant 1; 3

1) sober, temperate a) abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use b) of things free from all wine, as vessels, offerings

Literally abstaining from wine.

Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich - “Clearheaded”

Thayer - “free from all infusion or addition of wine”

All other definitions and applications come from this primary meaning.

Remember this when we discuss “not given to much wine.”

First he must not be a drinker.

Old Testament priests could not drink at all when they went to the tabernacle to worship.

Lev. 10:8-11 “The LORD then spoke to Aaron, saying,

9 Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you may not die--it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations--

10 and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean,

11 and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.”

Don’t drink it when serving God, and don’t even look at it.

Prov. 23:31,32 “Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly;

32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.”

Prohibitions in the New Testament are:

1.) Against Being Intoxicated

1 Cor. 6:9,10 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Gal. 5:21 “envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

2.) Against Any Stage Or Association With Intoxication

1 Pet. 4:3,4 “For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

4 And in *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign *you*”

This means he has control, or mastery, of himself.

He is not out of control in anything on a regular basis.

He watches over and restrains himself in his passions so that he is in control.

The KJV translates this as “vigilant” because he must be watching. (Not others for this qualification, but be watching himself.)

You must be sober so that you can act properly.

1 Pet. 1:13 “Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Pet. 4:7 “The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.”

1 Pet. 5:8 “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Acts 20:28 “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.”

Self is often the easiest one to fool. Self-deception and self-delusion are the hardest errors to shake. So the elder must be clear headed, and ready to act.

3.) Other Things That Keep Us From Being Clearheaded

We do not pretend that alcohol is the only thing that clouds our judgment. There are any other number of mind-clouders – things that keep us from being temperate.

These things do are not always sinful, but any regularly practiced sin keep us from thinking clearly.

Worldliness and lusts are evidence of not thinking clearly.

Stress, financial pressures, and fatigue can rob us of our ability to think rightly. When we are too involved in, wrapped up in anything, it can cloud out judgment and keep us from our duties.

#6 The Eldership Qualifications (5)

- I. Willingness
- II. Domestic
- III. Experience
- IV. Reputation
- V. Character
- VI. Good Habits

A. Temperate/Vigilant **1 Tim. 3:2**

B. Hospitable **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**

KJV Given to hospitality/But a lover of hospitality (Titus)

ASV Given to hospitality

RSV Hospitable

NASB Hospitable

NIV Hospitable

NKJV Hospitable

(Strg. 5382) **φιλοξενος** *philoxenos* given to hospitality 1, lover of hospitality 1, use hospitality 1; 3 hospitable, generous to guests

This is the exact opposite of xenophobia. It is acting in the best interest of strangers.

It is benevolence in action for people that you don't even know, but whom you help from the kinship of brotherhood in Christ, or the brotherhood of man.

It is not just inviting one another over for dinner.

At this time it was especially needful for traveling Christians to have a place to stay.

The inns of that day were little more than stables or brothels. They were places full of vice and danger.

So in that day it was quite common to stay in the home of strangers, even among the heathens.

It would be difficult for Christians to stay in the homes of heathens because of pervasive idolatry and immorality without offending their hosts or being tempted to compromise their principles.

Heb. 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."

This is the case of Abraham in **Gen. 18:1-22**. Abraham entertained traveling angels.

He did not know that they were angels, but gave them the royal treatment as his guests.

They blessed his dwelling and gave him the promise that he would have a child within the year.

We, in entertaining strangers may also receive blessings and favor from the Lord by their presence.

Our guests, especially if they are Christians, may have been sent to us by the providence of God for our own good that we may learn something from them or be encouraged by getting to know other faithful people.

Or think of how their prayers for us may come back to bless us, or the encouragement that they will have for a long time in remembrance of the good deeds shown to them by us.

Matt. 10:40-42 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

41 He who receives a prophet in *the* name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward.”

3 Jn. 5-8 “Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially *when they are* strangers;

6 and they bear witness to your love before the church; and 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, that we may be fellow workers with the truth.”

It was a blessing to me growing up in a home where saints were welcome. I learned much from the preachers and others who passed through.

We had regular opportunities to show hospitality to saints when we lived overseas as men came to preach or others came for other reasons.

From this I have friends all over this country and others.

Weren't most who are now friends at one-time strangers to you?

What if you had treated them poorly or dismissively at the first meeting?

While we are thankful for the advent of good, clean, safe, and reasonably priced hotels and motels, and they make traveling easier, there is a closeness with people and meeting new folks that is lost in them.

But that does not excuse us from God's instruction to love and receive and help strangers.

Hospitality is especially to be shown to shown to brethren.

1 Pet. 4:9 “Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”

Gal. 6:10 “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

This requires the putting of oneself out and sometimes opening the wallet.

Note that this is a requirement that simply cannot be met without the cooperation of the elder's wife.

The instructions to Titus now end with three qualification showing that this man is one who faithfully takes care of his duties.

Duties to God - Just

Duties to Men - Holy

Duties to Self - Self Controlled

C. Just/Upright Tit. 1:8

KJV Just

ASV Just

RSV Upright

NASB Just

NIV Upright

NKJV Just

(Strg. 1342) **δικαιος** *dikaios* righteous 41, just 33, right 5, meet 2; 81

righteous, observing divine laws

a) in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God

1) of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves in their virtues, whether real or imagined

2) innocent, faultless, guiltless

3) used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life a) only Christ truly

4) approved of or acceptable of God

b) in a narrower sense, **rendering to each his due** and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them

The elder must do God's will.

He must be an example in this to others and make sure that he takes care of his duties toward other people.

As an elder he is taking on responsibilities towards the members, to be their leader. This is not simply an honor, but a responsibility that he must be willing to discharge. If the elder is not very strict and careful about his duties, and impartial in discharging them, there will be a tendency to anarchy in the church.

Prov. 24:23 “To show partiality in judgment is not good.”

Consider the parallel with preachers:

Do your work:

2 Tim. 4:1-5 “I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Don't be partial in it.

1 Tim. 5:21 “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”

So the elder must have integrity and act with justice towards all.

Jas. 2:8,9 “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well.

9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

Too many churches have been torn asunder by elders who are partial in judgment to family or friends.

The sins of some are rebuked, the sins of others are met with silence.

The problems of elder's families (as with preacher's families) are cases that are especially prone to become church problems.

D. Holy/Devout **Tit. 1:8**

KJV Holy

ASV Holy

RSV Holy

NASB Devout

NIV Holy

NKJV Holy

Having now spoken of the elder's duty to men, now we speak of his devotion to God.

(Strg. 3741) **οσιος** *hosios* holy 4, Holy One 2, mercies 1, shall be 1; 8

undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure holy, pious

The congregation as a whole is to be holy.

1 Cor. 3:16,17 “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

This can only be fully accomplished when the leaders and members act in purity towards God.

The elder must lead in this quality that all are to share in.

1 Pet. 1:16 “because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

Elders are to be are living examples of the Great Exhortation of the Apostle Paul.

Rom. 12:1,2 “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Other exhortations include:

Eph. 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love”

Heb. 12:14 “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification [holiness - KJV, NKJV] without which no one will see the Lord.”

Here is the man who is careful to follow all the commands of God.

1 Jn. 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Having loved God enough to faithfully serve God and conform himself to the teaching, he is then suited to lead.

E. Self Controlled **Tit. 1:8**

We have dealt with duty to others, duty to God, and now we turn to duty to self.

KJV Temperate

ASV Self-controlled

RSV Self-controlled

NASB Self-controlled

NIV And disciplined

NKJV Self-controlled

(Strg. 1468) **εγκρατες** *egkrates* temperate 1; 1 1) strong, robust 2) having power over, possessed of (a thing) 3) mastering, controlling, curbing, restraining a) controlling one's self, temperate, continent This is the man that lives within himself because God tells him to – and how to.

Self control, the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites.

Self discipline, one who holds himself in.

We think of this in regard to alcohol. We're are not to be under its influence, nor to be controlled by any other thing, except what is good and holy.

2 Cor. 5:14 “For the love of Christ controls us...” “Love of Christ constrains us...”

Before we were in Christ we did as we wanted. Now we do as He wants.

One is to develop the knowledge of right and wrong and then to put it into practice.

Temperance is needed for all to grow.

2 Pet. 1:5-7 “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge;

6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control [temperance - KJV], perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness;

7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.”

This is one of the main things that Paul preached to Felix and is something that needs to be preached a lot in our day and age as well.

Acts 24:24-25 “But some days later, Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus.

25 And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.”

Self control is part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is the opposite of immorality and lasciviousness.

The elder exercises self control – his mind, his words and his tongue.

Jas. 3:1,2,7,8 “Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

2 For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race.

8 But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.”

Not only does the elder need to know how to not make things worse, he needs to know how to be able to get things directed back towards the will of God.

#7 The Eldership

Qualifications (6) And Elders' Wives

- I. Willingness
- II. Domestic
- III. Experience
- IV. Reputation
- V. Character
- VI. Good Habits
- VII. Other Habits Elders Must Avoid

A. Not Addicted To Wine **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**

KJV Not given to wine

ASV No brawler

RSV No drunkard

NASB Not addicted to wine

NIV Not given to drunkenness

NKJV Not given to wine

(Strg. 3943) *παρῖνος* *paroinos* 1) given to wine, drunken

Thayer - one who sits long at his wine, in the secondary sense, quarrelsome over wine, hence, brawling, abusive.

Here is double prohibition – of both drink and the quarrels and problems that go with it.

Yet some find room to allow some drinking, so long as it ain't too much. They argue that some is allowed.

Is this the point of these prohibitions? Is only the worst case disallowed?

But what is if I say, "Don't get addicted to drugs." Is some then allowed, just not addiction?

Or don't get stoned. OK, then we can get a buzz on, just not fully stoned?

No, we mean don't start.

Does this same logic work in other passages?

1 Pet. 4:3,4 "For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*." (KJV)

"excess of riot" – some riot allowed? What if I riot *moderately*?

No, now remember the verse above? Temperate/Vigilant **1 Tim. 3:2**

KJV - "Vigilant" ASV, RSV, NASB, NIV, KJV - "Temperate"

(Strg. 3524) *νεφάλεος* *nephaleos* 1) sober, temperate a) abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use b) of things free from all wine, as vessels, offerings

Literally abstaining from wine.

Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich - "Clearheaded"

Thayer - "free from all infusion or addition of wine"

Also consider what did the faithful gospel preacher do because of this type of instruction?

He was so against it that he wasn't even taking it for needed medicine.

1 Tim. 5:23 “No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.”

Timothy had to be specifically instructed to take it for medicinal purposes.

This shows how scrupulous a faithful man was – he wouldn't touch it no matter what.

So what about the elders who would rule us?

Do we want them under the effects of alcohol?

1.) Unbridled Tongue

Prov. 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.”

2.) Perverts Judgment

Prov. 31:4,5 “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink,

5 Lest they drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

3.) Makes One Sick, Body And Spirit

Isa. 5:11 “Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink; Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!”

Hos. 7:5,6 “On the day of our king, the princes became sick with the heat of wine; He stretched out his hand with scoffers,

6 For their hearts are like an oven *As* they approach their plotting; Their anger smolders all night, In the morning it burns like a flaming fire.”

Isa. 28:7,8 “And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; They reel while having visions, They totter *when rendering* judgment.

8 For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a *single clean place.*”

We need our leaders (and our members) alert. So they must abstain.

We have enough problems without impairing our judgments and destroying our brain cells and making ourselves more stupid.

Prov. 23:29-33 “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

30 Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine.

31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly;

32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.

33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your mind will utter perverse things.

1 Thess. 5:6 “so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.”

B. Not Pugnacious **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7**

KJV No striker

ASV No striker

RSV Not violent

NASB Or pugnacious

NIV Not violent

NKJV Not violent

(Strg. 4131) **πλεκτες** *plektes* 1) bruiser, ready for a blow 2) a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person

This idea was a secondary meaning of the prohibition against wine. Now we deal with it directly.

The elder can't be the man who is short tempered, quick on the draw, uncontrolled.

The elder cannot have a violent temper and try to solve problems with physical force.

The elder will face many trying situations. He will be insulted by the rebellious.

He will face many provocations – both unintentional through ignorance and intentionally by those who are rebellious.

If you easily take insults this job isn't for you.

If you are pugnacious, it will be hard to keep the respect of the congregation and work with the other elders.

The elders lead by example and a knowledge of the word of God.

Their good character and unassailable reputations as blameless men are the greatest weight in their moral authority. Violent tendencies and tempers will cause them to lose all.

Jam. 3:15-17 “This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

So he must be a peaceable man.

Rom. 12:17,18 “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

The elder makes for peace even with those who are not inclined to.

Prov. 16:7 “When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

C. Uncontentious/Not A Brawler **1 Tim. 3:3**

KJV Not a brawler

ASV Not contentious

RSV Not quarrelsome

NASB Uncontentious

NIV Not quarrel-some

NKJV Not quarrel-some

(Strg. 269) **αμαχος** *amachos* 2) not contentious 3) abstaining from fighting

This is another prohibition of the same type.

This is the person that abstains from battle.

Twice the physically violent is specifically prohibited, once in secondary meaning, and various times by exclusion when we consider the good habits that they must have instead.

This is the rule for all.

Tit. 3:1,2 “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

2 to malign no one, to be uncontentious [be no brawlers - KJV], gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”

This type of worldly attitude is not from God.

Jam. 3:16 “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

1 Cor. 14:33 “for God is not a *God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

Such men would cause confusion in the church.

You can have firm convictions without being in rows, fusses or squabbles.

This is not to say that he doesn't fight for the truth, but he habitually avoids unnecessary fights.

He is not argumentative, quarrelsome or belligerent.

Consider what the preacher is to be:

2 Tim. 2:23,24 “But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged”

Yet at the same time contending for the things of God.

Jude 3 “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

The elder must put an end to fusses, not be in them, or especially not be the cause of them.

VIII. The Elder's Wife

A. Explicitly: None Mentioned

There is not a verse or place that directly says, “Elders wives’ must be or do thus and so.” But that does not mean that nothing is taught, for explicit teaching is not the only type.

B. Implicitly

While the elder's wife would influence just about every positive quality that he must possess, and she will help him avoid the negative things, consider especially the qualifications that she would have direct and particular influence on.

1.) Qualifications Drawn From Family

Elder has and runs a good house. **1 Tim. 3:5**

- 1.) Rule House Well – he cannot rule it well if she is rebellious.
- 2.) Children Under Control – no man can control the children without her help.
- 3.) Children Who Believe **Tit. 1:6** – he is not the only one to teach the children.
- 4.) Children Not Engaged In Evil – if her influence is evil, how will this be accomplished?
- 5.) Reason: Can't Rule House, Can't Rule Church!

2.) Qualifications Drawn From Type Of Man Husband Is

Reputation

Blameless/Above Reproach **1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7** – many man are reproached because of their wife.

Respectable/Orderly/Dignified **1 Tim. 3:2** – the well ordered life this takes must have a suitable partner.

Good Reputation With Those Outside **1 Tim. 3:7** – many men's reputation have been destroyed by their wives (and of course the opposite it true).

Character

Prudent/Sober **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**

Gentle /Patient **1 Tim. 3:3**

Free From The Love Of Money **1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7** – if she is not content and is constantly pushing for things, this will be hard to do.

Loving What Is Good **Tit. 1:8** see what type of woman he loves and was wise enough to choose as the “wife of his youth.”

Good Habits

Temperate/Vigilant **1 Tim. 3:2**

Hospitable **1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8** – this cannot be done without her help.

We could greatly elaborate on all these points, but the idea should be clear to us: The man who has grown and matured to be an elder and leader of God's people must have a suitable spouse who has also so grown.

C. Inference: Same As Qualifications Of Deacons' Wives **1 Tim. 3:11**

1 Tim. 3:11 “Women *must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.*”

Notice the Context:

1 Tim. 3:8-12 “Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

9 *but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

10 And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

11 Women *must likewise be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let deacons be husbands of *only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.*”

vs. **8** – deacons “likewise” – likewise to what? they are to meet their qualifications just as the elders are.

vs. **11** – women “likewise” – again, likewise to what? They are to meet their qualifications just as the elders and deacons are.

Now which women? The women that would be discussed.

The context must determine what type of woman, married, single, aged, etc. is being spoken of.

Jn. 2:4 “And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come.”

What woman is this? Jesus' mother.

What women are here in this text? vs. **12** – back to deacons.

These qualifications for deacons wives must speak to some degree about the elder's wives also. Why would the lesser office have qualifications for the wives if the greater would not?

We rightly infer that what applies to the lesser will apply to the greater also.

1.) Dignified

KJV grave

ASV grave

NASB dignified

NIV worthy of respect

NKJV reverent

NRSV serious

(Strg. 4586) **σεμνος** *semnos* 2) to be venerated for character, honourable

Gravitas, a serious weight about their character.

This is not that they are not to be joyous, but one who can take things seriously when need be.

These women need to be able to conduct themselves with decency and decorum. They are certainly not to be wild hairs, or even flippant and irreverent.

Frivolous and flighty women are not proper helps for men engaged in great works.

They must know how to conduct themselves properly.

They are not to be engaged in worldly pursuits.

Of course one area that this attitude is quickly seen in is dress.

1 Tim. 2:9,10 “Likewise, *I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments;*

10 *but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.*”

2.) Not Malicious Gossips

KJV not slanderers

ASV not slanderers

NASB not malicious gossips

NIV not malicious talkers

NKJV not slanderers

NRSV not slanderers

(Strg. 1228) **διδολος** *diabolos* AV - devil 35, false accuser 2, slanderer 1; 38 1) prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely

Slanderers = devils. Just like Satan.

Rev. 12:10 “And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.”

The wives of elders and deacons are going to know information that other people are not going to know, and some of it will be of a sensitive nature.

If they cannot control their tongues, but like to talk, they can cause tremendous damage.

Recall the admonition and warning Paul gave to Timothy concerning some widows:

1 Tim. 5:13 “And at the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention.*”

The gossip and the tale-bearer are always present, doing their destructive work.

Prov. 18:8 “The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.”

Prov. 16:28 “A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.”

We don't ever need this to start so close to the leadership.

3.) Temperate

KJV sober

ASV temperate

NASB temperate

NIV temperate

NKJV temperate

NRSV temperate

This is the same as elders are to be. **1 Tim. 3:2**

(Strg. 3524) **νεφιλεις** *nephaleos* AV - sober 2, vigilant 1; 3

1) sober, temperate a) abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use b) of things free from all wine, as vessels, offerings

Literally abstaining from wine.

Bauer, Arrndt and Gingrich - “Clearheaded”

Thayer - “free from all infusion or addition of wine”

All other definitions and applications come from this primary meaning.

But remember this when we discuss “not given to much wine.”

So first they must not be drinkers.

The KJV translates this as “vigilant” because she must be watching (examining) herself.

You must be sober so that you can act properly.

1 Pet. 4:7 “The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.”

1 Pet. 5:8 “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Self is often the easiest one to fool, and self deception and self delusion are the hardest errors to shake.

The elder must be clear headed, and ready to act – *and so must his wife.*

Women in general are admonished to this.

Tit. 2:3-6 “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *to be sensible*, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

[The next verse tells young men to do this too.]

6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible..."

They are to be calm and controlled, have a properly balanced mind and to be teachers of this type of life.

4.) Faithful In All Things

KJV faithful in all things

ASV faithful in all things

NASB faithful in all things

NIV trustworthy in everything

NKJV faithful in all things

NRSV faithful in all things

(Strg. 4102) πιστος *pistos* faithful 53, believe 6, believing 2, true 2, faithfully 1, believer 1, sure 1; trusty, faithful a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties b) one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust c) that can be relied on

Trustworthiness – the character of one who is reliable, and can be trusted and counted on.

This is one of the most common words in the New Testament, appearing over 200 times on the pages of Scripture.

The Christian religion is based on faith.

In the vast majority of passages in which *pistos* occurs, it refers to our attitude toward God and Jesus Christ.

It expresses that absolute trust, confidence, and obedience which are essential to Christianity.

However, in this context, the word *pistos* has the idea of fidelity, not belief.

Here it describes the character of one who can be relied upon.

God is Faithful:

Tit. 1:2 "God, who cannot lie..."

Heb. 13:8 "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday today and forever"

Reliable!

God is true to us, and will take care of us.

1 Cor. 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."

We must not just be faithful to God, but to other men also.

Christians will be faithful in all their duties: to work, family, friends, to their word, etc.

Elders and their families should be the first and best example of this.

Consider all the areas of life for the elder's wife to be faithful:

God

Husband

Family

Church members

So many will count on her, she will have tremendous responsibilities and opportunities to serve.

Sometimes in this is a particular temptation to step out of her place and lead.

But this is to be resisted.

1 Tim. 2:12 "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."

Yet in all things in her realm, this Christian woman is one who others should be able to count on.

#8 The Eldership

Duties Of The Congregation To The Elders

The Old Testament gives numerous prophecies about the church. Consider these from Jeremiah.

Jer. 3:15 “Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.”

Jer. 23:3,4 “Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply.

4 I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.”

When we have the oversight that God foresaw and intended we need to respect it.

So let us consider our duty toward the elders.

I. Esteem, Don't Grieve

Members of a local church should esteem their elders.

1 Thess. 5:12,13 “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate [know, respect, recognize] those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

What is the very next instruction after show love and appreciation for the elder?

Don't make things difficult on them – be at peace in the congregation.

Words of appreciation are great, but an attitude of appreciation is even better.

But making life easier for the elders by doing what is right is best.

We need to be at peace as part of the gospel teaching.

Heb. 12:14 “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”

Rom. 12:18 “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

If we are to be at peace with all men, how much more are we to be at peace with our brethren? Our spiritual leaders?

Some just seem to go out of the way to make trouble for anyone in authority.

And some people are just difficult to deal with because of their attitudes.

These are not Christian attitudes, but the elders will see much of them.

Rom. 14:19 “So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”

Ps. 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!”

This keeps the elders from dreading dealing with you and the problems you would constantly be causing.

Heb. 13:17 “Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

II. Obey

Members of the congregation should obey their elders.

Heb. 13:17 “Obey your leaders [rulers -KJV, have the rule over you - ASV], and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

In matters of faith, elders have no choice but to follow the Word of God.

They must rule in a manner consistent with the Scriptures.

1 Pet. 4:11 “Whoever speaks, *let him speak*, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, *let him do so* as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

If the elders institute certain programs, like Bible classes, special service, etc., the congregation is obligated to participate.

1 Pet. 5:2 “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness”

III. Give Just Regard

All older Christians are to be regarded and treated well and fairly.

1 Tim. 5:1,2 “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, *to* the younger men as brothers,

2 the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity.”

But elders, as men of proven character in leadership positions are especially to be regarded highly.

We must be very careful in making or receiving an accusation against the elders.

1 Tim. 5:19 “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”

Elders will make mistakes from time to time, just like the rest of us.

However, if an elder should persist in sin, he should be rebuked publicly.

1 Tim. 5:19-21 “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful *of sinning*.

21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit of partiality*.”

His character is examined closely when he is appointed.

1 Tim. 5:22 “Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily and thus share *responsibility* for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”

Then he is assumed to have this good character until proven conclusively otherwise.

But just because a man serves as an elder does not grant him immunity from reproof if he is caught in either moral or doctrinal sins.

Acts 20:29-31 “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.”

In this case, the elders might even have to look out for other elders, but they also must look out for themselves.

IV. Receive Instruction, Guidance And Help

Members of a local church should utilize their elders.

We should turn to them in time of adversity and trial.

James 5:14-16 “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

This applies, not only to periods of physical problems, but also spiritual ones also.

Physical illness – have them pray with you.

The anointing with oil is probably medicinal.

Luke 10:34 “and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”

Mark 6:13 “And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.”

Nothing here forces us to take it as miraculous, but even it were miraculous, it would still serve as an example of conduct in a non miraculous age, just as we don't preach by inspiration as the apostles did, but we certainly preach.

Spiritual problems – confess them so that they can pray with you.

We should seek their guidance and counsel.

Our youth oriented culture neglects the wisdom that comes with age.

Older women should teach the younger women.

Tit 2:3-5 “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.”

So who should teach the young men?

And who should teach the entire congregation?

The entire congregation can benefit from the wisdom of their elders, if they but will seek for that counsel and listen to it.

Prov. 12:15 “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”

V. Inform

James 5:14-16 “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

CALL the Elders!

The elders are to take the lead in helping.

Acts 20:35 “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Some weakness is obvious, but many times things go unknown and unnoticed.

Elders do not have the gift of clairvoyance! (Neither do preachers or deacons.)

These elders that God gives are to be so respected because they are doing God's will.

Let us now consider what they must do to be worthy of this respect.

#9 The Eldership

Duties of the Elders To The Congregation

The Old Testament gives numerous prophecies about the church. Consider these from Jeremiah.

Jer. 3:15 “Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.”

Jer. 23:3,4 “Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply.

4 I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.”

God foresaw and provided for His people to have good leadership that would oversee His people.

So let us consider what they must do to be worthy of this respect – our elders’ duties to us.

I. Oversight

A Of One Congregation (And All Of It)

Acts 14:23 “And 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.”

The elders rightly may delegate the doing of many things, but the oversight should never be shirked, skirted, or handed off because they have been given oversight of the church by God.

The elders have the eldership to use the authority of it. If unwilling to exercise oversight, they are unfit for duty.

The can delegate the doing under their oversight, but not the oversight.

They must oversee, and take responsibility for all the things in the church.

To do this they must work together because it is a group (eldership, presbytery) rule.

B. Of Finances

Acts 11:28-30 “And one of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius.

29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a *contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

When the apostles were present in the early days of the church in Jerusalem the money was laid at their feet.

When the permanent arrangement of elders came into being they took the charge of these things.

C. Of Doctrine And Teaching

The very meaning of shepherd is to “feed”

Eph. 4:11,12 “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”

Elders must be able to teach others.

1 Tim. 3:2 “...able [apt] to teach...”

In order to teach it, they must know it.

Tit. 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict”

They are to stop the mouths of those who don’t keep to the doctrine.

Consider **Acts 15** as an example.

False teaching claimed to come from the Jerusalem church.

The elders, along with the apostles, examined the matter.

Acts 15:5,6 “But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”

Acts 15:13 “And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me.”

James, an elder, read from the scriptures, reasoned from it against the false teachers and suggested a course of action.

Acts 15:19-22 “Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

21 For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas--Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren”

This is exactly what elders are to do today – only instead of standing with apostles on what is heard, they stand behind the apostles based on what is written.

D. Rule It Well

1 Tim. 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

1 Tim. 3:6 “but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”

Consider how fathers rule well.

Eph. 6:4 “And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Would the elder unnecessarily provoke the congregation?

Think of the problems in a family if Mom and Dad had different standards and expectations?

Did you ever know of children (maybe you did it or your own kids did) who would ask mom if dad said “No”?

With differing answers comes strife.

Either strife between the children and the parents or among the parents themselves.

The church will have the same type of problems if the elders speak with different voices.

***One of my favorite answers is “Ask the Elders.”

Because some things I'd rather not deal with. :-). But many times I am asked about things that are their responsibility, not mine. So I refer people to the elders.

But what if they would give differing answers to people who go to them?

II. Be Examples

1 Pet. 5:3 “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

The example is the one who has already done it.

Others then trust that they can go where they otherwise would not have gone, but now someone has shown them the way.

Jn. 10:4 “When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

5 And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

From the qualifications of elders we see that they are to be good examples:

as fathers

as husbands

as teachers
 in devoted Christian service
 as neighbors – good reputation outside
 in Bible study – holding and using the word, apt to teach it

They must live so that we can follow them.

Heb. 13:7 “Remember those who led you [rulers - KJV, have the rule over you - ASV], who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith”

III. Give Voluntary And Willing Service

1 Pet. 5:1,2 “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

They must desire the office to be appointed, they must continue to be willing and able to handle it and to keep it. We can't make it hard on them, but they aren't to be permanently exasperated for having the duty. When it gets to that point for them they should give it up or deal sternly with those who are causing the problems by their contrary doctrines or defiant conduct.

IV. Watch

A. Keep Watch Out For Us

Consider the good shepherd – he sought the *one* that was lost.

Luke 15:4-6 “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?

5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’”

How did he know he was one short of 100 unless he counted regularly?

All the sheep would look pretty much the same to me, and 99 would look a lot like 100.

But the shepherd knew the sheep not only by their presence, but in their absence.

How did he know where to look if he didn't know the sheep's tendencies and the places that lost sheep might go?

Paul warned that the flock will face many dangers.

Acts 20:28-30 “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.”

David, the shepherd boy of old, fought the lion and bear.

The elder must be on the look out for the grievous wolves who would ravage the flock.

Think of the situation if they stop watching out for us.

Read **Ezek. 34**

But shepherds who don't watch ruin the people.

Jer. 10:19-21 “Woe is me, because of my injury! My wound is incurable. But I said, “Truly this is a sickness, And I must bear it.”

20 My tent is destroyed, And all my ropes are broken; My sons have gone from me and are no more. There is no one to stretch out my tent again Or to set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become stupid And have not sought the LORD; Therefore they have not prospered, And all their flock is scattered.”

B. Keep Watch Over Themselves

Acts 20:28 “Be on guard for yourselves...”

What if they don't?

Jer. 12:10 “Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard, They have trampled down My field; They have made My pleasant field A desolate wilderness.”

We all have to take care for ourselves.

2 Cor. 13:5 “Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?”

When we stop looking at self, stop examining to see what needs improvement, when we decide in pride that we don't need to do that, we'll certainly fall.

1 Cor. 10:12 “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

Shepherds that don't retain faithfulness and self-control end up feeding themselves on the flock.

Isa. 56:9-11 “All you beasts of the field, All you beasts in the forest, Come to eat.

10 His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber;

11 And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.”

Prov. 28:15 “*Like* a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.”

V. Holding And Building On Word Of God

Elders had to hold to it be qualified.

Tit. 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Paul told the elders to keep relying on it and growing in it to be ready for all that would come later.

Acts 20:32 “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.”

#10 The Eldership

Similarities And Differences In Duties Of Preachers And Elders

Introduction:

Consider this great Old Testament example of mutual support.

Ex. 17:8-13 “Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.

9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

10 And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moses’ hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set.

13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”

Here are good men working together to achieve all the blessings that God would give.

Think if these men had conflict and bickered among themselves?

What if the helpers thought they should get to hold the staff?

Think now if the elders and the preacher bickered and argued over role, position, honor?

Preachers are to work under elders. The apostle Paul’s letters to preachers told them to appoint elders over the churches that they would be working with.

But some preachers try to dominate the eldership, or act like they are one of the elders in sharing the oversight of the congregation.

Other elders try to micro manage the preacher’s work.

They are not content the make sure that he preaches the whole counsel of God, or in making sure that all needed areas of teaching are dealt with.

Some elders try to change the preacher’s natural delivery style or meddle in other things that are the preacher’s responsibility. (This trait is most common among former preachers who are now elders.)

Others do not let their preachers bring the whole counsel of God to the members. They place certain topics or applications off limits.

Consider this description of preacher/elder conflict reported in a newspaper of institutional churches (a great place to study what happens when you don’t respect the Biblical pattern).

A preacher shortage? Leaders disagree
By Ted Parks For the Christian Chronicle
February 01, 2002

(excerpt from middle of the article) Congregations often insist that preaching candidates have specialized academic training and effective leadership skills. But churches sometimes fail to clarify where the elders’ leadership role ends and the preacher’s begins.

“Most ministers ... want a seat at the table of leadership,” said Andy Wall, minister, Conejo Valley church, Thousand Oaks, Calif. “They don’t necessarily want the head of the table, but they want a voice.”

Wall, who has done extensive research about why people leave churches of Christ, says that ministers, like members, sometimes chafe under heavy-handed and restrictive elders. “They treat ministers as hirelings, and over time it just leads to frustration,” Walls said.

Central Church's Farris likewise fears that "many churches may not express (respect for) the role of the preacher."

<http://www.christianity.com/CC/article/0,,PTID25485|CHID127205|CIID1337008,00.html>

So the preachers want to have a part in the oversight and the elders don't respect the preachers.

Turning the pages of New Testament and applying what is found there would cure these conflicts.

I. Character

A. Elders: Mature Character

1 Tim. 3:2 "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach"

The elder has to be all these things now. He cannot start in the office unless he already is these things.

B. Preachers: Mature Or Maturing Character

1 Tim. 4:12 "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

Even if young, the preacher can preach. But he must be working on these things right away.

II. Example

A. Elders: Is (And Must Remain) Example

1 Pet. 5:3 "nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

The qualifications of the elder show the type of man he must be to lead as an overseer.

B. Preachers: To Become (And Stay) Example

1 Tim. 6:11 "But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness."

2 Tim. 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

Tit. 2:7,8 "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified, **8** sound *in* speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

The preacher's responsibility is to work on these things.

The preacher can begin his work before reaching this level of maturity, but he must immediately begin to strive for it.

In these first two areas, the only difference between the elder and preacher is that the preacher works on them while doing his duty, the elder has achieved them before beginning his duties (duties of oversight, not of Christian service).

III. Teaching

A. Elders: Teach

Apt

1 Tim. 3:2 "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach"

Exhort

Tit. 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Refute

Tit. 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Acts 15:5,6,13-20 “But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”

13 And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me.

19 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.”

Feed The Flock

1 Pet. 5:2 “shepherd [feed - KJV] the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness”

B. Preacher: Preach The Word

Always Teaching (by reproving, rebuking and exhorting)

1 Tim. 4:13 “Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.”

2 Tim. 4:2-5 “preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Study

2 Tim. 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

Teach With Authority

Tit. 2:1,15 “But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.”

15 “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

Fulfill Ministry

Col. 4:17 “And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

IV. Applying The Gospel Standard

A. Elders: Take Heed To The Flock

Acts 20:28 “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.”

Acts 15:6 “And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”

The elders’ oversight role includes making sure that the gospel standard is held in all things.

B. Preachers: Apply The Teaching

Set In Order (appointing elders and teaching needed things)

Tit. 1:5 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you”

Charge Not To Teach Falsehood

1 Tim. 1:3 “As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines”

Remind In All Points Of Doctrine And Conduct

1 Tim. 4:6 “In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.”

Reprove Those In Sin

1 Tim. 5:20 “Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful *of sinning*.”

This charge applies even to dealing with elders:

vs. **21** “solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit of partiality*.”

Charge The Rich

1 Tim. 6:17 “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

Don't Be Timid

2 Tim. 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”

Hold The Pattern Of Sound Words

2 Tim. 1:13 “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

Teach Others

2 Tim. 2:2 “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

Charge Not To Wrangle About Words

2 Tim. 2:14 “Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers.”

Correct Those In Opposition

2 Tim. 2:24,35 “And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth”

Reject Factions

Tit. 3:10,11 “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.”

Get Christians To Do Right

Tit. 3:14 “And let our *people* also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”

V. Looking After The Members

A. Elders: Shepherd

Luke 15:4-6 “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?

5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’”

Tend To Weak

Sick

Jas. 5:14-16 “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

This deals with both the physically and spiritually ill.

Straying

Discipline – Exhort, Rebuke And Even Disfellowship

Most discipline (and the most effective type of discipline) is done by preventative methods.

This is dealt with by instruction.

When things go wrong, remedial discipline (remediation) is attempted by teaching and exhortation, eventually by rebuke, and finally, in the case of the intransigent (the stubbornly unrepentant) disfellowship.

The elders are to make sure that all this is done.

The preacher is often called on by the elders to do much (or even all) of the public parts of this.

But sometimes a short rebuke directly from the elders is more effective than 10 sermons by the preacher.

B. Preachers: Watchman

Preachers also watch for the souls of men, but in a slightly different way than elders.

The preacher’s role in this is parallel to the ancient prophets.

Ezk. 3:17-21 “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

18 When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

19 Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

20 Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he shall die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

21 However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself.”

Ezk. 33:7-9 “Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

8 When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die,’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.

9 But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your life.”

This is to deliver souls from sin when they are in it and to keep those who are out of sin saved from it.

Paul said that he had lived by this standard.

Acts 20:26,27 “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.”

Thus the preacher also takes part in the discipline – mostly by admonition.

The preachers exhort and rebuke continually as needed.

VI. Oversight

A. Elders: Oversee

Teaching – they must insure that only the doctrine of Christ is taught, and all is refuted.

Acts 15:6 “And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”

Tit. 1:9 “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Judgments – they help apply good wisdom in fulfilling all the functions that the church is to do.

Acts 21:18-26 “And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

19 And after he had greeted them, he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 And when they heard it they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

22 What, then, is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come.

23 **Therefore do this that we tell you.** We have four men who are under a vow;

24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

25 But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.”

“*therefore do this...*” The elders gave the apostle Paul instruction to help the church.

He graciously submitted.

He could have viewed this as a major inconvenience. It would take several days time, and be of some expense.

But he respected the elders enough, and wanted to help the brethren enough to do it.

If an apostle graciously submitted to elders by following what they decided in their wisdom would help the brethren, what should we do?

Areas Of Judgment:

Personnel – make sure preachers, deacons, teachers, all workers delegated to do things are doing them.

Finances – oversight of the funds given to do the Lord’s work.

Acts 11:30 “And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

Programs – teaching programs, assembly times, advertising and preaching methods (meetings, newspaper, radio, etc. as they see best)

Facilities – church must have a place to meet. Elders will secure a place and make sure it is suitably maintained. Their job is to build Christians not buildings; yet poor facilities can hinder the greater work that we are to be engaged in.

The Elders are to Rule and “*Rule Well.*”

1 Tim. 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

They are to rule for the Lord in applying, in the church, the things that will help the brethren to faithful service.

B. Preachers:

1.) Inherent Oversight In (And Over) Own Teaching

Tit. 2:15 “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

Preaching has lots of authority. You are proclaiming the message of God to the hearers.

2.) Other Areas: No Oversight

The denominational pattern is to invest final (and almost total) authority in the hands of the preacher (falsely called pastor).

But this is not what the scriptures teach.

The preacher has no inherent authority in any area outside the preaching of the gospel.

He may (and usually does), at the elders discretion, have *Delegated Authority Under Elders In Such Areas As They Given Him*.

Most of these are things related to the preaching work, but they don't have to be.

Like Deacons, Preachers are to be trusted servants.

They are to be ready for all the tasks that scriptures give, and for the work that the elders might entrust in them to help the church do its work.

But they don't have any more authority in these others things than any other member.

We also note that the preacher is not to be the congregational “go-for.” If these other responsibilities begin to interfere with his “ministry of the word” they should be given to someone else.

VII. Location Of Work

A. Elders: Authority Over (Oversight Of) One Congregation

Acts 14:23 “And 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.”

Acts 20:28 “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.”

1 Pet. 5:2 “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness”

Elders oversee the members in their own congregation and their own work.

This is the only venue for their authority to be exercised.

B. Preachers: Can Teach Anywhere

The preacher, since his authority is in the message (and only there), has authority in all times and places where the proclamation of the word of God is to be preached.

Timothy preached:

in Ephesus

1 Tim. 1:3 “As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines”

in Philippi

Phil. 2:19-21 “But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

20 For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.”

in Corinth

1 Cor. 4:17 “For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.”

2 Cor. 1:19 “For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us--by me and Silvanus and Timothy--was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.”

in Thessalonica

1 Thess. 3:2 “and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith”

When these roles are respected according to the pattern that the New Testament lays out, there will be no conflict between elders and preachers. Both will do their God given complementary works to build up the brethren and shepherd them safely through the trials of life.