

6-30-24 Every Good Work (Titus)

Week 2

Text: Titus 1:5-7; 2:1-8.

I'm thankful that we don't have to flip a coin when it comes to selecting servant leaders in the church. The Bible is very clear about the test for Elders and Deacons and this morning we're going to check our answers with Scripture. While our series is centered on the Book of Titus, for a comprehensive understanding of this topic, **1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 5:17-20, James 5:14-15, 1 Peter 5:1-4** should also be studied.

Last week we established that since our world is a lot like the Cretan culture, we must stand for the truth if we hope to make an impact.

The task Paul gave to Titus.

Read Titus 1:5.

Paul describes his purpose for leaving Titus on the island of Crete. While the Book of Acts does not record a visit from Paul to this island, his trip with Titus most likely took place after his release from his first Roman imprisonment. After spending some time on the island, Paul moved on to preach in other cities, but because there was much work still to be done, he left "Titus the Troubleshooter" behind.

The Greek word indicates that Titus was left behind temporarily. Titus's task was to straighten, to "**set in order**" or "straighten out what was left unfinished."

Specifically for Titus, his task was to "**appoint elders in every city, as I commanded you.**" Most New Testament uses of this word refer to "setting someone in office" or appointing a person to a position of authority.

Titus was given the tall task of appointing those whom the Holy Spirit had already raised up to serve as elders/overseers/pastors. Notice that he is to do this in every town. Crete back then had 100 different cities, which shows how the gospel had spread.

The New Testament uses various words to describe godly men who lead the church. Bishop, deacon, elder, and pastor. All these words carry various meanings, but they tend to overlap.

"What is it that elders/pastors/overseers do anyway?" Among other responsibilities, the Bible lists six primary tasks.

1. Model Christian maturity. **1 Peter 5:3: "Not lording it over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock."**
2. Shepherd the sheep. **1 Peter 5:2: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care..."**
3. Feed the flock. **1 Timothy 5:17: "The Elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."**
4. Refute the rebellious. **Titus 1:9: "...Encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."**

5. Manage church matters. **1 Timothy 3:5: “If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of the church of God?”**
6. Intercede for the ill. **James 5:14: “Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.”**

Men who serve in the role of Elder, Bishop, Deacon or Pastor must meet certain requirements.

Read Titus 1:6-7.

1. Blameless.

- **“if a man is blameless...”**
- Last week, one of our points was to embrace your identity. Reject, retire the old identity. Satan wants you to believe the lie that once you are Christian things are the same. You are powerless, you are a spiritual failure, you are pathetic, worthless, you will never change, things will never change, your anxiety will rule you, and on and on.
- I also said, *“You do what you do because of what you think of you.”* What in the Dr. Sues?!
- Do you have any scripture to back up that nursery rhyme?

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you. Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, “Eat and drink!” But his heart is not with you. NASB

- Who we are, our character, shapes our thoughts about ourselves and others. What we think is a reflection of who we are.
- To even begin we must be. We must embrace what God says we are. Remember what learned a couple of weeks ago God called Gideon when He visited him? **“You mighty man of valor.”**
- We cannot put do before who. Who you are is where we must start. You are, by the power of the Holy Spirit, blameless. You are in the sanctification place of being blameless. Salvation begins the process, sanctification is a lifelong process, along with service.
- The ESV version says, **“above reproach”** Notice that this quality is so important that it is listed first and is stated again in **verse 7**. This is really a summary quality that is fleshed out in the following verses.
- This does not mean that an elder must be completely flawless or faultless, or no one could serve in this capacity, especially me. The Greek word means “without blame” and has to do with “unquestioned integrity.”
- A leader’s lifestyle and reputation must stand out so that he will have the respect of those he is leading. This is not an optional quality, a leadership in the church “must be” blameless. Or at the very least in a state of continuous blamelessness.
- He is cautious of where he places himself. Free in Christ but not everything is good to do or be.
- Stuart Briscoe writes, “The only leader worth following is the leader who is following Christ.”
- I think of how Enoch was described in **Genesis 5:24 as one who “walked with God.”**

2. Faithful Husband.

- This integrity must be evident in the marriage relationship, if the pastor/elder is married. The Greek phrase literally reads this way: “a one-woman man.”
- While there is some disagreement about what this may mean, the obvious interpretation is that a man must remain faithful and true to his wife.
- This was particularly important in Crete because of the rampant immorality that pervaded the island. In fact, in the Roman world, it was common for wealthy men to have relations with servants in their home, with prostitutes at the pagan temple, and with their wife.
- Paul is saying that this is unacceptable for the pastor/elder. He must be completely committed to his wife in every way.
- Let me make two additional points related to this qualification. First, the clear teaching of Scripture is that Elders and Pastors are to be men. Paul uses the masculine pronoun throughout this list and here says that Elders are to be husbands.
- When it comes to the office of elder/pastor/bishop/overseer it is to be filled by a man. “It is not a question of being qualified, it is a matter of being authorized.” Male in Koine Greek is “Ah-ner” female is “U-naa” and a group of people is “antropos.”
- Second, God’s standard is one man and one woman for life in a monogamous marriage. We must take a stand for the sanctity of marriage.
- To embrace our identity in Jesus we would say, I am a follower of Jesus and He empowers me to be faithful to my wife and a spiritual leader in my home.

3. Obedient children.

- An elder must be above reproach in marriage and in his parenting. A father must be actively involved in the faith development of his children. An elder/pastor/overseer’s children must not only believe but not be **“open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.”**
- Now, let me qualify this. There are no perfect children, and we must allow them to process their faith as they discover their place in God’s family. Having said that, the true training ground for an Elder is in the home.
- We must be careful in raising our children. We are not solely responsible for how they turn out; they are responsible for their decisions in life. But we are responsible for training them the right way. God’s way, not ours.

For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? 1

Timothy 3:5

4. Entrusted with God’s work.

- **Verse 7** reiterates the standard of blamelessness and introduces the concept of being **“a steward of God...”**
- Entrusted refers to stewardship and was used of the one who cared for all the needs of family members, finances, crops and other servants. As such the overseer must see himself not as the owner of the church, but as the one entrusted with the spiritual nourishment, growth and behavior of the family of God. Just as the steward’s main task was to carry out the will of the master; so too, the overseer is to carry out the Word of the Lord.

- Leaders should feel honored to be used of God. We need to make sure that we don't allow our hearts to trick us into treating the Lord's work as a chore. Now, some people need to be told to knock it off.
- After salvation, comes sanctification and then comes serve. We get the privilege to be part of God's mission! As leaders we will be faith filled, bold, risk-taking leaders. We will refuse to insult God with small faith and small thinking!
- We have been entrusted with the responsibility of challenging and building up your faith. Especially when you can't see it.

5. Leads with humility.

- **"...not self-willed..."**
- The word combines two ideas: "self" and "delight." An overbearing person is one who is self-loving and is so preoccupied with himself that he forces his opinions on others. There is no place for arrogant intolerance on the elder board because overseers are to be loving leaders, not dominant dictators.
- Able to self-reflect, "What do I need to surrender to move us forward?"
- Or when an issue is brought up, rather than getting defensive, they can say, "tell me more."

6. Slow to anger.

- An elder must not be easily set ablaze.
- Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 13:5**, love is **"not easily provoked."** While anger is sometimes justified, there are many warnings in Scripture to avoid exploding. **Proverbs 29:22: "An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins."** An Elder must be like the person described in **Proverbs 14:29: "A patient man has great understanding..."**
- This is not easy today....

7. Is not carried away in drunkenness.

- This is an interesting phrase in the original because it literally means, "beside wine" or "tarrying at wine." This picture is of a man who always has a wineskin or a bottle with him.
- It was especially important in Crete for the leader to avoid drunkenness because this behavior could be confused with the drunken worship of the Greek god Dionysius, which involved drunkenness and immorality and was widely practiced by Cretans.

8. Not violent.

- An overseer must not be a "striker" or a "fighter." The Greeks expanded this meaning to also include those who were violent in their speech.
- This prohibition to avoid retaliation was important because it was not uncommon in the first century for men to settle their disputes with their fists.

9. Not a pursuer of dishonest gains.

- Leaders in the church must not love money more than ministry. An elder/pastor/overseer must not be involved in dishonest practices for selfish purposes. Again, the Cretans were notorious for being fond of greedy dishonest gain.

Application

Men, actively pursue becoming an Elder, Deacon, Bishop, or Pastor.

This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position.” 1 Timothy 3:1 NLT

I’m praying that God will develop more leaders who will help oversee the flock of God.

Respect your leaders. Our culture doesn’t really respect those who provide leadership. We’re skeptical and critical, and sometimes rightly so. But in the church, it must be different. In the church of God trust shouldn’t be earned, trust should be given. But trust can be broken, so we must tread lightly.

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thess. 5:12-13

Submit to your leaders. Someday I will have to give an account about how well I’ve kept watch over God’s flock. Church leaders will be evaluated for their stewardship of God’s household. Congregation, will the leaders of this church be able to tell God that leading you was a pleasure when they stand before Him? (Pause...hold...hold.)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you Hebrews 13:17

Pray for our leadership. One of the most important things you can do is to pray for the elders, deacons and staff of this church. Paul summed it up very succinctly in **1 Thessalonians 5:25: “Brothers, pray for us.”**

Conclusion

Read Titus 2:1-8. I say often that every believer is to carry themselves with the same qualifications as church leaders.

Old men:

Be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.

Older women:

Ditto! Reverent in behavior, not slanders, not to be drinking too much, teachers of what is good, builders of young women.

Young women:

Listen to and follow the older women's example. Love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, pure, taking care of the home, and uh oh.... submissive to their husbands. Why? That there won't be shame brought against God's ways.

Young men:

Sober, in all things live in God's ways, be a good role model, be men of integrity, reverence, dignity, pure, speaking God's truths, live in such a way that anyone trying to slander you would fail.

I wouldn't be an ambassador of Jesus Christ if I didn't share with you that, you are sought after and you are precious in His sight.

Let us review some of what God says about us.

I want to focus on two today.

We are sought after. God desired to know you, to be your God before the foundation of the earth. He doesn't want you to suffer, be alone, God pursues after mankind.

We are precious in His sight. God loves us so much that He gave us His very best. God loves the "whosoever".