

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Titus 1:5-9**.
- B. The church belongs to Christ (Mt. 16:18).
“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”
- C. Jesus is the head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23).
(Eph 1:22-23) And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.
(Col 1:18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.
- D. The Elders have asked that I preach a series of lessons on the qualifications and work of Elders (this Sunday), and on the qualifications and work of deacons (next Sunday).

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

- A. Scripture texts are 1Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
- B. *Negative* qualifications:
 1. Without reproach. *An elder must be a man who **has a good reputation**.*
 2. Not a brawler, striker, contentious.
*An elder must be a man who **does not release his anger physically**.*
 - a) The KJV translates this word as being a striker. (Humorous story of a man who thought it meant that one could not be a member of a union and go on strike.)
 - b) The male, spiritual leader is to be mature in controlling his human spirit. He is not to engage in physical violence as a way to solve problems or deal with difficult situations.
 3. Not a lover of money.
 - a) *The man of God knows **how to properly make, save, and spend money**.*
 - b) The elder knows that *money is not evil*, but that the *love of money is*. It becomes a matter of priorities, and of the heart.
 4. Not a novice.
 - a) *An elder must be a man who **one who is growing and maturing spiritually**.*
 - b) Spiritual growth is something that must be attained and something that is seen by others, for the elder to be truly what God wants.
 5. Not soon angry. *An elder must be a man who **doesn't have a short fuse**.*
The Bible does not classify **all** anger as sinful. There is way to be angry and not sin (Eph. 4:26). **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,**
 6. Not self-willed. *An elder must be a man who **does not build his world around himself**.*
The man who is self-willed is self-pleasing, self-serving and arrogant. He is self-centered, and his own authority. He can become very greedy and vain (2Pet. 2:2-3).
(2Pet 2:2-3) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; **3** and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.
 7. Not addicted to wine. *An elder must be a man who **not to be affected by strong drink**.*
One commentator says that the Greek word used here, *paroinos*, literally means “a man who sits too long at his wine.” It seems clear to me that the Bible teaches that a mature Xian man is not to allow himself to be controlled by anything that is sinful. The emphasis of the verse is on being *addicted* rather than on *wine*. We need not be addicted to anything but Jesus (1Cor. 16:15; KJV).
- C. *Positive* qualifications:
 1. Husband of one wife. *An elder must be a man who **must be loyal to one woman**.*
Paul made sure that Xians knew that an elder must **a man** who is married to one woman and that

- he was to be loyal to her and her alone.
2. Temperate. *An elder must be a man who has a clear perspective and a correct spiritual orientation.*
 - a) Temperance usually means that one doesn't drink alcoholic beverages, or that the person is moderate in indulging the appetite. But to the Xian it means much more.
 - b) A man who is temperate does not lose his physical, psychological, and spiritual orientation. He remains stable and steadfast and his thinking is clear.
 3. Sober-minded. *An elder must be a man who is to be sensible (prudent).*
 - a) A prudent man... a humble man, with a proper view of God's grace and knows how to pray.
 - b) Xians frequently go to two extremes. Either they see themselves as *nothing* or they are caught up with an *exalted* view of themselves. An immature person finds himself vacillating between these two attitudes.
 4. Orderly. *An elder must be a man who is respectful when he lives a well-ordered life.*

The man who is respectable is a man who lives in such a way that his life-style adorns the teachings of the Bible. Whether it be his; *dress, speech, appearance of his home, office, or way of doing business*--all are to be in proper relationship to Biblical principles and doctrines.
 5. Given to hospitality. *An elder must be a man who is willing to extend hospitality.*

To be hospitable means to serve and provide for others, sometimes at a moment's notice.
 6. Apt to teach. *An elder must be a man who is able to teach and is teachable.*

Yes, the man of God will know the Word sufficiently enough to teach it to others. This teaching is to be both private and public (see 1Tim. 5:17).
 7. Gentle. *An elder must be a man who is meek and mild-mannered.*

The characteristics of being meek, forbearing, and kind--mark the one who serves as an elder.
 8. Rules well his own house. *An elder must be a man who knows how to serve and to lead.*
 - a) Gene Getz says the following about this characteristic.
 - The quality of being 'one who manages his own household well' is probably the most significant mark of Christian maturity listed by Paul. It, above all others, reflects whether or not a man is above reproach, moral, temperate, prudent, respectable, etc. And it, more than any other single characteristic, demonstrates whether a man is mature enough to lead other Christians.
 - b) Paul is **not** speaking here about... how successful a man is in his business.
Paul is **not** speaking here about... how well a man can do church work.
Paul is **not** speaking here about... a man who has a perfect family.
 9. Good testimony from without. *An elder must be a man who is not criticized for ungodly behavior.*

To be under reproach means to suffer shame, embarrassment, and guilt.
 10. Self-controlled. *An elder must be one who is disciplined in lifestyle.*

Who or what controls his life? The mature man who serves as an elder will exhibit qualities that show him to be under control--under the control of Christ.
 11. Holy. *An elder must be a man who practices his holiness everyday.*

The word *devout* like *just*, refers to practical holiness. For the man of God to be a devout person, he must have an observable, practical holiness about him.
 12. Lover of good. *An elder must be a man who desires to do good.*

To "love what is good" means to desire to *do good*, not evil. There are a number of things that the NT classifies as *good*. It is that which is useful, salutary, pleasant, agreeable, excellent, upright, and honorable.
 13. Just. *An elder must be a man who is wise and discerning, making proper judgments.*
 - a) To be just means one who can make mature judgments. The just man of God has a mature viewpoint on life and its many variables and circumstances. He is a man of wisdom and understanding.
 - b) Just men, are men who are spiritually and psychologically mature, which enables them to make good, sound, scriptural judgments about life and people.

14. Having children that believe. *An elder must be a man who **has children who are Christians.***
Very simply put, the elder must be the father of children who have become Xians. The word belief in the Greek text also has the denotation of being obedient. Men who serve has elders are to have children who are Xians, and who are obedient to their father.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As the congregation is about to select additional elders and deacons, it is very important that we do so according to the Scriptures.
- B. Give this matter serious thought and prayerful consideration.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.