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Summary, Questions, Implementation

In this series we expounded many of the NT passages related to church leadership. Tonight we want to come back and try to answer some questions that may have been stirred up in your mind and that were definitely stirred up in mine as we went through the study. I needed some time to let these questions percolate and it was easier just to wait and address them at the end of the class rather than them interfering with the exposition.

Question 1: Isn't the Elder model merely descriptive of early church practice and not prescriptive for the church to follow? That is, it may have been what the early church followed, but where is it that we are commanded to follow it? It seems to me that the Bible is not decisive on the issue and therefore all forms of church government are legitimate and a local church should just do as they feel led by God.

Answer: Let's think about this all forms of church government are legitimate approach because it is true that many hold this position and there are many forms of church government that have developed throughout church history. First, let's think about these models. There are five basic models. One is the Hierarchical Model and it is exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope is at the top of the hierarchy, with cardinals beneath him and archbishops beneath them and bishops beneath them and priests beneath them and the congregation beneath them all in a great pyramid. Now, if we were to transfer this idea over to forms of national government what model would it be? A form of Totalitarianism. And what does Totalitarianism do to people? It crushes and oppresses them. So these forms of government have repercussions. You can't ignore that when considering which form of church government to follow.

Two is the Congregational Model exemplified in many independent Baptist churches among others. The congregation is invested with authority and they vote and the majority rules. They vote on who their pastor is and they will often have an administrative board that runs the affairs of the church. Transfer this idea over to forms of national government what model would it be? A Democracy. What happens in a democracy? Everyone does what is right in his own eyes and the final result is chaos, the church splits. Democracy has always resulted in unstable societies. So there are repercussions to this kind of government.

Three is the Pastoral Model where the pastor is the one in authority and a board of elders or deacons in the advisory role; many independent Bible churches and Baptist churches follow this model. Now come over to forms of national government and what model would it be closest too? A Dictatorship. You give all power to the Pastor and he rules. What does that do to people? It squelches them. The vision of one man is realized at the expense of everybody else. Some pastors want this model because it's easier, they don't have to mess with anyone else's opinion. They are the expert. So it's easier to get things done without having to jump through all the hoops. So you can understand why they want this model. Don't be naïve and think the model doesn't have repercussions.

Fourth is the Centralized Model where a group of elders have the authority and the pastor is hired by the elders and under the control of the elders, also a very common model found in many different places. Sort of a reversal of the pastoral model. Now transfer this idea over to national government and what do you have? You have an Oligarchy or Aristocracy. Either way all the power is invested in a few people. What are the results of this historically? Class warfare, a sharp separation between the leadership and the people. Now, it's my observation that this is how our church has functioned. You have the elders and they have the power and I am basically a hired gun of the elders and they protect me and tell me when I screw up. I'm not attacking it so much as observing that while we are structured after the elder model we've functioned more in the Centralized power model, imho. But the repercussions of this model are a sharp separation between the leadership and the people and that's what's created in our congregation's mind the so-called monster called the elder board, this multi-headed beast that is somehow evil. But

without elaborating my main point is that there are consequences to this form of government. Is God really unconcerned about that?

Fifth is the Elder Model where the authority is vested in a council of elders (including the “pastor”) who oversee all aspects of the church and delegate authority to the deacons who are nominated by the congregation, primarily in some Presbyterian circles but increasing in popularity. And in this model what’s the parallel when it comes to national government? A Republic. The Republic for which I stand. And what does a Republic do? It allocates authority to a small group of men who are appointed to office but it also gives the people a vote in electing some, not all, of their leadership.

So clearly each form of government does different things to people and therefore they are not all equally legitimate and it really does matter. And if it really does matter then doesn’t it seem to follow that God would give some clear direction on it?

Now what our founding fathers set up was a Republic, not a Democracy, you couldn’t even have an electoral college with a democracy, it would be a sheer tally, majority rule, the electoral college alone signifies we do not have a Democracy. And if we really understood biblical church government it would help us understand what a Republic is because our founding fathers started with the Biblical pattern of church government and carried it over to the nation. In other words, when they organized themselves to govern other men they started with the Bible. They asked, what does God think about humans governing over other humans? They knew that God had given civil government, that it was a divine institution. But how should they do it? How should men rule other men? And they reasoned that since God had also given us church government, then maybe we ought to consider the principles of church government when we go to set up our national government. And a Republic is what they came up with. But this design was based on the Bible. And that’s why, for example, they set up governmental offices like *Minister of Education*, *Minister of Finance*, *Minister of Defence*, *Minister of Agriculture* and so forth. Why do you think they called them ministers? Because they were ministers of God, they were ministers of mercy for good, they served the people. Where did they get that title from? They got it from Romans 13 and they defined the minister of Romans 13 as a politician who holds public office. That’s how our founding fathers thought about those who served in public

office, they were servants of the people. And we can be proud of that heritage. But a lot has changed and now our government is more of an oligarchy (rule by elite), a plutocracy (rule by the rich) and a corporatocracy (rule by corporations).

But in any case, if you think about the biblical form of church government first, that's your starting point, you come to certain conclusions you can see reflected in our early Constitutional Republic. For example, in the church there are a group of elders that serve everybody else. They are appointed by other elders and not elected by the congregation, they then serve for life. What in our Republic corresponds to the elder? The Supreme Court Justices. They are appointed by others in leadership and not elected by the people and once they are in office they serve for life. In the church we also have a group of deacons that serve the church on behalf of the elders, they are kind of a go between. And they are elected by the congregation, they get nominated by those who are part of the congregation of disciples, by you, so you have a vote and the men you elect are appointed to the office. What in our Republic corresponds to the deacons? The Congress. Our Senators and Representatives are elected by the citizens of the republic. And originally, by the way, it wasn't all citizens, it was the men only, and it was the same way in the church, only the mature men of the church, in good standing who could vote. But my point is to show you that originally the very fabric of our Republic was ordered the way it was ordered because the men who ordered it were reading this book. And they apparently came to the same conclusions I have come to so far as the biblical form of church government. And they took that idea and they transferred it to the national government. Now they had some other ideas too, this isn't an exhaustive analysis. But they had the wisdom to say, now, if we are going to rule over men we better consider first what God has said about men ruling over other men because He knows far more than any one of us and indeed more than all of us combined.

And I think that, so far as men ruling over other men, a Republic is the very best form of government you can possibly have. You have some in leadership who are appointed by existing leadership and you have others in leadership who are elected by the general populace, so they do have a say. Of all the possible forms of government, this side of the Millennium, a Republic is the least abrasive form of government, it is the greatest promoter of freedom, and it is the best.

So, does it really not matter what form of government we have in the church? Is it really true that the fact that so many different forms exist is an argument that they are equally good and legitimate? I think not.

But someone will say the Elder model is depicted in the Book of Acts and Acts is a transitional book, therefore the Elder model is not normative for the church age but a transitional form of church government. It's merely descriptive in the NT, not prescriptive. Herein lies a logical fallacy revealed by the *reductio ad absurdum* argument or the reduction to absurdity argument. In other words, let's say that is true and it ought to be a maxim, the book of Acts is transitional, therefore what is contained in the Book of Acts is not normative. If that is a maxim it must work in every case. So let's test it, let's take the doctrine of justification in the Book of Acts. If everything in the Book of Acts is transitional and thereby not normative for the church age then logically justification is not by faith but by works during the transitional period. That's called reducing an argument to absurdity. It shows that the argument has a flaw. And we know it's flawed because we know that the Jews on the day of Pentecost were justified by faith and the Ethiopian Eunuch was justified by faith and Paul was justified by faith and Cornelius and his household were justified by faith and everyone else in the Book of Acts was justified by faith and not works. In all truth, Acts is a transitional book, but that does not mean that everything in the book is thereby not normative. We've already given you one illustration, justification by faith, we could give you others. The point is we must be careful when stating that certain things are not normative because they occurred in the transitional period of Acts. For example, some expositors claim that preaching to the Jew first is a transitional truth and not normative for the church age, while others claim it is normative. Others hold that water baptism is a transitional truth and not normative for the church age, while others claim it is normative, and of course some claim that tongues are transitional and not normative for today, while others hold that they are. And I think by this you can see that there is much more to it than making broad, sweeping generalizations. After studying Acts and much of the Epistles I am inclined to state that each of these issues must be studied on its own merits with care. And in general I would agree with the principle that if other passages in Acts or the Epistles contradict it, then it is a transitional truth. But if other passages in Acts and the Epistles agree with it, then it is a normative truth.

But let us not make such sweeping statements about transitional truths that clearly result in reductions to absurdity.

Now in the case for the Elder Model it is not only illustrated consistently in the Book of Acts but it is laid down as doctrine to follow in the Epistles. In the book of Acts the Elder Model is formed at the apostle's direction, both in Jerusalem, Acts 11:30, and in the Diaspora, Acts 14:23. And in the Epistles Paul states it is doctrine to follow. For example, in Titus 1:5, Paul says to Titus, "I left you in Crete...to appoint elders in every city." Now are we really going to argue that only the churches on the island of Crete were to have elders? Or is the appointment of elders in all churches for all churches in all times implied? It should be obvious that they are for all churches in all times. But it should also be observed that if Paul left Titus to appoint elders in Crete that the churches on Crete did not have elders until Titus appointed them. So there was a period of time in which these churches did not have any leadership and as Paul points out, they were lazy, unruly gluttons. People need leadership. But nonetheless the observation could indicate that when a new church begins there may not be anyone qualified to be an elder. And if no one is qualified there may be a transition time for the new church to grow qualified elders. Growth takes time, the Holy Spirit has to work in people's lives, and as the men mature it should be obvious who the elders are, and at that time they should be appointed. And it may take months or even years to get a plurality of elders, which should be the aim. But if there is only one man qualified early on then there should be only one elder. You should never appoint a man to be an elder just to have a plurality. While that should be the aim, you should only appoint those qualified to be elders at the time and wait for the Holy Spirit to raise up others. So Titus 1:5 teaches that elder rule by appointment is a doctrine to follow and not just someone's fancy.

The second passage is 1 Tim 3 where Paul says, "If a man aspires to be an elder he must be..." and then gives a lengthy list of qualifications. Does this not imply that Paul intended local churches to have elders? It seems quite strange that Paul would spill so much ink on these qualifications if such men are not really necessary.

Third passage, 1 Tim 5:17, where Paul states that "The elders who rule well should be considered deserving of double honor, that is, those who work hard at speaking and teaching." Does that not imply that there are a plurality of

elders in the church and that among those men there may be a first among equals in the speaking and teaching role? It seems obvious to me.

Or is it not implied by the Greeting to the Philippians where he states, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.” If it’s not the aim for a local church to be ruled by a plurality of elders and deacons why did they have them at Philippi? Where did they get that model if Paul did not give it to them? It seems strange they would have happened upon the very model illustrated consistently through the Book of Acts. It seems much more likely that Paul told them the model and they followed it.

Now someone will say, yes, but they met in house churches and so they needed one elder in each house church, so there was a plurality of elders in the city of Philippi but there was only one elder per church, therefore this supports that the pastor is the only elder and the authority is vested in him, the Pastor Model. Really? While I agree that the early church met in homes and that there may have been one teaching elder per house church, all the house churches were really just subsets of one church and not independent churches. Part of the problem in the early church was house churches dividing from other house churches when Paul says they were all to be one (1 Cor 1:10-12) and if the city had a congregant who had a large enough home to accommodate all the believers on occasion they would all join in that home (Rom 16:23). So the situation then is not at all the situation we have today. They had only one church per city and a plurality of elders. And the house churches then are not equivalent to the different churches a city has today. The many churches in a city today disagree doctrinally and have drawn hard and fast lines. While it is true that we should all agree doctrinally, it seems very unlikely that we ever will in this life. So in the present situation where there are multiple churches in each city it would follow that each church is to have a plurality of elders and deacons.

But someone else will say that a plurality of elders is negated on the grounds that 1 Tim 3:1 says “If a man aspires to be an elder” relying on the singular form of elder rather than plural and pointing out that 1 Tim 3:8 says “Likewise deacons” plural and not singular. Such argument is to support the claim that there should be only one elder in a congregation and a board of deacons, along the lines of the Pastoral model which is a form of Dictatorship.

However, it is quite a flimsy basis to build a form of church government on the singular and plural forms in 1 Tim 3 when elsewhere at churches they are in the plural and the plural.

But someone will say Rev 2-3 supports a single Pastor over the congregation. There the argument is that the seven angels of the seven churches are seven pastors. And that these seven pastors travelled to the island of Patmos where John was exiled and he gave them the seven letters. In the letters singular pronouns and verbs are used throughout and further, how unlikely it would be for a letter to be written to an angel rather than a human pastor - so the argument goes. Now while we do not disagree that the Greek word "angel" does in some contexts refer to a human messenger, in the context of the Book of Revelation this is quite a stretch. The Book of Revelation uses the word "angel" more than any other book in the entire Bible, Old and New Testament, nearly 80 times, and upwards of 70 of those it is very clearly used of angels and not human beings. So then how do you justify taking 8 of those references to human beings? Besides the fact that Acts 20 presents the church of Ephesus as having a plurality of elders and not a single pastor, there is a very good argument that angels are angels in these letters. The argument goes like this: Christ has assigned an angel to each local church and they are responsible to minister to us. As Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" Why then is it hard to imagine that these letters are addressed to angels? The odds that these angels are human messengers is very sketchy to say the least. The bottom line is that there is no clear evidence that the Pastor model is the model of the NT Church, though I do think it could serve for a period of transition, but not as a permanent model. On the other hand there is very clear evidence that the Elder model is the norm and standard. Over and over in multiple passages it is directly taught, as in Tit 1:5 and Acts 14:23 or implied as in Acts 11:30; Acts 20:17-38; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17-25, et. al...

The other models have far less Scriptural support. The only Hierarchy in church government is Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd. The Congregational Model puts authority in the congregation which reverses everything; those who are to be lead become the leaders. The Centralized Model makes the pastor a hired gun. That way the pastor can do the visitation, the counseling, the evangelizing, the teaching, the organizing, the

praying, the marrying and the burying. And after all what, I ask, does everybody else do? But people in this model feel sure they have covered all of their bases, everything is getting done by the Pastor, we can sit back and do nothing, besides, we pay him to do it, it's his job. Now not only is it impossible for him to do all these things well, the NT teaches that he is to be paid only for working hard at preaching and teaching and that marrying and burying and visiting and counseling are not to be compensated for. Those are the responsibilities of all believer priests and cannot be fulfilled for you by the pastor. I find it so interesting that the quote "pastor" has taken on such an expanded role that people think that the only person in the church who can baptize someone else is the pastor. Yet where did you ever find that in the Bible? Or counseling? Why is it that the pastor does the counseling? Why can't any believer who knows this book formally counsel others? But especially evangelizing - why do the people feel that rather than evangelize one of their friends or acquaintances who might never darken the door of a church building they should bring them to the pastor, the pastor does that, that's his job, I don't know how to do it? These are not the pastor's duties; these are the responsibilities of all believers. But tradition has taken over and to the detriment of the church.

So it seems to me that the prescribed form of church government in the NT is the Elder Model and that this model is the backbone of the very Republic for which we stand. Elders are appointed for life by other elders and deacons are elected by you, so you get your say too. I think this model, functioning, will produce the greatest freedom and greatest ministry and love that should exist among us.

Question 2: If elders are to teach the congregation as a team, recognizing that one elder will probably serve as the first among equals, how do the other elders get trained so they can teach well? You will remember that one of the qualifications for elder is "apt to teach" and that this qualification distinguished them from a deacon. So how do other elders get trained to teach on a high, high level? This church has always struggled (I am told) in getting people to show up when Jerry, Fred or I am not teaching. So is there a way to remedy this problem?

Answer: Some will answer that Seminary is the place for men to get trained to teach well. However the Seminary as a separate institution from the Church and didn't begin until 500 years ago with the Roman Catholic

Jesuits. So how did men get trained before the Seminary? Answer: the Church was a Seminary.

Let me take you back to the beginning to show you the model that seemed to work fine until the 1500's. Once there was a man named Jesus. Jesus had a strategy to train men to teach the word of God. His strategy, when He entered the ministry at about 30 years of age, was to travel around and teach. As He taught He would observe who was attentive, who asked questions, who wanted to know. Then He would be walking along and He would say to one of these men, "Come, follow Me!" that was the call to be His disciples. The master teachers used to choose their students; and some would reject but others would accept and follow Him. They would enter into what we call discipleship. They would become a student of the master. Now discipleship was costly in the ancient world, instruction from someone like Plato or Aristotle was only affordable by the elite. And Jesus said, to be My disciple is costly too, he didn't mean in financial terms, but he meant so far as what you would have to give up in this life to be His disciple. He said you will have to give up everything if you want to truly be My disciple. And He warned his prospective students to count this cost ahead of time. Consider that you will have to hate your own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes, even your own life to be His disciple. It is very expensive. But He also said, that if you count the cost and you become My disciple and you finish My curriculum you will gain everything; some 30, some 60, some 100 fold. This is the method that changed the world. He chose just 12 men, He didn't need a congregation of 3,000. He only needed 12, only 11 finished the curriculum, 1 did not, and he went to destruction. Think of what this simple method has done. He needed only 11 well-trained men. He didn't need a rock band, He didn't need a tv, a radio or a microphone and He never even left the country. That's one of the stunning things when you go to Israel. You start touring the place and you find out, man alive, this is the dinkiest little place I've ever been. While you're looking at one site you turn around and you're looking at the next site. For crying out loud, when you land at the airport you're at a biblical site called Lydda, it was built right on it. It all happened within a tiny little geography. And all He needed was 11 men who would sit at His feet and be His disciples, finish His curriculum. He gave us the technique for multiplying the church. It was discipleship. One master teacher and students who would become master teachers who would teach other students. And if you think that is an overly simplistic method to

use today, tell me how is it that you are here today? Will there be people who bug out? Yes. But those who don't will change the world.

Then there came a man named Paul. Jesus came before the Church age, Paul came after. What was Paul's strategy as he traveled from city to city on missionary journeys? First to evangelize, second to train people in the word of God. Always, always, always this was Paul's strategy, he evangelized, he then took the new group of believers and he started training them, that's making disciples. And as he did this he watched men, just like Jesus had done, he watched to see who really wanted it and then he would pour into them. He'd find men like Timothy and Sosthenes and others. He took them and personally trained them on a very high level. Paul was the master, they were the students, but soon they would be masters too. When they became masters he appointed them as elders.

Now, when it comes to our church, whose job is it here at our church to train the elders? It's my job. I'll tell you a little joke. I don't often do this but there were two men walking through a cemetery who happened upon an epitaph that read, "Here lies a pastor and a theologian." One man looked at the other and said, "Why, would you look at that, two men are buried here." Now you've heard that I'm your pastor-teacher, but in past centuries, up until the early 1900's, about 100 years ago; they had what were called pastor-theologians. Every pastor was expected to be a theologian. The point is that too many people today assume that a pastor does one thing and a theologian does another; the pastor gives the people practical advice and he tells little sermonettes from the pulpit and he holds people's hands when life is tough because the people were a mile wide and an inch deep; the theologian on the other hand studies, he writes books and teaches some very heavy course material. Unfortunately that's the division the church makes today. But in the past there was such a thing as the pastor-theologian. It was the pastor-theologian's job to educate the flock in the depths of the word of God, in biblical theology, in systematic theology, in apologetics, in how to think about issues, so that when the people faced tough times they would be a mile deep and a mile wide. Today the pastor-theologian is virtually non-existent and when people happen upon one they say, why that man should be in the seminary, that kind of sermon is for the academy, why do I need all that. I need something simple, something that will help me today. The problem is friend, that what you need today is what you should have learned yesterday.

And you will only find yourself flitting around endlessly without the depths of doctrine in your soul. Doctrine is what gives you stability, it teaches you to think, and if a man is not taught it he will have nothing but his emotions to respond with, he will not be able to think and he will not be able to live and the pastor will run around putting fires out. The answer is that we need pastor-theologians, men who recognize that their Churches are Seminaries.

Now think of the benefits of this. If a pastor-theologian would follow the model laid down by Jesus and by Paul and train his elders to be strong teachers in the word of God, at least those who had the inclination to teach, think what could happen. Think what it would mean to have multiple men, each a spectacular expositor of God's word; think what it would mean if they could handle the Scriptures, they could exegete and they could communicate the word of God with power and authority. That's what you want to hear when you come into this church; you want to hear someone teach the word of God with excellence and with power and with authority. You don't want someone up here apologizing for what they believe and beating around the bush and saying, well, there's five views on this passage and I don't know which one is right so I'll just tell you the five views and you decide. For crying out loud, if the guy up here can't figure it out with 30 hours of study what makes you think the guy in the pew can figure it out? Besides, that's not how you present truth. Truth is not what you or I decide. Truth is in this book. So if you don't have the tools to study this book then well, you're going to be handicapped when you study it. So you want someone who knows the original languages and is able to get you as close to the text as possible and who teaches it with conviction and strength. Now, that's my job. It's my job as a first among equals in the teaching department to train men like that from within this body, as I am now doing. Then you will see that all it takes to get a powerful teacher of the word of God is one man who knows the word of God training another man in the word of God, who then trains another man in the word of God and so forth.

Now isn't that what Paul told Timothy to do? "Teach these things to other men who are able to teach others also." That's the method. It's a time proven method. But yeah, if I don't train men who are inclined to teach then other men here will not be the caliber of men you're interested in. So bear with me as it takes time to train men to be powerful expositors in the word. You don't just wake up one day and say I want to be a Bible teacher and step into the

pulpit and you're a great Bible teacher. It takes years and years of training to get to that point.

Now think of another thing this would mean. 8 years ago this church entered into a pastor search. I was told they looked through 77 resumes and over 40 of them were from Dallas Seminary. If that doesn't tell you something about Dallas now I don't know what will. I didn't even have my degree in theology and yet of all those I was the one that was closest to your theology. Who says God doesn't have a sense of humor? And who can convince me that it would not have been much easier to simply say we have a man right here, he knows the people, the people know him, he is thoroughly trained in Greek and Hebrew Exegesis, he knows Systematic Theology, he understands Apologetics and all the other disciplines, we need not look elsewhere, we have our man right here? We have grown him from within. Think of what this would mean so far as doctrinal continuity. Statistics say than an orthodox Church and Seminary on average stays orthodox for only 75 years. After that they go apostate. Think what this would mean so far as continuing in orthodoxy. If we grow our own men then that is much stronger than searching out there in the wild blue for some new Seminary graduate.

One thing I am afraid will be forced upon the Church is to stop depending on Seminary's to produce their pastors. I am afraid that with the apostasy that has set in in seminaries it is high time that Church's will have to produce their pastors if they want to duplicate themselves. And again, if you think that is nigh impossible let me remind you that Jesus only had 11 men, you could argue they were upwards of 70, but the point still remains, it doesn't take many, it takes a few good men. I would rather have a few good men, well trained in the word of God with God's grace, than a congregation of 15,000. Nothing is impossible with God.

So friend, it can be done, it has been done, numerous times in church history pastors have taught other men to be pastors and it will be done, by God's grace, in this assembly, that is how men get trained to be heavy hitting theologians.

I admit we have some things to implement to accomplish these goals but that these goals are given to us by this book and that we intend to Shepherd your

souls as this book demands, that you might be free in Christ, free indeed, and growing in wisdom and knowledge, worshipping in Spirit and truth.

Question: What advantages did early elders have over us?

Answer: No cultural gap, they understood the surrounding culture to whom the Bible was addressed. No linguistic gap, they knew Greek, they understood the Greek thought form that is inherent to the language, they didn't have to study the original languages and translate the meaning to non-Greek speakers. That alone can take a year or two to learn and several years to get comfortable with. No geographical gap, they knew the cities and place names, the topography, the bodies of water, things which often carry implications or connotations, e.g. can anything good come out of Nazareth? No customs gap, they knew common cultural customs readily and therefore did not have to research to discover what customs meant. No literary gap, they understood the biblical poetry and proverbs. As far as training is concerned they were much closer to these things than we are and therefore they had tremendous advantages over us. However, today we have so many resources available, we have more resources now than any period of church history. If you can imagine in the early 1500's Desiderius Erasmus, a humanist scholar, pieced together a Greek NT from only 7 manuscripts, they were so bad he had to back translate parts of Revelation from the Latin Vulgate to complete it. Now we have discovered over 5,600 Greek manuscripts and adding fragments the number increases to 25,000. So today there are a tremendous number of resources. The only problem with all the resources now is finding out which ones are good. To do this takes a lot of work because you have to know the worldview of the author or editors of the resources. Sometimes, for example with Kittel, everyone in evangelical circles used to use Kittel, but Kittle was liberal and the articles in Kittel are liberal, so you have to be careful when you use a resource.

Question: How trained should elders be?

Answer: Since there is the first among equals principle in 1 Tim 5:17 then let me use an analogy to describe how trained elders should be. Some will be first among equals, they'll get master level teaching, the languages, systematic theology, biblical theology, the whole nine yards. But others will not and I don't think it's necessary that they do. By way of example, should all software users be software writers? Why some people are very good at using the software but wouldn't have the first clue how to write it! And yet

those good at using the software can teach others how to use it. You don't have to be able to write the software to teach others how to use it. So I think it's the same thing with elders and theology. It's one thing to memorize someone's theology, a favorite teacher, a writer, I have memorized the theology of many men. It is another thing to develop your own theology from the text. I don't think every elder is going to be cut out for developing their own theology from the original texts.

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