

In the Lord's work, character is everything!

In the very pagan & wicked culture in Crete, the gospel has invaded & taken root! There are churches in various cities! But there's one *urgent need* -- godly elders!

When we come to talk about biblical church leadership, we must understand a few remarks about *eldership*:

1. it is essential (it's a vital, necessary work)
2. it is a plurality (never a 'one-man-show'; singular leader; but a team)
3. it is for men (church leaders, by God's design, must be men)
4. it is exemplary (they are to be followed, imitated)
5. it is noble (it's a God-blessed work)

It's important to recognize that God gives us more clear, specific, unambiguous directions about the *CHARACTER* of the man who is an elder more than any other aspect of eldership (including preaching, teaching, counseling, administrating, etc.).

The NT speaks of **Church Leadership** in many places:

- The specific qualifications for elders: 1 Tim 3:1-7 & 1 Pet 5:1-5 & Titus 1:5-9
- Other descriptions of godly leadership: Matt 20:24-28; Acts 20:20-28; Ex 18:18-23; 2 Tim 2:23-25

The structure of Titus 1:5-9

- I. The historical purpose of why he is writing (verse 5)
- II. Paul gives the summary charge to appoint elders who are above reproach (verse 6a)
- III. Then Paul spells out what that means both positively & negatively in a man's character (verses 6-9)

Titus 1:5 — *Some observations of the text:*

1. The need for godly leadership for church things to be in order
2. The appointing of church leaders by church leaders -- The biblical pattern is that godly leaders appoint other godly leaders.
3. The plurality of men serving as elders (=plural)
4. Those who serve as elders must be men (v.6a; the pronouns/verbals are *all* masculine in gender, vv.6-9)
5. The apostolic directive to ensure godly, biblical church leadership (v.5b - as I directed you)
6. The understanding that every church leader is a steward of God (v.7a)

THESIS — From titus 1:5-9 we will learn *God's BLUEPRINT for biblical church leadership.*

He must be *above reproach* (a man of God) in 3 primary realms:

1. domestic piety (in the home) (6) [in the home]
2. honorable character (7-8) [in the heart]
3. theological fidelity (9) [in the Word]

• **Defining “Above Reproach” (6a)**

This is the guy who is unaccused; he has untarnished reputation; unblemished reputation; has nothing in his life that someone could point to & accuse him. He has unimpeachable character.

A man of irreproachable integrity - Job 1.1; Ps 26:1, 11; Rev 14.5; Phil 2.15; Ps 101; Prov 2.7; 10.9; Ps 119:80.

I. DOMESTIC PIETY (in the home)

II. HONORABLE CHARACTER

III. THEOLOGICAL FIDELITY (9)

Some applications:

- ✓ Pray for your elders to maintain holy hearts & lives
- ✓ Honor the noble & God-given office of eldership
- ✓ Strive for these characteristics in your life [all believers]
- ✓ Submit to your elders with joy
- ✓ Strive to make their work a blessing and not a burden by receiving the Word & implementing the Word in your life.
- ✓ Encourage your shepherd elders specifically (and their wives and children)
- ✓ Exhort young men to strive for godliness & to consider eldership as a goal
- ✓ Observe other men who demonstrate godly character & humbly mention them to your elders for consideration.
- ✓ Praise & thank God for godly men that he has given to lead His church!

The overriding concern of the New Testament in relation to church leadership is to ensure that the right kind of men will serve as elders and deacons. The offices of God’s church are not honorary positions bestowed on individuals who have attended church faithfully or who are senior in years. Nor are these offices to be viewed as church-board positions to be filled with good friends, rich donors, or charismatic personalities. Nor are they positions that only graduate seminary students can fill. The church offices—both eldership and deaconship—are open to all men who meet the apostolic, biblical requirements. The New Testament unequivocally emphasizes this.

--Alexander Strauch