

**Title:** Pt. 2 – Biblically Qualified Elders

**Scripture:** Titus 1:9

**Series:** The Pastoral Epistles

## 1. Introduction:

- a. Last week we spent much time going over the moral qualifications necessary for a man to be called to the office of elder. Today we will study the required spiritual qualifications for this same office. In verse nine, Paul deals with the primary spiritual ministry of an elder, namely, that of being a faithful teacher. In the epistles to Timothy (which we have studied earlier), the apostle repeatedly emphasized the importance of elders carefully and consistently preaching, teaching, and guarding God's truth.
  - i. If you remember, we read in **1 Timothy 3:1-2** The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (2) Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
- b. Because preaching and teaching of scripture are spiritual gifts, bestowed sovereignly on servants of God through the Holy Spirit, and because pastors must be **able to teach**, it follows that every elder is gifted in this area and commissioned by the Holy Spirit.
  - i. A man can have the desire and the moral qualifications to be an elder yet not be called by God the Holy Spirit to this office. This type of individual

would lack the ability to teach the scriptures. In other words, he would not have the gift of teaching. This does not mean that this man is inferior, just not chosen for this particular office.

1. **Romans 12:6-8** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; (7) if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; (8) the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

c. Like today, the church in Crete found itself in dire spiritual trouble. The need for godly men who could serve as examples of maturity and teach the scriptures by God the Holy Spirit's power becomes evident as we read further into the epistle of Titus.

i. **Titus 1:10-11** For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. (11) They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

1. For this same reason, today, we need these same types of men. We are living in terribly dangerous spiritual times. There is a deep-rooted hostility towards Christ, his church, and the Gospel of grace. Sin seems to surround us at every corner. Today, then, more than ever, we need godly men

who will stand boldly and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ while always serving as examples of Christian maturity.

2. We need men who are able by means of sound teaching to incline both the will and heart of the Christian to joyful service to God and expose the errors of those who rebel; that is, to withstand the opponents of the Gospel.
  - a. Because men like these are desperately needed in every generation, the church should be fervently praying that God would raise them.

2. The First Spiritual Qualification: He must hold firm to the trustworthy Word

- a. **To Hold firm: Antechō:** means to strongly cling or adhere to something or someone. God's preachers and teachers are to cling to the **trustworthy Word** with sincere devotion and steadfast diligence.
  - i. The thought is of someone holding on to what is essential with all of his might and energy. Think of someone holding on to a life preserver in the middle of the ocean; in the middle of a raging storm.
  - ii. The minister must hold fast to the Word of God as his only means, his only supply. In clinging to God's Word in such a way, he leaves no room for any other authority. Furthermore, a pastor must continuously keep his hold on the Word of God by living according to its precepts and commands.

- iii. This clinging to the Word of God is an ongoing command. In other words, if a man is going to be qualified and continue to be qualified to serve in the office of an elder, he must never lose his grip on God's Word.
  - 1. God's Word must be lived out. It must be authoritative all the days of the minister's life.
- b. And what is meant by the **Word**? In the original language, the Word is **logos**. **Logos** refers to the expression of a concept, thought, or truth. It is frequently used, as it is here, of God's revealed truth and will (the Scriptures). In other places, it refers to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God.
  - i. Therefore, as a minister faithfully preaches and teaches the logos, the Word of God, he brings the congregation to a clearer understanding of Jesus Christ, the living **logos**.
- c. Because the Bible is the very **logos**, God's truth, it is **trustworthy** to the maximum degree. We must commit to the authority and sufficiency of God's Word as the only source of moral and spiritual truth that can guide our lives.
  - i. Failure in **holding fast to the trustworthy Word** is mainly responsible for the superficial, self-elevating preaching and teaching in many evangelical churches today. This failure, above all others, will continuously wreak havoc on the church.
    - 1. Our pulpits are no place for modern psychology, self-help, comedic relief, or any such nonsense.

The pulpit is reserved for the serious expounding of the **logos** of God.

2. The minister understands that the life of a Christian is found within the pages of the Holy writings. As we read in **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
  - a. The pastor's role in teaching and preaching the holy scriptures will equip and complete the believers to stand faithfully in this world and be welcomed into their eternal rest.

3. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word **as taught**,
  - a. This duty to scripture is in accord with what had been previously taught, which here refers to the content of divinely revealed doctrine.
    - i. Titus had been taught rightly. Titus had been immersed in sound doctrine. Therefore Titus must teach those things that the apostles had taught him.
    - ii. Beloved, our faith must be informed by the same doctrine that the holy apostles taught. We must seek to be as orthodox as possible when it comes to the teachings of scripture. A minister may not adopt a modern mindset but must be steeped in historic Christianity. The Church of God is significantly harmed when we abandon sound doctrine for the junk food teaching of today.

1. We're to avoid anyone or anything that would lead us astray from sound doctrine.

a. As we read in **Romans 16:17** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

4. The Second Spiritual Qualification: so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine

a. This last half of the verse supplies the purpose for **holding firm** to the apostolic doctrine. The first purpose revealed to us is to **give instruction** and pass on those things which God has delivered to us through his holy apostles in the written Word of God.

i. The thought here is of urging, imploring, and encouraging others. It means to call alongside to give strength and help. The minister calls his fellow brothers and sisters to walk alongside God through biblical teaching.

b. Here we must explain what it's meant by **sound doctrine**? **Sound** translate's *hugianō*, from which we get the English Word *hygienic*. It has the basic meaning of being healthy and wholesome, referring to that which protects and preserves life. In his preaching and teaching, it should be the pastor's sole objective to **instruct** his congregation in the **sound doctrine** that protects and preserves their spiritual health.

- i. For this reason, preaching and teaching must be expositional, setting forth as clearly, systematically, and thoroughly as possible the truth of God's Word and only those truths. The pastor must teach the whole counsel of God's Word.
  1. **Isaiah 28:9-10** "To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? (10) For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."
  2. A minister understands that contrary to popular opinion, the Bible is not a resource for truth but is the divinely revealed source of truth. He exposes his people to that divine source as much as possible.
- c. **Sound doctrine** encompasses all that God has revealed in the scriptures. We are to think of the Gospel as a fixed and unchangeable authoritative body of doctrine.
  - i. **Galatians 1:8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.
- d. The sense here is practical authoritative teaching that compels believers to implement the faith in all aspects of life.
  - i. **Titus 2:15** Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

5. The Second Spiritual Qualification: requires that a minister be able to **rebuke those who contradict it**.

- a. The next duty of the pastor who teaches faithfully is a negative duty. He is to encourage believers in sound doctrine, but he also rebukes **those who contradict it**. **Those who contradict (or resist) sound doctrine** are false believers (not simply unbelievers) who, in their spread of unworthy doctrine, actively **contradict** (“speak against”) God’s Word.
- b. The elder’s task is to **rebuke (to speak against)** these types of individuals. The Lord’s preachers and teachers speak out against unsound doctrine that goes under the guise of biblical truth. As you read through the New Testament, you find that this is why many of the epistles were written. The writers of the holy scriptures often wrote to rebuke (to speak against the false believers) who would pervert the straightway through the crookedness of their teachings.
  - i. Consider the example left to us by Jesus. He says in **Matthew 23:15** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.
- c. We must understand that it is not unloving to publicly rebuke those that would pervert the straightforward way of salvation. It is the highest form of love to do so. In openly rebuking such individuals, the pastor ensures that the true sheep of God are not misled and led astray.



- i. **Jude 1:4** For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

6. Benediction:

- a. **John 21:17** He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

**Public Reading of Scripture**  
**John 10:1-5**