

1 Timothy Chapter 5B

QUIZ: During his life on the earth, our Lord Jesus founded only ONE organization: What was it?

(Jesus walking with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi)

Matthew 16: 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

John MacArthur:

“The church was designed and chosen by the Father in eternity past, redeemed by the work of the Son on the cross, and begotten by the power of the Spirit. The church is the chosen channel through which God’s saving truth flows to the world.”

In order to effectively minister the glorious light of the Gospel and rescue men and women from the kingdom of darkness, the church needs to maintain the purity of God’s Word and function in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Why?

Because the church is the Body of Christ, the visible form of the Lord Jesus on the earth in our world.

MacArthur continues: “the church is a model of godly virtue in an ungodly world.”

- Peter summed it up this way:

1 Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

- Because we are keenly aware of our ongoing battle against remaining sin; you may not see yourself as a royal priesthood, a holy nation, BUT if you are born of God that is in fact who you are.
- Revelation 1:6 & 5:10 confirm that Christ has made all who believe a kingdom and priests to our God, and decreed that they will one day reign on the earth.

In order for the church to function in its God given role on this side of heaven, it requires a consistent supply of godly leadership.

- Maybe you work in the Human Resources Department of your company and you have been on the job for 10 - 15 years. You know how hard it is to find qualified individuals to lead the different departments of your company.
- The church has been in existence for more than 2000 years and the Lord is continually calling and equipping men to serve as leaders in every nation in every generation.

We have already discovered from our study in chapter 3 that God’s design for leadership in BOTH the Old and New Testament is a plurality of Elders.

Tragically throughout the O.T. the leadership of Israel, more often than not, failed their divine calling and the people fell into apostasy.

Sadly the history of the church is not much better than that of Israel.

- Greed and immorality among church leaders too often becomes front page news astounding even the unbelieving world.
- YOU may have attended a church where a pastor or elder has fallen. Those situations can be truly devastating to the members of the congregation.

How can a church care for its good leaders and how should they discipline the bad ones?

- Paul's instructions to Timothy provide sound practical advice for the church in every generation.
- Let's not be like those men who ignore the instructions (building things)

These instructions are important to ALL of US but, IF you are in elder training you should be taking some very good notes on this text.

Here in 1 Timothy 5 we find Paul's instructions for maintaining or restoring a strong eldership.

1. Honoring the hard working elders
2. Protecting the faithful elders
3. Rebuking the corrupt elders
4. Carefully selecting replacement elders

FIRST: Honoring the hard working elders:

The first principle in maintaining healthy biblical eldership (according to Paul) is to give proper honor to the elders who serve faithfully in the church.

1 Timothy 5:17 **Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.** 18 **For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."**

- When Paul speaks here of "HONOR" it appears that he has TWO things in mind.

FIRST - The word (TIME) can refer to respect or regard. (example)

1 Thessalonians 5: 12 **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.**

- Also used this way in Hebrews 13: 7

SECOND - The same word can also refer to financial support, (Mt 27:6, Acts 4:34, 1 Cor 6:20) Showing special honor to faithful elders through financial support. We might call this an honorarium.

- Even though Paul OFTEN refused financial support for himself, he was in favor of providing it in the churches. He wrote this to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 9: 7 **Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?** 8 **Do I say these**

things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

10 Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. 11 If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

While all elders are worthy of honor Paul singles out elders he says are worthy of: “DOUBLE HONOR.” Who are they?

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

- Rule Well - lead with excellence, they are faithful in providing sound leadership.
- Those who “labor” (*to work to the point of fatigue*) in preaching and teaching.

Paul supports his call to honor diligent elders by quoting from the Old and New Testament.

- 1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

Old Testament - Deuteronomy 25:4 You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,

- The O.T. Law provided that oxen who threshed the grain were entitled to eat a portion of the grain over which they were laboring.

N.T. - Luke 10 (When Jesus sent the 72 out to prepare the way for the Lord, he instructed them)

4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.

- Paul uses the words of Jesus to affirm the church’s responsibility for its elders.

SECOND: Protecting the faithful elders (from false accusations.)

1 Timothy 5: 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

- Ministry is a sacred trust and that trust rests upon the work of God in an elder’s life which produces a high level of integrity, purity and credibility.
- IF an elder is discredited in any of these crucial areas (integrity, purity, credibility) the whole church is affected, the ministry he is involved in suffers disgrace.

But the Biblical narrative shows that godly leaders are often attacked by unscrupulous liars.

- Joseph - Falsely accused and imprisoned by Potapher’s Wife.
- Nehemiah - Accused of having a personal agenda, grabbing a position of power (Sanbalet and Tobiah)
- Jesus - He ate with publicans and sinners, glutton and wine bibber.

How should the church handle it when an accusation is brought against an elder?

1 Timothy 5: 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

- The body of elders should NOT ADMIT - ENTERTAIN an accusation against an elder unless it comes on the evidence of 2 or 3 witnesses.
- This requirement does not put an elder in a privileged position, two or three witnesses were always necessary to bring a conviction in the Jewish legal system.

Deuteronomy 19: 15 “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

- Elders are never to be at the mercy of frivolous, evil accusers.
- Remember throughout the Bible an attack against someone in a position of authority was a very serious matter. (David refused to slay Saul - cave of Adullam)
- UNFORTUNATELY there are times when leaders fall.
- While elders are to be protected from FALSE accusations they are NOT to be protected from true ones.

3. Rebuking Corrupt Elders

1 Timothy 5: 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

Elders who continue in their sin must bear the consequences of their sin.

- When an accusation is made and confirmed it is thoroughly investigated by the body of elders.
- If the allegation is found to be true, the sinning elder is to be publically rebuked.
- While this is very difficult to do, when it is done correctly it preserves the integrity of the office and upholds a standard of holiness for the entire church.

Years ago, in a church I was attending, a pastor elder was found to be unfaithful by a number of witnesses.

- BUT instead of rebuking him publically his fellow elders allowed him to resign quietly.
- The church was not informed of his moral improprieties. This brought about a great deal of confusion and mistrust throughout the church.
- Instead of explaining the Biblical process and affirming a standard of holiness through honest and open communication the people in the church were never told the truth.
- When the truth is not communicated it opens the door to all kinds of confusion and deception.

One of the purposes of a public rebuke according to Paul is so that the rest may be fearful of sinning. “The rest” here refers to the rest of the elders.

Paul gives a STRONG exhortation to maintain these holy principles and refrain from showing partiality.

1 Timothy 5:21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

- You know as well as I that it is natural to show partiality to the people that you sincerely love. You cut them some slack,
- The correction and discipline of an elder in the church MUST NOT be tainted by any form of partiality or prejudice.

- The sinning elder should not be protected by the close friends he has made in the church NOR should he be railroaded by trumped up charges that reflect prejudicial judgment.
- He is to be judged and disciplined by the clear standards of scripture. If he is no longer the husband of one wife, if it is proven that he has become a drunkard, greedy for material gain, teaching false doctrine, he no longer meets the qualifications of an elder and must be publically disciplined.

LAST POINT: Carefully selecting replacement elders

1 Timothy 5:22 **Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.** 23 **(No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)** 24 **The sins of some men are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.** 25 **So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.**

The BEST way to prevent unqualified elders from serving in the ministry is to NOT lay hands upon anyone too quickly.

- The “**laying on of hands**” refers to the process of ordination, whereby the church in thoughtful and prayerful agreement publically recognizes the qualifications of a man for service as an elder.
- ONLY after a period of careful investigation is a man to take the office of elder.
- To lay hands on a man hastily is to forego a careful evaluation and take any warm body who is willing to serve.
- Paul warns Timothy that a hasty ordination makes those who are doing the laying on of hands partakers of the sins of those being appointed.

Paul adds a side note specifically for Timothy: He tells him to add a little wine to his diet for the sake of good health. WHY?

- Obviously Timothy was committed to strict abstinence from alcohol.
- In those days when they did not have good methods for water purification many people suffered from dysentery. A little wine added to the diet would solve that problem.

1 Timothy 5:24 **The sins of some men are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.** 25 **So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.**

- Judging men for the office of elder must not be done in haste, WHY?
- Because some people are much better at hiding their sin than others and some people in true humility cover their godly attributes so as to draw attention to God and not themselves.
- The process of preparing good elders takes time.

CLOSING:

- It is the church’s responsibility to honor and protect faithful elders.
- It is the church’s responsibility to rebuke those who are in sin.
- Above all the church should prayerfully and carefully support the process of ordaining godly men to positions of leadership.

If we do these 4 things, We work in agreement with the Lord Jesus as he builds his church and the gates of hell will not prevail over it.