

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Intro: Here we have Paul's instructions regarding the qualifications of bishops/elders/pastors.

Why is this passage important?

--First, because God may call some of you to be pastors!

--Second, so you know what is biblically expected of pastors here at CCPhilly, and also how/why someone becomes a pastor in a Calvary Chapel.

--Third, to recognize how much rot has infected the Church at large due to the willful neglect of these qualifications by religious leaders and congregants. In many churches, there is literally no attempt to hold elders to this biblically demanded test. *Churches pick elders by popular congregational vote, in bi-yearly rotations, by seminary degree, job applications, etc.*

--When it comes to the church office of elder, many people don't even know who their elders are, haven't seen them at all, don't know what they do, and certainly have never been discipled by them! It is all so unbiblical!

Verse 1:

--***This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.***

--***If a man.*** . . the masculine nature of this office is evident in this passage. Paul says ***a man***, the adjectives in the Greek are all masculine, and Paul is clearly assuming husbands who are the head of households.

--***the position of a bishop.*** . . or what we would call in our modern day—a pastor or elder.

--The three Greek terms used for this position in Scripture are:

1) *presbyteros*: elder, which was of a Jewish origin and described the seniority and dignity of age. **(Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5)**

2) *episkopos*: bishops/overseers, which was of Greek origin and described the oversight and management of supervisors. **(Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1+2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25)**

3) *poimen*: pastor/shepherd, describes the caring and feeding work of shepherds. **(Mt. 9:36; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 5:1-2)**

--The descriptive nature of these words is evident because the Scriptures use them interchangeably in numerous passages **(Titus 1:5+7; 1 Peter 5:2)**.

--In fact, all three are used of the same group of men in this singular passage:

****Acts 20:17+28: From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders (presbyteros) of the church. . . Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos), to shepherd (poimaino) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.****

--Each word emphasizes a part of the pastoral calling. It is unbiblical to separate the various works. A pastor or elder must be an example, a faithful steward, and a feeding/caring shepherd. Differences in the magnitude of these various gifts are allowable in a pastor. The absence of one of them altogether is not.

--**he desires a good work.** But isn't the pastoral work a calling? The desire to be a pastor is part of God's calling, as are the spiritual gifts and necessary Christian graces. *This was not a glamorous calling then, and if lived rightly, still isn't in America!*

--Though the pastoral work may not be glamorous, it is good! It is a noble work for men to take the spiritual lead in their homes and in the house of God, as He has designed them to.

--We need more faithful men! May God send us shepherds with His heart!

Jeremiah 3:15: And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

--Shepherding the church of God, as an undershepherd of God, is a noble work.

Matthew 9:36: But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

1 Peter 5:2: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly. . .

Verse 2:

--**A bishop then must be. . .** These are *musts*—not just good ideas. God demands a certain type of man to shepherd His sheep. If the man does not meet these qualifications. He is not from God. *The emphasis is godly character and spiritual life!*

--**blameless:** Which means *above reproach*. This term really seems to be a summary of all the rest that is said. It is the first qualification for pastors listed here and in Titus.

--Perfection is not required, but there shouldn't be anything in a pastor's life which, if it came out, would be a reproach and a breach of trust.

Proverbs 6:32-33: Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away.

--A pastor is called to be an example of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. The public nature of the office requires trust. A pastor must be able to refer to his own life as an example, as we see so often in the life of Paul: **(Acts 20:17-35; 1 Cor. 4:14-17; 2 Thess. 3:6-9).**

1 Corinthians 11:1: Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Philippians 3:17: Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6: as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord. . .

--Hidden or blatant sin will bring reproach and shatter the trust public example requires.

--**the husband of one wife:** can be literally translated: *a one woman man*. There should be no reproach in the faithfulness God requires in marriage. All unbiblical sexuality, such as polygamy, concubines, temple prostitutes, homosexuality, slaves, pornography, adultery, etc.

--A pastor should be above reproach in his marriage. To be given to one woman also means no excessive personal sharing with single women, inappropriate counseling, sexual joking, or foolish emotional connections to another man's wife. *We cannot only draw the line at physical sexual interaction.*

--**temperate**: literally means: *unmixed with wine*. In context, it relates more to sobriety of mind, as the issue of wine is dealt with later. The term describes a man who is stable and self-controlled.

--A pastor cannot be rash, emotional, or mentally unstable. *Mental health issues are rising among American pastors. Any pastor with a mental health issue needs to step down and receive ministry instead of give it.*

--**sober-minded**: Describes prudence and good judgment. We might say *Level-headed*.

--Pastors are dealing with eternal life and eternal reward. They cannot be more goofy, foolish, immature, or trite than they are **sober-minded**. There should be a soberness to their life and ministry because it holds the weight of heaven and hell in all they do.

--**of good behavior**: Describes someone respectable. It is being well-ordered—inwardly and outwardly. A pastor shouldn't be out-of-order in personal spiritual life or caught in bad situations in public life. *Sadly, it is common to hear stories about pastors' bad behavior caught on recordings, social media, or TV!*

--**hospitable**: Hospitality was an important Christian virtue in Paul's day as believers were often persecuted, poor, and didn't have the resources we do (**Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9**).

--Pastors must like people! People from our congregation should be able to witness to our hospitality! If not, something is wrong.

--Hospitality should be more than having people over. Pastors should also be approachable. They should be hospitable *people*—in their personal homes and in public interaction.

--**able to teach**: This is the only part of the list that relates to a pastor's gifts or official duties. The necessary ability to teach the Word of God is notably absent from the qualifications of deacons but always present with elders (**Titus 1:9**).

--Pastors must be *willing and able* to teach. Again, there can be different measures of a teaching gift (**Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 Pet. 4:10-11**), but the gift cannot be absent. You cannot be a pastor if you are unable to teach normal people the Bible, or if you confuse people!

--Teaching also goes beyond the pulpit on Sunday mornings. A pastor must be able to refute false teachers and heretical teaching, admonish, warn, correct, rebuke, and instruct both personally and publicly.

2 Timothy 2:24-25: And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

--All pastors must be able and willing to humbly teach those in opposition to the truth of God because they love them, and want them to find freedom in the truth.

Verse 3:

--**not given to wine:** is literally: *not one who lingers beside wine*. Paul is describing lines that come *before* drunkenness. Apparently, Timothy tried to stay far away from wine, as Paul had to encourage him to stop drinking only water and drink some wine medicinally in **5:23**.

--We know the Bible warns priests (**Lev. 10:8-11**); kings (**Prov. 31:4**); magistrates (**Isa. 5:22-23**); and prophets (**Isa. 28:7**) about the dangers of wine. The effects of wine and the circumstances surrounding wine are too compromising for a pastor who wants to remain blameless.

--Pastors should not be dependent on alcohol, linger in alcoholic environments, participate in alcoholic parties, or become promoters of alcohol.

--**not violent:** Is literally: *no striker*. Pastors are regularly in the middle of intense situations. No pastor should be quick to throw punches! *Think of the religious leaders with Jesus, Paul before salvation, false teachers, etc.*

--**not greedy for money:** The love of money is always seen as a serious defect in Christian character (**6:10**). In the life of a pastor, it is a disqualifying trait. There are two main ways a minister can be spotted as greedy.

--First, they are extortioners. Extortioners are wolves in sheep's clothing, knowingly seeking to leverage their position to fleece the flock. Paul labels the false teachers in Ephesus as those **who suppose that godliness is a means of gain (6:5)**.

--Any pastor who preaches the Christian faith as a means of acquiring personal wealth is biblically disqualified from being an elder. If this simple qualification were taken seriously, it would disqualify the entire health and wealth/word-faith movement. *Can you imagine how foreign so much of our modern, greedy preaching would be to the apostles?!*

--Second, they are hirelings. A hireling is only in the ministry for "the hire." A paycheck is the ultimate goal. When tough times come, or personal sacrifice is required, the hireling leaves.

--The hireling also waters down the Word of God because he is afraid to offend those he depends on for his daily bread. All his shepherding decisions are monetarily motivated. Any pastor whose shepherding is decided primarily by fiscal considerations is a hireling.

--From the Pharisees (**Mk. 12:40; Lk. 16:14**); to Judas (**Jn. 12:6**); to the false teachers in the early church who were just in it for the money (**2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11**), Satan has always commissioned his servants to extort God's people.

--Pastors must serve for more than the money (**Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2**). A greedy pastor is no longer blameless.

--**gentle:** Is a hard word to describe, but an easy trait to see. Gentleness is an amalgamation of virtues such as patience, kindness, meekness, love, etc. A pastor who regularly deals with sin, handles babes in Christ, and general spiritual immaturity must not be impatient and harsh.

--This is not the pseudo-gentleness that neglects the duty of shepherding, but the true gentleness of Christ in shepherding. Gentleness is required *because* of what we have to do. Biblical gentleness is not in conflict with correction or rebuke. *Think Jesus and Paul!*

2 Corinthians 10:1: Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

--***not quarrelsome***: Not causing contention or “stirring the pot”. A pastor should always seek to edify, bring peace, and have things done decently and in order.

--Many pastors have disqualified themselves simply because they are combative, bullies, hard-headed, and impossible to work with.

Verses 4-5:

--A man’s home circle is a much smaller field of influence than the church—made up of numerous homes. If a man cannot properly take care of his own house, he cannot do so for the church of God. *Sadly, many are made elders without anyone asking their wife and kids about their qualifications in the home!*

--In most normal cases, a godly father is going to have his home in order. Even troubled kids will be dealt with in a fair and godly manner. Older prodigals who leave the covering of the home should not be held against the pastoral candidate. Even the best Father has prodigals (**Lk. 15**).

--If a pastor’s homelife is not blameless, he needs to step back and get his home in order. Once that is accomplished, ministry will become a healthy ingredient in the life of the home again.

Verse 6:

--***not a novice***. . . is literally: *not newly planted*. Pastoral ministry requires pastoral character, and there are no shortcuts to true Christian character! The testing Paul refers to in **3:10** is evident here. Pastoral character grows most evidently in congregational life.

--There is no easy way to become a pastor. Especially here at CCPhilly! The way to become a Calvary Chapel pastor is to live pastorally: personally, in the home circle, and in the congregation. We only ordain pastors who are already living in the congregation as pastors. Their pastoral gift should be evident *before* their ordination. *Theological knowledge and training are a lifetime pursuit that won’t be an issue for any man who is temperate, sober-minded, and of good behavior.*

--***lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil***. Pride will eat up a man whose spiritual roots are not deep enough to endure the upward growth. As pride took down the devil (**Isa. 14:12-15**), so it will take down the novice.

Verse 7:

--***Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil***.

--I think this was particularly important because most pastors then, and through history, have been bi-vocational. Even those who are blessed to be supported full-time are constantly interacting with the unsaved world.

--Pastors should never be "Sunday Christians". A segmented life is a trap laid by the devil. Jesus wasn't more holy in the synagogue or temple than in the home or carpenter's shop. In like manner, a pastor should live set apart in the church building and outside of it.

--Otherwise, he brings a reproach on the name of Jesus Christ, and loses his blameless character.