

The Qualifications of an Elder

by Aaron Hurst

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having godly elders in the church, who are blameless, husbands of one wife, and have faithful children, and who are not self-willed and not soon angry.

Duration: 1:11:30

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 10:27, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:5, Titus 1:7-9, 1 Peter 5:2-3

Topics: "Elder"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of a man's ability to teach and shepherd, which is reflected in his family. He discusses the qualities of an elder, including ruling his own house well and having his children in subjection. The sermon also mentions the role of a wife in supporting her husband's ministry, highlighting the qualities of being grave, not slanderous, sober, and faithful. Additionally, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of an elder being vigilant, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, and being apt to teach. The sermon warns against promoting young converts too quickly, as they may become prideful.

Transcript

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How I thank the Lord this morning for his word to us, for his faithfulness. He is the chief shepherd. And I'm glad that we can follow him.

And that his sheep, they know his voice. A stranger will they not follow, but they'll follow the true shepherd. I thank God for his word to us already this morning.

Thank you, Brother Emmanuel, for sharing, preaching the word of God. As we look at the Lord continuing to build his church, as Emmanuel has shared already, we are seeking God that he may add to the ministry here, those with an office of ministry and a charge. But yet we're all ministers, are we not? We're all servants of the Most High God and ministers of that grace.

I'd like to look into the scriptures this morning of the qualifications of a godly elder. And as we go through this message, I feel like it would be good for us to read a few scriptures here together. And then we will look at the different points that God has given to us from his word.

Let's begin in 1 Timothy chapter 3. 1 Timothy chapter 3. I believe as we look at the qualifications in scripture, as Emmanuel already so clearly laid out, the elder is a deacon, he's a servant. And the word elder, the word bishop, the word deacon, I believe that they can be interchanged without doing violence to the scripture, but rather that the qualifications for an elder, the qualifications for a bishop, and the qualifications for a deacon are all applicable to the elder ordination that we are looking at here before the Lord. So let's look in 1 Timothy, I'm sorry, yes, 1 Timothy chapter 3, and let us read beginning in verse 1. This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given too much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, and let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own house as well.

We'll stop reading there, and let's go over to 2nd Timothy. Let's turn with me to 2nd Timothy 2, and we'll read a few verses here, beginning in verse 24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Now turn also with me to Titus, Titus chapter 1, beginning in verse 1. Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and according to the truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour. To Titus, mine own son, after the common faith, grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly.

For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine

both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Let's pray. Father, we worship you, Lord.

We thank you, Lord, for the holy word of God. We thank you, Lord, for the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, our Teacher. Father, today we just thank you that we don't need to preach ourselves.

Try to figure this thing out, Lord. But, God, we can go to the word. And we can receive instruction, direction for this congregation.

Father, this morning we just do ask in Jesus' name, Lord, that you would just anoint your word to our hearts. We pray, Father, that you would quicken us, Lord, by your Spirit. We pray, Father, that you would make known unto us your will.

Lord, as we look and preach the word of God, the qualifications, Lord, of a godly elder, Lord, we know we have not arrived. We sense our great need, Lord. I sense my need, Lord.

Oh, God, make me a godly elder like that. And, Lord, I pray this morning, here as the word of God is preached, that you would just bear witness in our hearts, Lord, your will as we seek your face for two elders from amongst this congregation, Lord. Father, we are trusting you, God, that your will shall be done.

Amen. Thank you for each one here this morning, Lord. Bless everyone that is here and those that are listening in the phone, those that are sick among us, Lord, those that are wounded and hurting.

Bless them, God, for your healing balm upon their hearts and their souls and their bodies. We ask all these blessings in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we read these verses, we saw that there are some duplications, some of the same qualifications are listed in different places, so we will not be turning back and forth, but now we will go down through and we will just look at the different ones that are laid out to us. But first of all, I would like to have it be established in each of our hearts, as we look in Titus 1 verse 5, he says, For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. You know, God is a God of order.

You know, sometimes we hear people say, well, we don't need structure, we don't need elders, we'll just let the Holy Ghost lead us and we will just follow the Lord that way. But you know, God in His wisdom appointed it and left it clearly instructed that there should be elders, there should be bishops and deacons ordained to an office of sitting at the gate and overseeing and giving direction and counsel and shepherding the flock of God. You know, often the people who say those words, we'll just let the Holy Ghost have His way in the church, usually it ends up that the person who is saying that is the one who is in charge and is giving the direction.

You ever notice that? You know, they say, we'll just let the Holy Ghost do it, but it doesn't come out right, many times. And I don't want to stand here in criticism. God is able to take us where we're at, He's able to show us the way and God bless little congregations or fellowships that are struggling along and they don't have elders and they're looking to God and saying, the Holy Ghost will help us, amen, He'll help you.

But if you have an anti-wrong spirit about elders and God's proper authority in the church, it's going to come out different. So let it be understood, this is the commandment of the Lord, that there should be order. He says that thou should set in order the things that are wanting or the things that were lacking or the things that were not in place as they ought to be.

Let there be some elders ordained. But before you go ahead and just ordain an elder, let me give you some help and direction on those that should be appointed and ordained as elders. He says here in verse 6, if any be blameless.

And in verse 7 he says, for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God. Because he's a steward of God, he must be blameless. And when we look at that word blameless, we think maybe not one who is perfect in every aspect or has arrived, but rather one whom against a charge of unfaithfulness or dishonesty or any moral issue, it cannot stick because his testimony is blameless.

Do you understand what we're saying? One who is blameless, one who is upright, that if any charge be brought against him, he is so irreproachable of his character for truth and honesty and chastity and general uprightness that he's a man of integrity and the charge against the man doesn't fit. It's a little bit like I heard a charge once against a person, and it was not someone from our congregation, but I heard a charge against a person. And you know, as you know the man, and you know his message, when I heard that charge, immediately it was not believable.

You know why? Because the man's integrity, the man's testimony. A bishop must be blameless in that he is sound in doctrine. He is clear in his walk with the Lord.

He has a good testimony. When we look at that blameless, in 1 Timothy 3.7 it says, he must have a good report of them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. So, I believe as we look at blameless, this qualification found over in 1 Timothy 3.7 says he must have a good report of them that are without.

I think of in the Gentile world, in the unbelieving world around us, in those that you and I do business with, in those that you and I associate with in the world, those without, you know it's sometimes too easy for people to put on a Sunday face, and a Sunday activity and atmosphere and try to appear righteous before men in the congregation of God. But what about throughout the week? You know a man who has a testimony that is clear with his unbelieving neighbor, with his unbelieving employer, with his banker, with his landlord, with his extended relatives. Oh, now he may have some false charges brought against him because he sold out for God, but there's no charges of false or a lack of integrity and of truth and honesty and uprightness.

He must be blameless, having a good report of them that are without. What is his testimony in the community? We could say. An elder must be blameless as the steward of God.

His testimony in the community, there's a good report. And then in Titus he goes on to tell us, the husband of one wife. Now that verse right there has been, I believe, much debated, prayed over and thought as to what this means.

Well, I believe one thing, we do not want to read into it that an elder or a bishop or a deacon must be a married man. I think that might be taking it a little too far. However, I believe there are things that God teaches the man who has a wife and a family as we see further on.

So while it may be advantageous or it may be an advantage in some ways for the man who is an elder to be married and to have a wife and a family, I couldn't take it so far as to say, he cannot be an elder, he's not qualified if he's not married. Nonetheless, thus sayeth the scripture, I do not want to argue with God, with the scriptures. But we do know that Paul, he was an apostle.

And it's clear that he was not married as we understand the scriptures. However, there's been many differences of opinion as to what this means. Does it mean that he should not take another wife if his wife dies and departs? Should he not marry again? I believe that question has been raised.

Could he not take a second wife? If his first wife dies? Well, I don't believe it means that either as we study the scriptures because it says in different other places that there is that freedom to take a wife if the first wife dies. Some have said, well, it might be speaking to polygamy. Because when these letters were written to the church, there may have still been some polygamy around from the old covenant.

And therefore, there would have perhaps been believing polygamists in the church. So in order for God to set a clear picture of going back to as it was from the beginning, in the beginning God created male and female, and that they twain shall be one flesh, husband and a wife joined together. And so God is wanting to paint and point a very clear picture so anyone in office of a deacon or a bishop may not have more than one wife.

That has been understood by some. Certainly this morning, I do not believe, I believe this text right here refutes the error of the Roman Catholic Church saying that the priest must live in celibacy and not have a wife. Because very clearly it states here that an elder should be a husband of one wife.

Nothing is ever shared that in order for the priesthood you cannot be a married man. So let that be clear in our minds and let us see the error and the corruption that has bred in those religious systems where they forbid to marry. It's false doctrine, Timothy tells us.

Forbidding to marry is false doctrine. Because marriage is honorable in all. Doesn't say not for the ministers, but it's honorable in all.

And it's holy, and it's pure, and the bed is undefiled. You know, I believe we could say, as we look and summarize, it's a husband of one wife. You know, it's a husband of one wife.

He in his heart is a one woman man. And he's a husband of one wife. And he loves his wife as Christ loved the church.

And we could preach a whole message on that. He's a husband of one wife. And he is the husband.

Brother Emmanuel, he's the house band. I heard one of the brothers share one time, I believe at a couples night. He's there at the gate, and he's watching over his house.

And he is the husband of one wife. And then as we go on here in Titus, it says also, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. Having faithful children, and back in Timothy we read, in 1 Timothy 3.4, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? So it's one who has faithful children. It is one whose family is being led and nurtured in the ways of God. Certainly one should not be given an office of elder, and sitting at the gate of the house of God, whose own children are unruly and accused of riot, and are not in subjection to their father.

He that cannot rule his own house, cannot rule the church of God. According to 1 Timothy 3.5. So a man's ability to teach, to nurture, to shepherd is seen in his family, is it not? How he relates, how he communicates of the gospel is seen in his family. So as we are looking this morning, and we are

discerning the will of God, an elder must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

And as we look further, we will go over to 1 Timothy 3.11, but don't turn there, we are just taking these as they sort of flow together. So the man's testimony of his marriage, of his family, and now here in 1 Timothy 3.11, it speaks a bit to the wife, and we want to do that here this morning as well. It says there, even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

You know, as we seek the Lord, and as we look for an elder, we must also consider his wife. Because they too are one. They are joined together in one.

And they are a spiritual unit together. Their prayers and their effectual working in the ministry of God is affected. So that we cannot just disregard the wife of the elder.

I believe we have seen evidence of that at times, where maybe a man was gifted and qualified for the work of the ministry, but his wife disqualified him. So this morning, as we just look briefly at this point, their wives, they must be grave, meaning serious minded. A serious woman.

Not a silly woman. Not one who is just flirtatious or light-hearted, but serious. One who is worthy of respect because of her holy life, her holy conversation.

Not a slanderer. And when we think of slandering, we think of tail-bearing, gossiping, back-biting. No, not slanderers, but rather sober, meaning self-controlled.

One who is tempered in all things. One who doesn't need to give in to the temptation to get on the telephone and share the latest news from the minister's meeting. No, a faithful wife who her husband can confide in her and they are heirs together of the grace of life and she will protect and bless and pray and stand beside her husband as he is given that charge and that responsibility and the labors that come upon the elders.

She supports him in those times when he needs to leave, when they were just ready to have good family time together. You know, or just time to rest. You know, whatever the case may be, as brother Emmanuel shared.

But she is a wife who stands behind him. And she is faithful. She is trustworthy in all things.

Her husband can confide in her because she is faithful. She is serious. She is a woman of God.

She is not a tail-bearer. She is not a gossip. She is faithful.

Going on here in Titus, now he uses the word bishop here in verse 7. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God. We already covered that. Now he says, not self-willed.

And very simply, when I think of not self-willed, one within whom the cross of Christ has driven a death blow to the self-life. Amen? And it works itself out in so many ways. But he is not determined to have his own way.

Not self-willed. You know, there is a plurality of ministry. There is a plurality of elders.

And these differing gifts are brought together. And every gift and every joint and every part supplies a need in that plurality of eldership. And so we elders, as we seek the Lord and we work through decisions and directives for the congregation, if an elder is really self-willed, that is not going to come out very well, is it? But rather his will must be surrendered to the Lord and seeking for God's will and for the best and the benefit of the congregation and recognizing that I don't have it all together.

We need each other. And together there is a beautiful completion of the things that would be wanting if I were your only elder. You know what I mean? And so therefore there needs to be that cross experience of death to self and aliveness in Christ Jesus where not my will but thy will, O Lord, for this congregation.

And together we are able to look at things from different points of view and find the wisdom of God and the directive of God for this congregation. Not self-willed. Not my own way, Lord, but thine.

Not soon angry. One who has each thought, each motive beneath his control. Not soon angry.

Not one who would even allow the spirit of anger to lodge in his heart and rest there. Oh, we're wiser then to let an outburst come out, but not angry. You know, sometimes you've heard the statement already or testimony, you know, the person is angry inside.

There's a deep seething anger. But for the most part it is all kept hidden. You don't see it.

But when something happens to irritate him or rub him the wrong way, we might say, anger may come out. No, one who is not soon angry. Not one who is irritable and who is apt to be inflamed on an opposition.

But one who has command over his own temper, governed and led by the Spirit of God. Let's move on and look at another one. And this one comes out of 2 Timothy 2.24. And again, we don't need to turn there.

We read those verses. And the servant of the Lord must not strive. He must not strive.

He is not to be one, according to Strong's on the word strive, to quarrel or to dispute. You know, some people just love a good argument, they say. They love to dispute about matters.

Well, Strong's first definition says, to war. You know, they have that warring spirit. They are not satisfied unless they can have a good heated argument and win the argument.

Striving to words. No, he must not be one who strives, quarrels or disputes or fights. That's Strong's definition.

A servant of the Lord must not strive. 1 Timothy 3.3, going right along with some of these, I sort of tried to put them together in how they flow. Not a brawler.

And that fits very well. It comes alongside of strive and just says it a little differently. Not a brawler.

He's not one that's contentious. Do you ever meet a person like that? They're just contentious. Always a different viewpoint.

Always a different angle. Yes, but contentious. Instead of a quiet, peaceable, intreatable heart.

Not a brawler. Not one who is contentious. But rather, looking at the next point, 2 Timothy 2.24, one who is patient.

Patient. Patiently enduring of ill. One who is forbearing.

One who suffers long. Has long patience. You know, the farmer goes out and he plants that seed and he has long patience for the harvest.

And that's how it is in the work of the ministry. That's how it is in the labor of the Lord. Oh, we love it when we meet that soul.

And we can share the gospel with them, Brother Emmanuel, and they get converted that night. But a shepherd also deals with real issues and real problems in people's lives. That may take a long time.

And he has long patience. He doesn't demand perfection immediately. And say, unless you measure up, you're out the door.

But he has patience. He has long patience. And continues to believe and have faith in God.

And God can change this person's life. God can take care of those long-standing problems, my brother, my sister. And he continues to believe God.

He's patient. If he's ill-spoken of, he forbears. If he's misunderstood, he forgives.

He just has patience. Which goes right along with the next point we want to look at is to be gentle unto all men. Gentle.

You know, there's times that the elder sitting at the gate, he needs to use his rod. But there's also times he needs to be very gentle. And use that staff, Brother, as you shared.

And just minister grace. And hold out hope. Gentle.

Oh, that I can be more gentle. That people can know it's safe to go to the shepherd. He's not just waiting with his rod.

And saying, you fell again. What ails you? But no, rather, he's gentle, he's patient, and he has a message of hope. Not to leave them down there in their failure, no.

But to show them the way out. That word gentle has the meaning in strong's of mild or kind. He's full of kindness.

The next one we want to look at is meekness. It says in 2 Timothy 2.25, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. He must have a quality of meekness.

Which is humility. It's grace. It's the power of God.

Yet under the grace and gentleness and mildness of Christ to share it. Not to use their power to injure or hurt. Paul said, shall I come with a rod? Or shall I come in meekness? You know? Which would I rather have? Which would you rather have? In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. You know, there's a time for meekness. There's a time for a meek, humble approach.

He must be filled with humility. When you go to show the error of his way to another. Galatians 6. Go in meekness.

Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Go in meekness. Realizing that I am what I am by the grace of God.

I'm no better, but for the grace of God, therefore I. And we go in meekness. It says here that this meekness of instructing those that oppose themselves. Peradventure, God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

So that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. Who are taken captive by him at his will. Lord, grant us elders, holy elders, full of meekness.

In Titus 1.8 it says that he must be temperate. In Titus 1.7, continuing there, it says that he's not to be given to wine. And when I look at that this morning.

I don't believe we have any wine drinkers among us. Alcoholic beverage drinkers. But I may be mistaken.

There may be. But I don't believe it's a great number if there's any. Rather what I see this teaching us this morning is.

Not given to wine. Another place it says not given too much wine. And so I believe rather what this is teaching us in our day today.

Is that there is a temperance in the carnal appetites. It's hard for someone to take just a little bit of wine. For a long period of their life and not become at some point a drunkard.

It tends to be progressive. And it gets a hold of them. And they are no longer walking in temperance and self-control.

And having all things under the control of the Holy Spirit. But rather now they're brought under. And they're brought in bondage to that alcohol.

Well we might say, oh Aaron move on. We don't have any problems there. But rather I'd like to just say this morning.

It shows me of a temperate lifestyle. Having the carnal appetites under the control of the Holy Spirit. Whether it be wine.

Whether it be food. Whether it be pleasures. Whatever it be that our carnal appetites of this carnal man.

Are under the control of the Holy Ghost. And we're mortifying the deeds of the body. All of those old things.

So that we might live under God. Temperance. He must be temperate.

It says in Titus 1.8. Temperate. And I just wanted to put those two together there a bit. He's not given the wine.

He's temperate. He's temperate in all of his lifestyle. Titus 1.7. Says no striker.

And as I look that up. It's just simply. Strong's definition says.

Not a smiter. And we wouldn't smite someone with a hand or the fist. But what about smiting someone with words.

Or with just simply writing them off. You know. No striker.

Not a smiter. I also remember another brother preaching on that verse saying. No striker.

Not a quitter. But as I looked it up in its context. And of the Strong's definition.

I didn't find about not being a quitter. But what I found there was that he's not a smiter. He doesn't smite.

He will not smite with wickedness. With the fist of wickedness. Or with words.

Or attitudes. We want to now look at some other things here. That are real practical to.

The elder. The godly elder. His money.

And his things. Titus 1.7. Not given. To filthy lucre.

1 Timothy 3 says. Not greedy. Of filthy lucre.

And when we think of filthy lucre. We think of money. We think of possessions.

Materialism. Also in 1 Timothy tells us. Not covetous.

Are you sure this belongs here in qualifications for an elder? Yes it does. Because if a man is faithful. In the unrighteous mammon.

God will commit to that man the true riches. But a man who's not faithful. In the unrighteous mammon.

In the filthy lucre. I don't think should be entrusted. To be a watchman at the gate of the house of God.

Not greedy of filthy lucre. Not given to filthy lucre. Not covetous.

You know greed. Is I want more. It's never enough.

Having food and raiment. Let us therewith be content. You know but greed says.

I want more. I want more. More money.

A larger account. More possessions. More things.

Covetous. Always looking. Covetous.

Envyng the things other people have. Being envious. Being jealous.

What is your life? Is your life wrapped up in God? Or is it wrapped up in money? His money and his things. The elder must not be given to filthy lucre. He must not be greedy of filthy lucre.

And he must not be covetous. We'll sort of turn on to the positive side here now. Titus 1.8 But a lover of hospitality.

A lover of hospitality. 1 Timothy 3.2 says given to hospitality. Titus 1.8 says a lover of good men.

What is this person's love? What is he given to? Does he love people? He must be a lover of good men. He must be a lover of hospitality. Loving to reach out to strangers.

Loving to minister to souls in need. Hospitality. Giving to those who have need.

He must be given to hospitality. You know, some people are sort of loners. They'd rather be alone.

I don't believe that flows too well with the eldership. There may be some prophets and some preachers of God who are hid away somewhere alone and they bring messages from God to our hearts. But they wouldn't make a very good elder because they're not hospitable.

They always want to be hid away by themselves. And that's a gift that God has given to the church. That's a good gift.

But for an elder, he must be a lover of hospitality. He must love to have people around. He must love to minister to people.

He doesn't mind having his house filled with people from time to time. You know, he's given to hospitality. And we could say to his wife, she must be one who loves to be hospitable as well.

Isn't that right? Oh honey, we're having some company for supper tonight. And it's about five of five. But you know, those things do happen.

Don't they, brother Emmanuel? Somebody maybe just drops in. You know, his personal walk and behavior says that he must be of good behavior, 1 Timothy 3.2. Good behavior. His life is full of the goodness of God.

His behavior is becoming as godliness. In Titus 1.8, he is sober. He is just.

He is holy. And he is temperate. And I don't just want to go over those real fast, but I see our time is moving rapidly here.

But he's a sober man. He's a righteous, upright man. He has a serious outlook on life.

Life is not just fun and games. He's sober. And he's just.

He's upright. He's just in all of his dealings. And his actions.

And he's a holy man. He's holy. He loves to dwell in that secret place with God.

Communing with God. Beholding the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being changed from one glory to another.

Dwelling there with God. His walk is holy. His talk is holy.

His life is holy. A holy life. And we've heard many messages on that here.

But his life is holy. Another one we find in 1 Timothy 3.2 is that he's vigilant. Vigilant.

I think of that word as one who is like that watchman, brother Emmanuel. He's vigilant. He is circumspect.

And he is on the lookout. He is vigilantly watching the state and the health of his flock. Another one found in 1 Timothy 3.9. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

This elder has a pure conscience. He keeps his heart clear before the Lord. And he keeps his heart clear with his fellow men, with his brothers, with his fellow elders and deacons.

And his conscience is pure. He has a pure conscience. He's a holy man.

He's pure in heart. Blessed are the pure in heart. Looking a bit at his gifts and talents, 1 Timothy 3.2, he's apt to teach.

He is apt to teach. He is an apt teacher. He is able to take the truths of God and break them down and present them that they can be grasped and understood.

He's a teacher. He's apt to teach. He loves to teach.

He's apt to teach. 1 Timothy 3.6, he's not a novice. Not a novice.

He's not newly planted. It's the definition of that word. He's not just a young convert.

But he is one who is mature in the faith. He is one who has walked with God through the thick and the thin, we might say, through the good days and the bad days. He's weathered some storms and his faith is rooted and grounded in Christ and he's solid.

Not a novice. Not just a young convert. You know, there's many mistakes made here.

Taking a young convert whose testimony is so glorious and putting him up front and having him share. And I'm afraid some have been ruined that way. Because it says, then they'd be lifted up in pride.

Because look at how God is using me. And they fall into the condemnation of the devil. But as we look for the office of an elder, and if we look for an elder among us, not a newly planted one.

Not a young convert. But one who is seasoned and well grounded in the word of the Lord. Not one who is new to the congregation.

May I say that? But one who is one in heart with us. Knows the vision and direction and calling of God for this congregation. It's ministries, it's focus, you know, and it's outreaches.

Titus 1.9 One who is faithful in persevering, holding fast the faithful word as yet been taught. He's faithful in the word of God. He's sounding doctrine, you know.

He's rooted. He holds fast the faithful word. And he's able to exhort through the preaching of the word of God.

He's able to convince the gainsayers by the word of God. Because he's faithful and loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have pledged my allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and His word and His gospel and His doctrine.

And he holds fast to that faithful word and he's able to exhort. He's able to admonish. He's able to convince the gainsayers.

If we move on over to Titus 2.1 He says, But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. He's sounding doctrine. He loves the Lord God with all of his heart.

And he loves people. He's upright. He's true.

He has a good testimony. Within, here in the congregation and without. He's blameless.

He's the husband of one wife. He's faithful in his marriage relationship. He has faithful children.

He rules well his own house. His wife, the blessings of His holy life trickle down to her also. Yes, she also seeks the Lord herself.

But she's a serious woman. She's grave. She's sober.

Self-controlled. He's a gentle man. He's meek.

He's patient. He's not a brawler. He doesn't strive.

He doesn't get involved in quarrels and fights. He doesn't come to argue. Yes, he'll come to prove the Scriptures.

But if it just turns into an argument, he'll rather just pray for you, not win the argument. He's not soon angry. He's not self-willed.

He's not given to wine. He has his carnal appetites under control. He's not a lover of money.

But he's a lover of hospitality. He's a lover of good men. He's sober.

He's just. He's holy. He's vigilant.

He's a teacher. He's a shepherd. He's involved in the congregation now already.

Has been for a long time. You can tell he just loves people. He's reaching out to help people.

He's not self-willed. You can call him most any time. And they're available to help and bless.

We are looking to God to ordain two more elders, godly elders like that. Amen? Let's kneel together in prayer. O God, hear our hearts cry, Lord.

The work is increasing. And we thank You for it, Lord. And it's the house of God.

And it's the church of God. The purchased possession of Jesus Christ's own blood. And Lord, here we are.

We are in need, Lord. It seems the time is right that we should look out from among us holy men full of the Holy Ghost who can lead and shepherd and oversee the flock of God here at Charity Christian Fellowship. O Lord, would You give us holy elders? And Father, make us who are elders holy like that.

But we just heard this morning Father, we look to You. We acknowledge our need of You, Lord. This is Your church.

We are trusting You, Lord, to make it clear as we hear the voice of the congregation after a season of prayer and fasting to meet Wednesday night to hear the voice of God speak through the body of Christ here as to whom shall be ordained. Lord, we trust You for these things. Thank You.

Thank You, Lord, for the Word of God that gives us wisdom and direction and such clear teaching and understanding. We praise You and thank You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Well, it is a high standard, isn't it? Would that the church of God would be filled with men like this. You know, you might be here today and be a young man or you may just think yourself to be a nobody. But God needs men that have these qualities even if they're not called to an official position of an elder.

It's God's will that each one of us as a brother in the church would desire to be a man like this, to have these qualities that Brother Aaron shared about in our lives ever increasing. But you know, it's only by the grace of God that we can have them. As we come before Him as yielded vessels willing to be broken, willing to be changed, to be filled by God's Spirit, He will do it.

So, thank you, brothers, for laboring in the Word. And also, thank you for laboring and being examples. We appreciate that.

That has been a great inspiration and help in my own life to see brothers, elders, living out a godly testimony before me, how they lead their family, how they lead in the church, in the brotherhood. I appreciate that very much. We'll open it up now.

If you have something you'd like to share, add to the message, thoughts you might have, just raise your hands. We'll get a microphone to you. Keep your hands up, then the microphone's going.

Here's one. If there are others, raise your hand. We've been attending Charity Christian Fellowship for almost two years, not quite.

We'll not be voting for the elders as we're not members yet. But I do want to say with all my heart thank you to the elders that are here because long before we came to be a part of the congregation, my son Seth and I visited and we had the privilege to kind of scout things out to see if it would be a safe place for my family and I to come. And not only a safe place, but a prosperous place.

And we got to meet with the elders, get to know them personally. And there's only so much you can accomplish in two weeks, but I was able to come home and say to my wife that, you know, I can see Christ in them. And just as important, I can see Christ in their home.

And with that little bit of faith, we moved across the country to become a part of this congregation. But after two years, I can honestly say that there's been something far better than a honeymoon of two weeks, if you will. There's been a two-year relationship that's steadily grown.

And I just thank God that I realize more and more that we have elders who practice what they, and we have the privilege of their wives and their children who by grace are radiating the fruits of their ministries. And I guard that jealously. Though I can't vote, I can pray.

And I can also say with confidence that I have two, at least two other men and their families in mind that I am praying for and thankful for and lifting up to the Lord as elders to support our current ministry. And it's just a privilege to stand this morning and say that. I can't tell you, not only our elders, but our deacons,

how thankful I and my family are to be a part of a congregation where we not only feel safe, but we feel we have found a place where we can prosper spiritually.

I can't express it enough this morning. Thank you. Another hand back here.

A couple of brief thoughts. I don't know how much it was elaborated on during the message, but I see a qualification in an elder is when there's a discussion going on. And I've seen this many times in brothers' meetings and I'm so blessed.

And maybe the elders did not communicate fully or something was maybe misunderstood by a brother. And I've seen time and time again the elders take the low road. They humble themselves.

They apologize and they say, I'm sorry I didn't clearly share with you everything. Or maybe I didn't explain it in the right words. Or whatever the case may be, it's just a humbleness that I see an elder has and how important that is to walk in that humility and bow in their hearts.

It just has blessed me time and time again. And it basically puts it right back on the brother who has the question or has the problem. And it puts it right back in their court to how do they want to deal with the situation.

So I'm blessed to see that. I think that's an important quality. And the second thing is we ourselves have been here now for almost two years and we are members and we'll be voting.

And how serious of a responsibility it is as a brotherhood, those who will be taking up that decision to seek the face of God. And we have been praying for the last while yet and will continue to do so. And what a privilege.

What a privilege it is to partake in that. And I just want to encourage us to be really serious minded as we enter into this time. There's a hand over here on the sister's side.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to bless our ministers. I've really appreciated what they've meant to us in the last year and a half. And if I had to choose one word to describe them, it would be shepherds.

That's not primarily what I wanted to share this morning. We had a very exciting time with our daughter this weekend. I'd like to let her share a little bit.

On Friday, I went to my parents and I told them that I wanted to be a Christian. And they prayed and talked with me and I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. And I can truly say there has just been such a sweet spirit and bond between us since that day.

I just marvel at the simplicity of the gospel and yet the miracle of the new birth. Someone else? I want to thank the Lord also for being a part of the opportunity to be a part of this congregation and the teaching that we received this morning. I would encourage us to take this teaching to heart in two ways.

And it's already been mentioned, but the one, that this is an opportunity for both of us to look at these qualifications and this is my goal and your goal for your Christian life. And the other also, of course, we have voting on Wednesday night. And I also want to encourage each one of us to be prayerfully minded for Wednesday night and come with the will of God settled in our hearts for each one of us.

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