

# (1 Timothy) the Qualifications of a Pastor

by Brian Brodersen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of character and qualifications for an overseer, highlighting the need for a blameless man, a husband of one wife, and a man of good behavior.*

**Duration:** 1:00:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:26, 1 Timothy 3:1

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Pastoral Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the qualities and characteristics of an overseer or pastor in the ministry. He emphasizes the importance of being gentle, peaceable, and not quarrelsome, as the pastor will inevitably encounter disagreements and conflicts. The speaker also highlights the need for an overseer to be moderate, temperate, and not addicted to wine, as these traits are inconsistent with being an orderly and balanced leader. Additionally, the sermon touches on the historical development of the role of bishops in the church, tracing it back to the fourth century and the emergence of a single bishop in charge of multiple churches.

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## Transcript

We come this evening to the third chapter of First Timothy and just a quick reminder, Paul is writing to Timothy and basically giving him instruction on how the church is to look, what the church is to be like, and Timothy is implementing the things that Paul is writing to him. And so these are known as the pastoral epistles, as we've made mention before, in as much as they they give instruction basically to church leaders about issues and things that pertain to the subject of leadership. And so when we come to this third chapter, we come actually to the chapter that deals specifically with those who lead the ministry and what their qualifications are to be and what they are referred to and what their duties are and so forth.

And so we pick up in chapter three, verse one, where Paul says, this is a faithful saying, if a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. The word bishop for me conjures up images in my mind of long flowing robes, ornate headgear, the bishop's mitre, the pastoral staff, and a big ring for the loyal subjects of the church to kiss. It was in the fourth century that the single bishop in charge of a group of churches actually emerged the fourth century, some 300 years after the apostolic period.

Now, that led ultimately. To there being bishops among bishops, and thus we have archbishops and we have metropolitans and we have patriarchs, and ultimately there is the bishop of all bishops, the pope, the biblical picture of church leadership is much, much simpler than that. The word translated bishop.

Should be translated into English as overseer, because that's really the meaning, the simple meaning of the word. The Greek word is Episcopos. And these are two words making up the one word and the two words together literally mean to have an eye upon to watch over or, as we translated it, to oversee.

That's the meaning of the term. So Paul is speaking here of those who are the overseers of the church, and he's going to go on and he's going to talk about their qualifications. He's talking basically about the pastors.

The pastor of the church. Three terms that are synonymous that. We need to consider for a moment, are the terms overseer, pastor and elder.

All those terms are synonyms. They all speak basically of the same person or the same position within the church and within the church. There are these two primary offices that Paul is going to talk about here in the third chapter, that of pastors and deacons.

And then, of course, you have other areas of ministry that are mentioned in the scriptures, particularly in Ephesians four. We have the reference to the apostles, the prophets, the evangelist and all of these different roles and positions all work together. But over the local church situation, over the local congregations, you had the overseers and then you had the deacons and the overseers.

They were the ones that were responsible primarily for the spiritual well-being of the church. That was their primary task to take care of people's spiritual needs. The deacons, which we'll look at in depth in our next study, the deacons were there to give assistance to those who were giving spiritual oversight, but they were to assist them to a large degree by helping out in the practical aspects of the ministry.

They were to sort of take the load off of the spiritual overseers so they might be able to tend to their business. And it's in the sixth chapter of the book of Acts that we see these different positions begin to emerge. There was that situation there where there was a dispute between the Jews of the Hellenistic culture and the Jews of the Hebraic culture and the ones from the Hellenistic culture, they felt like they were being slighted in the distribution of the different foods and things.

And so they came and they were wanting the apostles to do something about it. And Peter spoke up and he said, you know, it's not right for us to leave the word of God and to wait on tables. So choose from among yourselves seven men.

Full of the Holy Spirit, of good reputation and so forth, and put them in that position and we will continually give ourselves to the ministry of the word and prayer. So really there, Peter sort of summarizes the distinction between the two, the overseers, the pastors, the elders are the ones who are to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. And the deacons or the or the servants, they're there to undergird and to help out in the practical aspects of ministry.

And so we'll look more specifically, as I said, at the role of the deacons in the future. But let's talk specifically tonight about the position of the overseer. Now, the first thing that Paul says is that.

If a man desires the position, he desires a good work. So it's a great desire, and I know that some of you here tonight, you have that desire, you desire to minister to God's people, you you desire perhaps ultimately to be the overseer of a fellowship. That is a great desire and you're commended for that.

Now, Paul gives us here a list of qualifications. And. It's quite unfortunate that the list has not been followed more closely historically.

If the list of qualifications had been enforced more thoroughly in church history, we wouldn't have nearly the blunders that we have, you know, passed down to us through. The mistakes that have been made, but so often they've been made simply because the qualifications were disregarded and the wrong people got into the position of being the overseers. So Paul lays down a pretty strict guideline here, and we want to look at each one of these qualifications that he lays out here.

And so let's read. First of all, just read on through verse seven, then we'll come back and look at each qualification specifically. And so he says in verse two, an overseer.

I'm just going to drop the word bishop because I don't think it's a it's a good word. As a matter of fact, it it was retained, I think, primarily because the King James version of the Bible was really put together by the bishops of the Church of England. And the whole position came into being, as I mentioned, in the fourth century.

So there were many, many, many centuries of this, you know, idea of a bishop being something more than the New Testament declared it him to be. And and yet it sort of stuck. But yet again, the the word is more properly translated overseer.

So an overseer then must be blameless. The husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous. One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.

For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God? Not a novice, less being puffed up with pride, he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. And so the first thing Paul says regarding the overseer is that he is to be blameless, blameless, faultless, above reproach, a man who is noted for integrity through and through.

That's the first qualification, a man against whom no criticism can be made. Affording nothing of which an adversary can take hold. No criticism now, of course, anybody can level any sort of criticism at somebody, but the idea is that there would be nothing to support it in the man, that there would be nothing to it, nothing that somebody could get a hold of and say, this guy's unfit for the job because of this.

And we know that that this occurred. And here's the evidence right here. So a man who's blameless, a man who is above reproach, and secondly, he says that.

The overseer is to be the husband of one wife. Now, the question has been asked. What does Paul mean by the husband of one wife, is he speaking in regard to polygamy? That the pastors were not to have several wives and some have actually thought that that's what Paul was speaking of.

But I highly doubt that because a polygamy was never a part of the church's experience. It was never a period in the history of the church where anyone practiced that. And although back in the Old Testament period, there were certain men who had more than one wife by the time that the New Testament was written, that practice was largely discarded even among the Jews.

So I think we can safely conclude that when Paul says the husband of one wife, he's actually stating that the overseer is not to be a man who is divorced and remarried. Not to be a man divorced and remarried. Just like today, divorce was rampant in the Roman world.

You know, the. It's amazing when you kind of go back and do a bit of a historical survey and look more specifically at the world that the apostles went into. It really bears a lot of similarity to the world that we're living in today.

It's amazing the parallels that we see. And so regarding the whole issue of divorce, it was just something that was as common among the Romans at that period as it is among people today. To give you just a few examples, some of the key historical figures in the Roman period were married numerous times, just like some of the key historical figures in our current period of time have been married several times.

Ovid and Pliny, they were both married three times. Caesar, as well as Antony, were married four times. Pompeii was married five times.

Herod, I think he won the award. He was married nine times. Nero, he was the fifth husband of his wife, Statilia.

Yeah. So, you know, sounds like Hollywood, doesn't it? I mean, you know, you look at a lot of these people and you find that they're on their fifth, sixth, seventh marriage. And of course, they want to tell us how we ought to live, but they haven't figured it out themselves.

But Paul says that the the overseer is to be the husband of one wife. Divorce is something that. Has been. Tolerated in the church in a way that it never, ever should have been. And it should not be allowed to go on being tolerated the way it is tolerated so often. The scriptures are very clear on the subject, so what Paul is basically saying is Christian men who divorce their wives without biblical justification cannot hold the position of pastor.

Now, let me just state this for clarification, we're talking strictly in the context of Christians, we're not talking about what happened in your life before you knew Christ. Whether it's you or anybody else for that matter, there are men in ministry today who are blessed and used powerfully by God. And yet in their past life, they might have been married two or three or four times, but they were lost.

They were in sin. And that was just one of the aspects of their sinful lifestyle. And yet when they came to Christ, as the Bible reminds us.

If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, old things have passed away, behold, everything becomes new. So they've got a new life, a new start, and God's blessed them in that. But we're talking specifically about those who are Christians.

And so, again, let me repeat Christian men who divorce their wives without biblical justification cannot hold the position of pastor. Pastors who divorce their wives without biblical justification are to be removed from their position and forbidden reentry. Now, this is where the.

The discipline in the church has really broken down so many times because there are, unfortunately, I hate to say it, but it's a fact there are many in ministry today who did do that very thing. As pastors, they left their wives, divorced them, married, sometimes their secretary, sometimes the worship leader,

sometimes a Sunday school teacher, some other woman within the church, and then have carried on in the ministry without any consequence or discipline. This is tragic.

This is pathetic. And and this, of course, is one of the reasons why the church is weak in these days. But Paul is very clear about this.

The overseer is to be the husband of one wife. And then he goes on and he says that the overseer is to be temperate. Temperate, another way to translate the word is moderate or balanced.

It's speaking of a person who's not given to extremes. A person who does not overindulge themselves. And then he says sober minded.

Another way to translate that word is prudent or discreet or chaste or self-controlled. The idea is a person who is in entire command over the passions and the desires. So a person who's sober minded, a person who's got their spiritual act together, that's really what the apostle is describing here, he then goes on and he says that he is to be a man of good behavior.

A man whose life is ordered well, the man whose life is beautiful and in whose character all things are harmoniously integrated. That's the way one person defined the particular word that's used here. And then the overseer is to be hospitable.

In the early days of the church. There were things that were written, just like, you know, we write books and things today commenting on the scriptures and so forth. They had things like that back in the early days.

And one such piece of literature was known as excuse me, was known as the Shepherd of Hermas. And in this piece of literature, it spoke directly to the overseer in regard to this whole issue of hospitality. And this is what it said.

This is what it said. The overseer is to be a man who at all times welcomes into his house the servants of God. When we talk through Titus, we talked about this whole thing of hospitality.

And, you know, we we pointed out that basically another way to look at it, a simpler way to look at it really is just that the the overseer is to be a people person, a person who likes people, a person who cares about people, a person who is anxious to help people and welcome people and things of that nature. It is sort of an irony, but it is a reality that there are people who sometimes end up in ministry who just flat do not care for other people. They don't like them.

They don't like to be around them. And you've heard before, you know, perhaps the sort of tongue in cheek thing that people will say that the ministry would be great if it weren't for the people. Some people genuinely feel that way about it.

And that's, you know, really a sad thing. There have been some interesting characters in in church history who have made it. Excuse me, my goodness, who have made, you know, some interesting contributions on one hand, but yet on another hand, they were very, very unsociable and not really likable people.

A.W. Tozer, you might have heard that name. He has made a great contribution in many ways to the church through the books that he wrote. But he was one of the most cantankerous and unsociable guys that anybody ever met.

He just was a person who didn't really care to be with people. He said he'd like to he preferred to spend his time with God. Now, I would agree that spending your time with God is probably better than spending your time with people.

But I would think that if you spent a whole lot of time with God, it would probably do something regarding your attitude toward people, because God certainly loves people. So, you know, if you spend a whole lot of time with him, it seems like that would rub off on you. But, you know, there have been these interesting characters in in the history of the church.

But but the overseer is to be a hospitable person in as much as they are to have just a benevolent attitude toward people. And then he goes on and he says, able to teach. Able to teach, and this is obviously self-explanatory, but I want you to notice.

And again, I think I might have pointed this out when we were going through Titus, but I do find it interesting that this is the seventh thing in the list of qualifications rather than the first or the second or the third. And the reason I bring that up is because I think there have been many times when a mistake has been made rushing to put somebody into the ministry because they are good communicators. They don't stand up in front of people and cough and stammer and stutter and do things like I'm doing tonight.

I know, but you know, there are those people who are, you know, they're just good at speaking. Now, teaching is an interesting thing, there is definitely a gift of teaching, a supernatural gift, a gift of the Holy Spirit. But, you know, you obviously don't have to be gifted by the Holy Spirit to teach.

We have schools, classrooms, universities and all kinds of different arenas where people teach. And some people do a very good job at teaching. I personally think it's possible to even teach the Bible in a fairly decent manner without necessarily being gifted by God to do it.

If you have a sharp mind and a good vocabulary and the ability to study and learn things and you have a gift to communicate, well, you can get up and even teach the Bible. You know, I don't know if you remember this or not, but a few weeks back in the presidential debates, Senator John Kerry, he gave a little Bible study and, you know, it wasn't bad. And I would imagine he probably could have gone on a bit further.

He gave a little exhortation from James. He shared a verse from Matthew. And, you know, he probably he's an articulate guy.

He's obviously intelligent to some degree. And so, you know, I said he's intelligent. Thursday night, I was teaching the men's study and we were talking about the distinction between wisdom and knowledge.

And there's a world of difference. There's some really smart people out there, but they don't have any wisdom. And so even though they're smart on paper, they're stupid in life.

And that's what you see with some politicians, actually. But anyway, so the thing is, we have to be careful because, you know, you can get a person who's charismatic and a person who is articulate and all of these things and you want to usher them right up front because, boy, this guy can speak. But Paul, he says, of course, the overseer must be able to teach, but but that's not Paul's primary concern.

Paul's first concern is that he's a man of character, that he's a godly man. That he has a right relationship with God, then able to teach, of course, that that's that's an important part. But it must be that gift must be

used from the foundation of a life of integrity, a life of righteousness.

And so. The overseer is to be able to teach, because that, of course, is one of the primary tasks of the overseer. The primary responsibility of the pastor, as I mentioned earlier, is spiritual.

But let me just sort of define that a little bit, break it down a bit. The pastor has basically a threefold responsibility. The responsibility of the pastor is to, number one, feed God's people the word of God.

That's the primary responsibility of the pastor, to give the word of God to people, to teach them collectively like we're doing tonight, but to teach them also on an individual level as the opportunity arises and as the situation calls for. So that's the first responsibility. The second, because the word pastor, as you might know, means to shepherd.

The second responsibility of the pastor is to tend the flock of God. And to tend the flock of God means to personally care for them, to pray for them, to counsel them, to encourage them and to bless them on a personal level, on sort of a one to one sort of a basis. Pastoral ministry is not simply about getting up in a pulpit and speaking to large groups of people.

It is about getting behind a pulpit or however else you go about teaching the word, it's certainly about that, as I said, but it's also about getting involved with people on a personal level and tending to them as a shepherd would tend to the sheep. And then thirdly. The pastor is to lead the people.

The pastor is to be in tune with the Lord and know what God is desiring for a particular fellowship and then be able to lead people in the direction individually and collectively the direction that God would have them to go. And so the pastor is to be one who is able to teach, and then he says that the overseer is not to be given to wine. And that, of course, would include other alcoholic beverages, but the idea here is that the pastor is not to be addicted to wine.

The literal rendering is one who does not linger long at wine. And so it is not an absolute prohibition against ever having a glass of wine. But it is an absolute prohibition against drunkenness, overindulgence, being addicted to wine.

And so the overseer is not to be given over to wine. Now, there are some who would say that. For those in ministry, they shouldn't have be involved in drinking any alcoholic beverage whatsoever.

And others would say, well, you know, I don't see that as being a big problem. And sometimes it kind of is really based on culture. You know, having lived in Europe for a while, the Europeans don't think much about this particular prohibition.

They recognize the the warnings against drunkenness and so forth, but they don't think too much about it in the sense of, you know, a Christian should never have a glass of wine or, you know, should never drop into a pub and maybe have a beer or something like that. In our evangelical culture here in the United States, you find some different perspectives on it. Those coming from more of a fundamentalist kind of a background would be a bit more dogmatic about this and a bit more serious that, you know, those in ministry especially should not should not have any contact with alcoholic beverages.

And yet again, the text itself states that there is not to be an addiction to wine. Now, it's interesting because when you get down to the deacon here, as you're looking at the the qualifications for the overseer, we read here not given to wine. If you go down just a bit further and looking at the deacons in

verse eight, it says regarding the deacons not given to much wine.

But the funny thing about it is in the Greek, there really isn't any distinction. There's a there's a distinction in the English, but there isn't really a distinction in the Greek. I have I have researched this over and over again, and, you know, because you look at it and think, OK, well, you know, in the English, there certainly seems to be a distinction.

But having done the research, just looking in the resources that I personally have at my disposal, as well as talking to others who have more knowledge of the Greek. I sat down with Carl Westerlund one day who has a master's degree in Greek, and I asked him about the difference. And he just as we looked at the Greek text, he said there really isn't any difference in the Greek text.

So, again, the point is that the overseer remember he's to be an orderly man, he's to be a man who's moderate, temperate balance. So obviously being addicted to wine or lingering long at wine is inconsistent with that. And then he goes on and he says that he is not to be a violent man.

And I think we can all accept that just at face value. Don't want the pastor beating up any of the congregants. You know, years ago, I have to tell the story.

There was a guy and he was teaching a Bible study here. He's a friend of mine. And there was one of the guys in the fellowship that was he was really blowing it.

He was it was at the time it was a group of a lot of younger people and a lot of young guys and a lot of young girls. And occasionally you'd find some guys that were there with less than proper motives. They were there to pick up on the girls and things of that nature.

And so there was an incident where this guy, you know, had done something like that. And the guy who was overseeing the ministry, he took him out and he worked him over. And I found out about it and I said, hey, what what are you doing? I mean, you can't do that.

And he said, what are you talking about? Haven't you haven't you read Nehemiah? Don't you remember when Nehemiah grabbed him and they plucked out their beards and, you know. I said, well, yeah, he did do that, didn't he? But so Nehemiah did it. But the pastors of the churches aren't to do it.

Not violent. And then he says, not greedy for money. And a little bit further down, he also adds not covetous.

So we'll look at them both together because they're similar things, but not greedy for money. Oh, boy, you think of church history. And again, as I was saying earlier, if if this standard would have been upheld, how much different church history would look than it does.

But it's it's an ugly, ugly picture. It's a deplorable picture in so many ways. And one of the things that has made it so ugly is the greed for money that has been seen historically in church leaders.

You think of the medieval period and all of the shenanigans that would go on back then. You know, we see stuff today and we you know, you might turn on a certain Christian channel on your television and, you know, you find them begging for money. Every conceivable scam employed to get a buck out of you.

And, you know, you might think that it's just, well, that's, you know, just what happens now with that group of people. Hey, this stuff has been going on for all of church history. And back in the medieval period, boy,

that the church in Europe, the Roman church, they would just, you know, steal people blind.

It was at that time that. The Reformation occurred, the thing that really sparked the Reformation, there were a number of things, but one of the things that just sent Luther over the top was the sale of indulgences. And this man was sent out by the pope to sell indulgences to the people and indulgence was basically get out of purgatory early certificate.

That's actually what it was, and so he would go around the country and he would sell these indulgences to people because they had loved ones that had died. And the church had taught them that their loved ones were in purgatory and purgatory could last a long, long, long, long time. And so this guy would come through town and he would say, you can get your loved one out of purgatory.

And of course, he would say, don't you want to get your loved one out of purgatory? You mean you're going to leave them there to suffer for tens of thousands of more years? And who could resist that? And the people would cough up whatever they possibly could. To buy that indulgence, it was all an indulgence was also somewhat of a get out of jail free card so you could actually pay for some sins in advance. This stuff, this is what the church was doing back in that period of time.

And this is the thing that finally sent Luther over the top, and this is the thing that caused him to write out his what's called the ninety five thesis, ninety five points that he tacked up on the church door in. The city of Wittenberg, Germany, ninety five points against the papacy and particularly in regard to the indulgences, but they were collecting money to build St. Peter's Basilica. That was the purpose.

I've been to St. Peter's. It is probably. Well, from my perspective, it is the most phenomenal.

Building I have ever seen, nothing like it. And it has got to be worth. Trillions of dollars, it's unbelievable the magnificence of the building.

But it was built through people being cheated and ripped off by the church, and so not greedy for money, not covetous, the indulgences back in that period of time, the covetousness, the pope would covet lands and goods and basically send out armies to ransack places and take over different areas. Regions, you know, when you understand some of this stuff, you understand a little bit better. Some of the other history that followed it and, you know, it's just such a tragic thing.

So so we've got that looking back in history, but like I said, we've certainly got the same problem today. Not that long ago. I heard with my own ears, this isn't secondhand information, I heard a certain so-called TV evangelist say this, he said he didn't want to hear any more about the golden streets in heaven.

He wanted to hear about the gold that he could get his hands on right here and now. Basically, the gold in your pockets, that's what he want to hear. But he said, don't don't tell me about the goal.

I don't care about the golden. I want to go. I couldn't believe I couldn't believe he said it.

You know, it was like one of those moments where I'm sure as he went back and reviewed the tape, he probably thought, you know, oh, boy, we better delete that. Because all of that covetousness, all of that love of money was just flowing right out of his heart right there, right on the big screen, not greedy for money, not covetous. And then he says the overseer is to be gentle, peaceable is another way to translate the word disinclined to fight, disinclined to fight, not always looking for a fight.

Not quarrelsome, he goes on to say, not a hothead or a contentious person. Now, you can't be like that in the ministry because you're always going to come up against people who disagree with you or want to argue or something like that. And if you have that sort of quarrelsome nature, you're going to spend all of your time just in conflict with people.

When I was younger, I was, I think, to some degree, I was a bit contentious, I was. I couldn't walk away from a fight spiritually. You know, I just OK, you know, you said that, well, come on, let's go.

I want to I want to fight with you about that. I want to argue with you. I want to show you that you're wrong.

And, you know, I think that's part of being young. At least it was for me, I I outgrew that, I think for the most part, you know, now sometimes people say things and it's, you know, I can tell it's sort of like picking a fight and you just say, well, you know, OK, I got to go. I'll see you later.

It's not worth it, really, in so many cases. But, you know, there are some that haven't. Uh.

In embrace that I know I know some guys in ministry now, as I think about it, they're not in pastoral ministry in the sense of pastoring a church there, they're recognized in a position of leadership and kind of, you know, maybe as even spokespersons to the larger body of Christ, you know, just a bit contentious, just sort of always. Ready for an argument, can never let anything slide by, always got to make sure that you get your point of view out there and that people know that, oh, no, that's wrong, what you thought about that, you know, there's a place, I think, where you just in things that don't really matter, except it's just a difference of opinion, you just let it go. You don't have to.

You know, try to convince everybody of your position and so not quarrelsome, not hotheaded or contentious, and then he says. One who rules his own house well. One who rules his own house, well, having his children in submission with all reverence for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God? Paul is real practical, isn't he? He says, if you can't take care of things at home, how could you possibly think you could manage? God's church.

And so the overseer is to be a man whose house is in order. And that doesn't mean that your kids never do anything wrong or that they don't occasionally rebel or that sort of thing. It just means that when those things do happen, you deal with it.

You are the spiritual leader in your home and you you take charge of the situation. You know, you probably heard the term PK, preacher's kid, pastor's kid, in some circles, PKs are notoriously problematic. To put it more bluntly, the biggest brats in the church.

And a lot of times it's simply because there isn't that kind of leadership in the home that ought to be there. Sometimes, of course, it's possible for a person who's in a position in ministry to sort of neglect the home for the sake of the ministry and not to put the investment into the home that that needs to be put into the home because, oh, well, I've got to take care of the Church of God. But if your home is falling apart sooner or later, the church is going to fall apart, too.

It shows that you're not able to take care of business. So it's important that we, if we're in leadership, that we make sure that that things are right in our own personal lives as well. You know, in looking at my own situation with my family, one of the things that stuck with me over the years is the fact that there are lots of people who can teach the Bible and preach and do all different kinds of ministry.

But I'm the only person that can be a husband to my wife and a father to my children. I can't delegate that to anybody else. I don't want to.

I can delegate other things. I don't have to go on every, you know, ministry opportunity that comes my way. I don't have to spend my whole life down at the church.

I can trust God to take care of his church. I can trust God to gift and raise up other people to help out. But, you know, there have been many who have sort of, you know, neglected the home.

And I think that's a huge mistake. It certainly is a bad witness in a lot of ways, and it brings difficulty and trouble upon the church. Because, as I mentioned earlier, the pastor's kid is out of control, causing trouble at the church.

Oh, that's that that story has been told over and over and over again throughout the years. And so he then goes on and he says in verse six, not a novice, not a novice. Why the danger of pride? A novice is a new believer.

That's what he's referring to here now. Now, what is a new believer? You know, sometimes I meet people and they say, hey, I'm a new Christian. I've only been a Christian five years.

You're not a new Christian if you've been a Christian five years. If you've been a Christian five weeks, you're a new Christian. I've even met people who I'm serious.

I've met people who told me they're new Christians only been a Christian 10 years. Hey, come on, if you've been a Christian 10 years, you ought to be a mature Christian. And 10 years is a long time to be in the Lord, there ought to be a ton of growth in 10 years.

So a novice is a person who's just a brand new Christian. And Paul says, now, don't put a brand new believer in this position because there's always that danger. A brand new Christian is not going to understand a lot of things.

God starts using them in a significant way. They're going to think that it's because they're so great or something like that. And they're they're prone.

They're vulnerable to become lifted up with pride. And then they fall right into the trap of the devil. And so he he tells him not to put a novice in the position.

But like I said, he's he's talking about a brand new believer. I think that after a year in the Lord, if you're faithful, growing steadily. I think after a year in the Lord, you're you're ready to start getting involved in serving the Lord in some capacity, three years in the Lord.

And if God's calling you, you're ready to go out and minister in a church. The apostles, how long did they spend with Jesus? They were with him for three years. He trained him for three years and then he sent them out, empowered them with the Holy Spirit.

Paul, the apostle, he had his three year period of preparation. I think three years of serious study and commitment and devotion. That's that's plenty of time for God to do a work.

I was pastoring my own church. After I had been a Christian for just about four years, I think Greg Laurie was pastoring his church or kind of, you know, what became ultimately Harvest Christian Fellowship. I

think it was after only a couple of years of being a Christian.

And if you look at the different, you know, guys around that have this long history with Calvary Chapel, if you look at Mike down in San Diego or Raul out in wherever Raul's at nowadays, you know, just the different guys, you know who I'm talking about. You know, I don't think anybody had probably any more than five years in the Lord before they were out actually doing ministry. I would I would guess that with all of them, it was probably considerably less, probably two to three years.

And so, again, a novice doesn't mean somebody who's only been in the Lord a couple of years. It means literally a brand new believer. And so, of course, we want to give people time to grow.

And then the final thing that he says is that. He must have a good testimony among those who are outside, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside now. Now.

Some have said that this disqualifies any person from the ministry who lived a reckless, wild, sinful life before they got into the ministry, even though they were unbelievers. And there's a particular man, I won't name him just. In order not to stir up strife, but he wrote a book on the subject of preaching and in addressing this verse.

He basically disqualified the vast majority of Calvary Chapel pastors from being pastors. Because according to his interpretation of it, we don't have a good testimony. Because of our the past, you know, sinful lifestyles that many of us lived.

But that certainly can't be what Paul is talking about, because he tells his own testimony. That he was a murderous beast, basically, and he was set on killing Christians. What Paul is obviously talking about is that we have a good testimony, literally a testimony that, man, that guy was wicked, that guy was horrible.

But my goodness, look at him now. What happened to him, he's changed, he's transformed, he's a different person. That's a good testimony that Paul's talking about.

The people from the outside would look on and they would see that, yeah, there is a distinct difference in that person's life, there's a change that's taken place. That the outside world would not look at us and say, well, what's he doing being a Christian, because he's still a thief, he's still ripping people off, he's still a liar, he's still a cheat, he's still a fornicator, he's still a drunk, he's still whatever. That's what he's talking about, not that he used to be, but boy, what a what a change.

So having a good testimony. That's the final thing there, and so really here, Paul list 15 different things as qualifications. For pastoral leadership, Charles Spurgeon, the great Victorian era preacher.

He said this in his book, Lectures to My Students regarding the pastor, he said his pulse of vital godliness must be strongly and regularly, his eye of faith must be bright, his foot of resolution must be firm, his hand of activity must be quick, his whole inner man must be in the highest degree of sanity. We required to have God's ministers, the pick of all the Christian host, such men indeed that if the nation wanted kings, they could not do better than elevate them to the throne. It's a high calling.

It's a glorious privilege. And there are some stiff qualifications. And I think it's a mistake to look at this and say, well, you know, that was Paul's standard.

It's probably unrealistic. Nobody's ever going to live up to that. That's not what these things are written for, they're written so that we would look at these things and see, yes, this person is qualified or no, I'm sorry, this person isn't qualified, that I would continue to measure my life against these things and make the adjustments that need to be made and say, Lord, help me to be more like the picture that you give of your servants here.

But in closing, I want to say this. Paul said this is a great thing to aspire to. If any man desires the office of overseer, he desires a good thing.

It's a great thing to aspire to. And men, we need more men aspiring to this position. We need more churches planted.

We need people to take steps of faith and to go out and do God's work. And you know what? You might very well be a candidate. God might very well be calling you.

You might say, well, wait a second, I'm just sitting here at the Saturday Night Study. What do you mean God could be calling me? Well, I'll tell you what, 25 years ago, I was just sitting here at whatever study and God was calling me. And 25 or 30 years ago, everybody that you listen to on the radio and ministers to you and blesses you, they were doing the same thing.

And God was calling them and God is still calling people and he's still calling men and there's plenty of work to be done. Where do you go? Well, I'll tell you, I was looking at that electoral college map. The blue places.

That's where you go. That's where they need the gospel. Los Angeles.

Los Angeles. San Francisco. Go.

You know, the largest evangelical church in San Francisco is twelve hundred people. It's the largest. Boy, the place is lost, hugely lost.

Go right up the coast. You saw the map, the West Coast, the left coast, as they call it, right up Portland, Seattle, right up there. Go over Detroit, Madison, Chicago, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Boston, all these places.

You know, I was looking at the map tonight. There's no Calvary Chapel in Pittsburgh. There's no Calvary Chapel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

And, you know, as I was looking over the map and looking at Iowa in different places, you know, some of these states, you get two or three churches with maybe, you know, the largest church being two or three hundred people. Now, I know there are other churches out there and I'm not saying that nobody is out there doing anything, but there's plenty of room for more. And so it's a good thing, it's a noble aspiration.

And of course, ultimately, it's about God calling, but you never know, he might be calling you. And when we consider the role of the deacon next week, we'll kind of wrap everything together by looking at some of the ways that you can sort of get a feel for whether or not God might be calling you. But.

Again, in closing. It's a great thing to serve the Lord in whatever capacity we talked about the ladies last week and all that they can do, and it's great to serve the Lord as an overseer. It's great to be a deacon, a servant in the church.

It's great to be a person who, you know, goes out into the world and sees their job as a mission field, but comes back in and builds and strengthens the church in that area that God gets them to do it. And let's not be dysfunctional Christians. Let's be functioning, a fully functioning body, every.

Part. Making its contribution and doing what it was created to do.

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